HAPPINESS IN THE WORKPLACE: AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Education is entirely my own work, and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____ Date: 3rd July 1015

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Dedication

To T.C, Siobhan and Vera

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Abstract

Happiness in the workplace: An Appreciative Inquiry

Catherine McGonagle

Maximising employee wellbeing is a challenge for managers at any time. The current economic climate of austerity and the resulting financial constraints within the public sector increase this challenge. Promoting happiness in the workplace is potentially relevant to improving productivity, creativity and retention of staff. Previous research on happiness in the workplace has focused on job satisfaction and employee engagement however happiness in the workplace is an understudied area and offers an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon.

The aim of this study was to develop, in collaboration with staff, a workplace which facilitates staff happiness at work. Concept analyses of happiness and happiness in the workplace were conducted in order to provide a conceptual framework for the study. Self-determination theory is proposed as a theoretical explanation for happiness in the workplace. Review of workplace happiness research highlighted an incomplete account of happiness in the workplace.

The study was conducted in a School of Nursing in the university sector. An Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach underpinned by a social constructionist philosophy was adopted. AI is an affirmative, collaborative, action focused and generative approach involving four stages of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny. All full time staff (n=80) of the School were invited to participate. A total of twenty three staff across roles and disciplines chose to participate in the study. Focus group and individual interviews were used to collect data during each of the stages. Template Analysis was used to inductively identify School strengths consistent with participants' understandings of happiness in the workplace. Self-determination, Fulfilment and Community were found to be central to Being Happy in this workplace in the Discovery phase. On the basis of these shared meanings of happiness in the workplace, vision statements and an action plan were subsequently developed in the Dream and Design phases of the study. Actions developed by participants were then implemented and some are ongoing, as is the nature of action focused research. During this Destiny phase of the study an evaluation was conducted to identify change as a result of the process and to further identify participants' experience of the AI process.

In addition to observable outcomes in the workplace arising from the action plan, changed thinking and changed behaviour of participants, in line with achieving happiness in the workplace, were identified.

Findings have implications for management practice and support the relevance of Self Determination Theory to the facilitation of happiness in the workplace. In addition findings indicate the value of Appreciative Inquiry as a generative approach for facilitating change in the workplace.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This thesis presents a research study which involved my colleagues in a process of exploring happiness in the workplace and of developing a plan of action for facilitating a happy workplace in the future. The study used an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology involving the use of focus group and individual interviews wherein participants engaged in a collaborative exploratory and change oriented process of developing a happy workplace consistent with their understandings of happiness in this workplace. The study was conducted in a School of Nursing in a higher education institute in Ireland. The School of Nursing was established within the University in 1995 and up to 2002 it was primarily involved in delivering post graduate nurse education and accrediting service delivered pre-registration hospital based nurse education programmes. In 2002 a large number of educational staff transferred to the School from the Health Service and commenced the delivery of an undergraduate pre-registration nurse education programme (BSc in Nursing). This undergraduate programme was the main educational programme delivered in the School. A small number of post graduate nursing programmes were also delivered in the School. The period immediately preceding the commencement of the study saw a rapid expansion of School programmes and activity with a multidisciplinary healthcare focus. At the outset of the study in 2011), my role was that of Head of School but this changed during the course of the study back to one of lecturer as my term in the role was time limited. This AI study was conducted as a direct result of my wish to work with colleagues constructively on a research topic of interest to them at a particularly challenging time external to and within the workplace. It was carried out during the year June 2011 to June 2012.

1.2. External context for the study

Following the success of the Irish economy in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a period which became internationally known as the Celtic Tiger, the country was plunged into a major property and banking

crisis during 2008. This crisis resulted in a prolonged period of economic instability and recession. Despite a change of government, the policy response included a package of severe austerity measures attempting to regain national economic stability and salvage the Irish reputation amongst its European Union Partners. The European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) collectively called The Troika, provided a rescue package of over 85 billion euro. This bail out by the Troika was conditional on the implementation of specified austerity measures aimed particularly at reducing both the National Debt resulting from the banking crisis but more importantly at reducing expenditure on welfare and the public sector which was considered to be excessive compared with other European partners.

While the financial and banking crisis was not unique to Ireland the transformation from that of the Celtic Tiger to one of financial debt had a significant internal impact. The public humiliation and perceived loss of sovereignty has been difficult but, more importantly, the hard hitting austerity measures have impacted on the day to day lives of the Irish people. According to the Central Statistics Office unemployment rose up to 14.6% in June 2011 from a relatively stable 4% during the period of the Celtic Tiger (2014). With unemployment rising those in work incurred increased social insurance charges and higher VAT rates on goods and services. Within the public sector, including the Higher Education sector, non-renewal of contracts led to a reduction in the numbers in the workforce. Employees have been subjected to increased workloads and salary cuts. In the years since the commencement of the crisis economic uncertainty prevails despite on-going reassurances from the government and the Troika.

1.3. Internal context for the study

The national situation had a direct impact on the local context in the School where the study was conducted. Within the two years prior to the commencement of the study non replacement of contract staff led to reduction in staff numbers. This coincided with government demands for more educational programmes in order to re-educate people who had recently become unemployed, “a

more with less phenomena", with an increasing neoliberal focus. During this period the School commenced an undergraduate professional degree in psychology, an undergraduate degree in Health and Society and a Certificate in Homelessness Studies with an increase in over 100 students annually to the School. The continuation in its current form of the BSc in Nursing which commenced in 2002 was far from certain as the Department of Health and Children called for a a review of the undergraduate nurse education nationally. During the course of the study concerns were rife regarding the future of the programme with particular concerns relating to potential cost cutting measures. Rumours abounded regarding reduction in the annual intake of students, reallocation of certain programmes across Schools of Nursing in the country and merging of Schools of Nursing particularly following the publication of the National Strategy for Higher Education (Hunt 2011), which spoke about more collaborative working across higher education institutions in general. The BSc in Nursing is the largest of the educational programmes provided in the School of Nursing and security of tenure at the school for many staff is largely dependent on the funding generated from undergraduate nursing. Uncertainty regarding the future of this programme leads to uncertainty regarding the future of the School in general. In addition to increased demands and perceived lack of security at work School staff were likely affected by what was happening in the wider economy and the potential impact on their families.

Austerity, transition and insecurity were the contextual factors for the study. Despite having transitioned from the health sector in 2002 and adapting to the academic role, the role of staff now appeared to be changing again with increased demands and less security

1.4. Rationale for the study

Physical, psychological and subjective wellbeing, of employees has gained increased attention within the workplace literature. Happiness in the workplace has been linked with increased productivity (Judge et al. 2001, Cropanzano and Wright 2001, Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins 2008), creativity (Amabile et al. 2005, Rego et al. 2009) and increased organisational citizenship behaviours (Rego et

al. 2009, Rego et al. 2011), all of which I considered important in increasingly challenging times. The impetus for this study was not one based on the identification of a problem in the workplace. There was no reason to believe that staff were either happy or unhappy at work or that the workplace was not conducive to happiness at work. Rather the impetus for the study was one of personal interest in something which I believed, as Head of School with responsibility for leading a large interdisciplinary team, to be important at any time but which I believed was increasingly important at a particularly difficult and challenging time, both in the internal and external environment. Having worked in a number of managerial roles, the most recent being that of Head of School, I was anxious to engage in an action oriented study focused on happiness in the workplace. I was particularly concerned that contextual factors could have a negative impact in terms of lowering morale and wellbeing at work. As a pragmatic manager I was anxious to ensure that my research would have immediate relevance and benefits for those of us working in the School. With this in mind I chose to use an AI participatory methodology to study happiness in the workplace. This involved not only developing an understanding of the concept in this workplace but also a developmental process of building a happy workplace for the future. This study was opportune, I believed, in terms of exploring an issue, which was important for both individual employees and for the continued success of the school itself despite the challenging contextual factors.

Having worked in the School for ten years I observed an absence in discourse in relation to school strengths or indeed happiness in the workplace. Much of the discourse in both the internal and external environment was broadly negative and was influenced by the national situation, particularly that of servicing the national debt, recession and the knock on implications of that for individuals, families and the workplace. There is minimal evidence in the research literature of the involvement of employees in the development of interventions which promote their happiness at work. This study contributes something new to the emerging body of knowledge in relation to happiness in the workplace. A greater understanding of the subjective meanings of happiness of employees is invaluable to school management and the galvanisation of school staff in a positively framed

research inquiry providing the potential to shape, in a constructive way, the School of the future. Additionally the knowledge developed during the course of the study will have relevance to other similar academic and non-academic workplaces.

1.4.1. Overview of Chapters

This section provides an outline structure of the thesis and an overview of the content of each chapter. The thesis comprises eight chapters commencing with the introduction and rationale for the study and progresses through the process of the study, findings of the study and to recommendations for further research and practice.

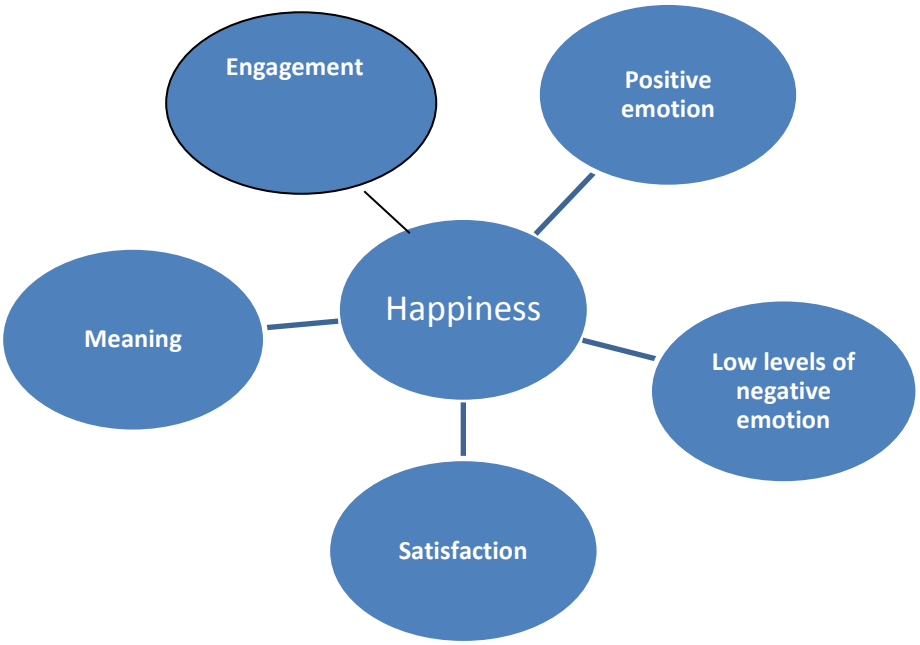
1.4.2. Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the study. It introduces the topic of happiness in the workplace and presents AI as the methodology of choice for conducting the study. The increasing pressures on workplace demand, both internally and externally, as a result of challenging national economic circumstances are outlined as both contextual background and rationale for the study.

1.4.3. Chapter 2

Happiness is a term frequently used colloquially. In chapter 2 the conceptual and definitional difficulties with the concept of happiness are acknowledged. This chapter subsequently provides clarity by conducting a concept analysis of happiness leading to a clearer understanding of happiness, its defining attributes, antecedents and consequences. The Concept Analysis Method proposed by Walker and Avant (1995) was adopted for this purpose. This analysis is further extended in the next chapter to the concept of happiness in the workplace, which is the focus of this study. Figure 1 presents a diagrammatic representation of the defining attributes of happiness identified in this process.

Figure 1. Defining attributes of happiness



1.4.4. Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 the conceptual and theoretical framework underpinning the study is presented. The concept of happiness is explored further in a workplace context. Related organisational wellbeing concepts frequently used interchangeably with happiness are examined for alignment and disparities with the concept of happiness. An absence of literature in relation to happiness enhancing strategies in the workplace is noted. Following this, the literature is reviewed in relation to happiness in the higher educational workplace. The relative absence of qualitative research or action oriented perspectives to the study of happiness in the academic workplace provides a justification for this study. Self-determination theory is proposed as a theoretical lens with which to consider happiness in the workplace and the findings of this study.

1.4.5. Chapter 4

Chapter 4 provides a rationale for the use of AI in this study. An overview of AI and its underpinning philosophy of social constructionism is provided. AI is described, critiqued and justified as the appropriate research methodology for meeting the aims and objectives of the study namely those of exploration, participation and action. The ethical and positional issues arising from conducting research within my own workplace and my role as Head of School are explored and addressed. The process of sampling is outlined as is the issue of quality assurance relevant to the action research focus of AI within this particular study. A diagrammatic overview of the appreciative inquiry into happiness in the workplace process is provided.

1.4.6. Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents one cycle of the AI 4 D process: Discovery; Dream; Design and Destiny. The rationale for the use of focus group interviews and individual interviews in the Discovery Phase of the study and focus groups in the subsequent Dream, Design and Destiny phases of the study is provided. The four phases of the study are outlined. Thematic analysis was the data analysis method used in this study (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, King 2012) and this is outlined in chapter 5. During the discovery phase of the study a template developed from inductive analysis of the first focus group interview was used, applied to analysis of the other interviews and modified accordingly to develop categories and themes (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, King 2012).

1.4.7. Chapter 6

Chapter 6 presents a number of themes pertaining to participants' understandings of happiness in the workplace. These are Being Happy, Self Determination, Fulfilment and Community. It also presents the outcomes of the action phase of the study where a number of actions decided upon in the Design phase of the study were implement and achieved. The positive experiences of

participants of AI in this study are also presented in this chapter. These included Changed Thinking about Happiness in the Workplace and Action on Happiness in the Workplace.

1.4.8. Chapter 7

Chapter 7 presents the discussion. Findings and outcomes of the study are discussed in the context of the defining attributes of happiness identified in the concept analysis, the literature reviewed in relation to happiness in the workplace and Self-Determination Theory. It is proposed in this chapter that Self Determination Theory is a useful theoretical framework for developing a happy workplace. Finally recommendations are made for practice and for future research.

1.4.9. Chapter 8

Chapter 8 presents a critical reflection on the process of the study. Limitations of the study are highlighted and discussed. Whilst the sample size for the study was small relative to the size of the school staff numbers, engagement of participants during all phases of the study was enthusiastic, leading to confidence in authenticity of the participatory process. This is important in an AI study and consistent with the aims of the study and my own commitment as a manager to staff participation in change. This authenticity is discussed in chapter 8. This chapter concludes with the argument that the AI Study did effect change in the School and that this change was built upon participants' own understandings of what happiness in the workplace means to them.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter introduces the study. My rationale for the study in the context of challenging times is presented. Challenging times provide new opportunities and this study offered participants an opportunity to be involved in creating something important for themselves in their future workplace. The chapter outlines the study process by providing an overview of each subsequent chapter. The following chapter introduces and clarifies the concept of happiness which is a central concept in this thesis.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Clarification

2.1. Introduction

Happiness is a sought after and valued state. Most people aspire to happiness both for themselves and for their children and happiness was considered to have such significance that the pursuit of happiness was enshrined as an unalienable right along with life and liberty in the United States Declaration of Independence (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). Happiness has been described as the greatest good and despite striving towards many things which will make people happy Csikszentmihalyi (1999) argues that happiness is the one intrinsic goal which people strive for in itself. He describes happiness as the "bottom line of all desire". (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p. 821). This chapter presents a conceptual analysis of happiness.

Despite the value placed on happiness by individuals and across societies and cultures (Diener and Lucas 2000, Cahn and Vitrano 2008) it is a complex and nebulous concept. Because of this valued status it is a concept that has been much debated from earliest times within philosophy (Cahn and Vitrano 2008). More recently it has become the focus of social and psychological scientific investigation (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2008, Friedrickson 2009, Seligman 2011) and the focus of economic study (Veenhoven 2003, Benz and Frey 2004, Propp 2009). The adoption of the National Happiness Index as one measure of national wellbeing in Burma in 1972 demonstrates interest in Happiness as a national and public policy issue (Evans 2006, Galay 2007). The argument for looking differently at societal well-being and the use of indices for the determination of national subjective wellbeing, more commonly known as happiness, have been increasingly advocated for in many other developed economies including the UK, France and Australia. It has been suggested that these can supplement more traditional national income measures and other economic indicators as indicators of the overall wellbeing of citizens (Lucas et al. 2003, Diener and Seligman 2004, Kahneman and Krueger 2006, Diener, Lucas and Scollon 2006, Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi 2010, Layard and Layard 2011, Diener 2012, MacLachlan and Hand 2013). The subject of happiness has interested

scientists at both a societal level and an individual level. The emergence of the discipline of positive psychology changed the focus within psychological study from that of a focus on illness and deficit to that of the exploration of positive characteristics and strengths which contribute to an individual's happiness (Seligman 2003, Carr 2004, Peterson et al. 2007, Buschor, Proyer and Ruch 2013).

Because the concept of happiness is complex it required clarification prior to undertaking this study. The chapter reviews and analyses the concept of happiness, clarifies terms and associated concepts and provides a working definition of happiness and its defining attributes. This chapter and Chapter 3, which explores the concept of happiness in the workplace, provided a conceptual framework for interpretation and discussion of participants' understandings of happiness in their workplace.

2.2. Literature search for Concept Analysis

The purpose of the review is to provide a critical account of the concept of happiness. This is further extended in the next chapter to explore happiness in the workplace which is the focus of this study. To this end an extensive search of electronic databases included PsychINFO, PsycArticles, PsyBooks, Sage Journals Online, Emerald Management Extra and Web of Science was conducted in addition to using the search engine Google Scholar to identify sources not found in the noted databases. Keywords used for the search included, happiness, wellbeing, subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, positive affect. In addition articles and books by known happiness experts in philosophy and psychology were reviewed. Recurring words, phrases and statements relating to happiness were extricated and grouped according to categories of attributes, antecedents and consequences.

2.3. The concept of happiness

Within the literature the term happiness is frequently used interchangeably with other terms such as subjective wellbeing (Diener, Lucas and Scollon 2006, Hartung and Taber 2008), psychological wellbeing (Wright and Cropanzano 2000, Cropanzano, Rupp and Byrne 2003, Wright and Cropanzano 2004, Ryff and Singer 2008) and satisfaction (Piccolo et al. 2005, Piccolo 2006). In order to develop

an understanding of the concept of happiness and its defining attributes it was important to clarify these terms. As part of this review the concept analysis method described by Walker and Avant (1995) was used to elucidate the concept of happiness to provide a definition of happiness and its defining attributes and of discriminating between terms used interchangeably with happiness whilst acknowledging some critique of the process (Paley 1996). The steps identified for concept analysis advocated by Walker and Avant (1995) are followed in this concept analysis.

Table 1. Steps of Concept Analysis

Steps of Concept analysis
1. Select a concept 2. Determine the aims of the analysis 3. Identify all uses of the concept that you can discover 4. Identify the defining attributes 5. Identify a model case 6. Identify borderline, contrary, invented and illegitimate cases 7. Identify antecedents and consequences 8. Define empirical referents *Walker and Avant (1995)*

This process (Walker and Avant 1995) allows for a systematic and iterative clarification of the concept of happiness which will ultimately provide the conceptual framework for the study. Having identified the focus and aims of the concept analysis the next stage of the approach is a review of common understandings and definitions of happiness itself.

2.4. Concept analysis- definitions of happiness

Whilst acknowledging the difficulty of defining any term (Downie 1994), particularly such a broad terms as happiness, a good starting point for developing an understanding of a concept is to look at common definitions (Walker and Avant 1995). Happiness is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (Hawker and Waite. 2007, p. 420) as *"a state of mind or feeling comprising contentment, satisfaction, pleasure or joy."* It is further described as the state of pleasurable content of mind, which results from success or the attainment of what is considered good (Dictionary.com. 2009). Synonyms identified include, pleasure, contentment, satisfaction, cheerfulness, merriment, joy, delight, elation and jubilation. Antonyms identified were misery, calamity, sadness, unhappiness and ill being (Hawker and Waite. 2007).

Satisfaction is one term which is frequently used interchangeably with happiness. The Oxford dictionary defines satisfaction as *"the feeling of pleasure that arises when you have the things you want or need or when the things you want to happen happen*" (Hawker and Waite. 2007, p. 810). There is an affective component to satisfaction and there is also a cognitive evaluative component involving making a judgement regarding wants and needs and whether these have been achieved.

Subjective wellbeing is a term which recently is being used increasingly to indicate happiness. Wellbeing is defined as *" the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy"* (Hawker and Waite. 2007, p. 1036) and the adjective subjective is defined as *" based on or influenced by personal opinions"* (Hawker and Waite. 2007, p. 912) Subjective wellbeing is therefore also a state which involves both cognitive and affective processes (Diener, Suh and Oishi 1997, Diener, Sapyta and Suh 1998). It involves a personal appraisal of one's own quality of life

Dictionary definitions of the term psychological wellbeing indicate similarity with those phenomena noted above. Psychological refers to *"of pertaining to, dealing with or affecting the mind especially as a function of awareness, feeling or motivation"* (Dictionary.com. 2009). It is unclear in this

dictionary definition whether psychological wellbeing is determined subjectively, objectively or both. Again the definition of the word psychological infers both an emotion and a cognitive component.

A less commonly used term within happiness discourse is that of emotional wellbeing. Emotions are defined as " An affective state of consciousness in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate or the like is experienced as distinguished from cognitive or volitional states of consciousness" (Dictionary.com. 2009). Emotional wellbeing therefore is distinguished from other terms denoting happiness as an affective state rather than one which involves cognition.

Dictionary definitions, aside from indicating both an affective component and generally a cognitive component to happiness, fail to discriminate between the term happiness and some of the other terms used. A review of philosophical perspectives and psychological perspectives was also conducted in order to provide more clarity on the concept.

2.5. Philosophical perspectives on happiness

Happiness is a concept that has interested philosophers through the centuries both in traditional western philosophy and also in eastern philosophy (Spencer 2008). In the 4th century BC the Greek Philosopher Aristipus is noted to have proposed that the goal of life is to maximise one's pleasures (Cahn and Vitrano 2008). The philosophy of happiness has been dominated by two main perspectives: that of hedonism and that of eudaimonia or the good or moral life. Aristipus was one of the first to articulate the Hedonistic view of happiness and this position has had a significant following in the world of philosophy. Hedonism essentially is the pursuit of pleasurable experiences and feelings and the avoidance of pain or negative experiences. Bentham extended the hedonistic perspective to a societal level and argued that an action is right if it promotes the happiness of the greatest number of people (Read 2004). *"Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; and by*

unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure" (Mill 2012, p. 10) . Central to happiness from a hedonic perspective and also from a utilitarian perspective is pleasure. The experience of pleasure is a subjective experience and much of the research on happiness in the form of subjective wellbeing and satisfaction is conducted from a hedonic perspective (Fisher 2010).

The other predominant philosophical position on happiness is eudaimonia. This perspective is generally attributed to Aristotelian philosophy although Socrates and Plato both had a position on this prior to Aristotle (Cahn and Vitrano 2008). Within this perspective the good or moral life is the happy life rather than a life of pleasure. While pleasure is not unimportant, meaning in life, achieving one's potential and virtue in life are essential components of the good life (Carr 2004, Warr 2007). Pleasure, it is argued, usually accompanies the engagement in and completion of activities which constitute happiness (Nussbaum 2008). The eudaimonic life is one which contains acts of altruism and virtue which, at the time may not be pleasurable, but overall which contribute to a person's wellbeing. As such the eudaimonic perspective on happiness contains an objective perspective which can be measured. While the term happiness is derived from the Greek word eudaimonia it is not an exact translation and it is suggested that a better translation of the word is that of human flourishing. Russell (2006, p. 172) described the happy man as

"One who lives objectively, who has free affections and wide interests, who secures his happiness through these interests and through the fact that they, in turn, make him an object of interest and affection to many others."

While hedonic utility has been the main driver of modern economies eudaimonic perspectives have been gaining increasing interest as a basis for societal happiness (Nussbaum 2008, Haybron 2008).

2.6. Psychological meanings of happiness

The increasing interest in positive psychology has refocused the study of psychology and science from that of distress and mental illness to that of positive emotions and psychological health and

happiness (Carr 2004). A number of positive psychologists have explored the concept of happiness and offer differing perspectives on it. Daniel Kahneman sees happiness in hedonistic terms and has led the development of hedonistic psychology which focuses primarily on happiness as utility (Kahneman, Kahneman and Tversky 2003). Diener & Lucas (2000) propose the concept of subjective well-being as happiness. It is frequently termed more colloquially as happiness (Diener 2000). Subjective wellbeing is multifaceted and comprises high levels of positive effect, low levels of negative effect and satisfaction with one's life as a whole and with specific domains of it such as work, relationships (Diener, Napa and Lucas 2003). In essence subjective well-being is hedonic wellbeing. Subjective well-being is defined as a cognitive and affective evaluation of one's life (Diener, Suh and Oishi 1997, Diener, Sapyta and Suh 1998, McGillivray and Clarke 2006). Conversely Seligman (2003, 2011) rejects the notion of happiness as pleasure and positive affect alone and he argues that much more is required in order to be authentically happy. He proposes that pleasure and frequent positive emotions, engagement with others and with activity such as work and meaning in life, are required for a full life. This engagement should involve the use of an individual's signature strength. While recognising the importance of pleasure he sees it as least important and argues for a refocusing on both engagement and meaning in life. Seligman's view on happiness is more consistent with the Aristotelian philosophy of the good life (Peterson, Park and Seligman 2005).

Csikszentmihalyi (1999) also identifies engagement as central to happiness. He describes the type of engagement when involved in an activity such as playing music, an athlete training, or someone working on a project, where they become immersed in the experience to the extent that they lose awareness of everything else as an optimal experience. He likened this optimal experience or *Flow* to that of an autotelic experience (Csikszentmihayli 2000). The activity is challenging and requires concentration and skill and also learning and mastery (Csikszentmihalyi 2002). People who experience Flow describe it as an enjoyable, pleasurable and exhilarating state (Fisher 2010) and all absorbing (Csikszentmihalyi 2002).

Similarly psychological well-being is a more complex psychological phenomenon more consistent with eudaimonic explanations for happiness. Ryff and Keyes (1995) suggests that psychological wellbeing comprises six components: self-acceptance; personal growth, relatedness, autonomy, environmental mastery and purpose in life.

While undoubtedly pleasure, positive emotions and satisfaction are intrinsic components of happiness more is required for a more lasting state of happiness. Michalos (2004, p. 37-38) argues that when people talk about happiness they are generally referring *"to a relatively lasting, justified good feeling about their lives"*.

2.7. Defining attributes of happiness

This review of current psychological meanings of happiness indicates the adoption of meanings akin to those traditionally seen within philosophy. Having reviewed how happiness is commonly defined and how happiness is understood in philosophy and psychology the following definition and defining attributes are proposed. Happiness is a state of mental well-being. It involves

- The presence of some positive emotions such as joy, contentment, hope (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, Diener and Tay 2012)
- Low levels of negative emotions (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, Diener and Tay 2012)
- High levels of satisfaction with life and particular domains of life (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, Diener and Tay 2012)
- The presence of meaning or purpose in life (Frankl 1985, Seligman 2003, Schueller and Seligman 2010, Seligman 2011)
- Engagement (Seligman 2003, Schueller and Seligman 2010, Diener and Tay 2012)

The first three defining attributes are consistent with the hedonic or subjective well-being perspective on happiness. The latter two attributes indicate a state of well-being more consistent

with a eudaimonic perspective where growth, development and virtue contribute to a more objective and less subjective state of well-being.

Walker and Avant (1995) note the importance of development of cases to illustrate the defining attributes of the concept and those attributes which are not consistent with the concept. A model case and a number of additional cases, borderline and contrary cases were developed to further clarify the defining attributes of happiness (Appendix One). The model case contains all of the defining attributes of the more eudaimonic perspective on happiness. In the borderline case a number of the attributes are missing and the contrary case contains none of the defining attributes and therefore is a clear example of what happiness is not.

Further understanding of the concept of happiness is enhanced by articulating those factors which contribute to and are the consequences of the concept itself (Walker and Avant 1995).

2.8. Antecedents of happiness

Happiness has been studied extensively within and across cultures with a particular interest in what causes happiness. Antecedents to happiness include previous history of happiness, relatively stable family and living conditions and history of affection (Veenhoven 2003). A significant debate within the realm of happiness studies is whether happiness is dispositional, genetically inherited and associated with positive traits or whether happiness is situational. A number of twin studies conducted by Tellegen et al (1988) and Lykken and Tellegen (1996) concluded that happiness was in the main caused by genetic inheritance and the effects of an individual's own unique circumstances. In effect, either a person has a positive happy disposition or personality or a negative disposition. They suggest, furthermore, that there is a direct causal relationship between mood and behaviour but there is less of causal relationship from behaviour to mood. As a result of this they conclude that trying to be happier, that is changing one's behaviour in order to increase their happiness, may be in fact be futile. This set point for happiness, which is the relatively stable point for a person's

mood over a prolonged period of time, is around 98% genetically inherited (Carr 2004). Despite changes in the person's life circumstances after a period of time the individual will adapt and return to their natural genetically inherited set point for happiness. The set point theory concurs with the hedonic treadmill theory in relation to adaptation. Some examples of this are lottery winners or paraplegics who despite quite dramatic changes in their life circumstances returned to their normal happiness level prior to the change over time (Brickman, Coates and Janoff-Bulman 1978). The adaptation position challenges the belief that happiness can be changed by either the individual or society and proposes that efforts to increase happiness are in effect "futile" (Lykken and Tellegen 1996, p. 189). More recently however, these theories have been challenged by some empirical findings in relation to non-adjustment to unemployment (Angeles 2009, Lucas et al. 2004), marriage (Easterlin 2006) and lottery wins (Gardner and Oswald 2007). Life satisfaction levels can change after significant life events without adapting to previous levels and this has necessitated a call for review and modification of previous set point and hedonic thread mill theories (Easterlin 2006, Headey 2008, Diener, Kesebir and Tov 2009).

It has been argued that inherited happiness set point accounts for about 50% of an individual's happiness, 10% is due to life circumstances and 40% determined by intentional activity (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005). Positive disposition and personality traits have been associated with happiness particularly extraversion and neuroticism (Diener and Seligman 2002, Francis et al. 2004). Positive character traits associated with happiness have been classified under six particular virtues. These are: wisdom and knowledge, incorporating creativity, curiosity, love of learning, judgement and perspective; courage, incorporating honesty, bravery, persistence and zest; humanity, incorporating kindness, love and social intelligence; justice; temperance incorporating forgiveness modesty, prudence and self-regulation; and transcendence incorporating appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humour and religiousness. Peterson et al (2007), in a study conducted in the US and Switzerland identified key character strengths associated with happiness and life satisfaction. These were love, hope, curiosity, zest and perseverance, with perseverance being more

strongly related to life satisfaction in Switzerland, all associated with pleasure, engagement and meaning in life. Positive self-esteem and happiness have been seen as synonymous but questions arise as to causality. Is positive self-esteem an antecedent to happiness or a consequence (Baumeister et al. 2003)?

It has been argued that relatively stable life circumstances have a positive impact on happiness (Fisher 2010). Good personal relationships are also a strong predictor of happiness (Argyle 2001). Social relationships, particularly close friendships, have consistently been shown to have a direct correlation with happiness (Diener and Seligman 2002, Demir and Weitekamp 2007, Demir, Özdemir and Weitekamp 2007) as has marriage and other forms of stable family relationships (Mastekaasa 1992, Lucas et al. 2003, Easterlin 2006) . Furthermore a study conducted by Fowler and Christakis (2008) noted that individuals are likely to become happier if a close friend became happier in the preceding six months.

Meaningful activity, including work (Argyle 2001, Diener and Seligman 2002, Warr 2007, Steger, Kashdan and Oishi 2008) and altruistic activity, including volunteering, have also been shown to have a positive impact on happiness (Post 2005, Meier and Stutzer 2008). Participating in religious activity provides an opportunity for both meaningful activity and social support. The relationship between religion and happiness had been studied, with many studies indicating a strong positive correlation between religion and happiness (Francis et al. 2004, Snoep 2008).

While dispositional and set point theories have received much attention in the literature, these theories remain inclusive and contested. The failure to consider cultural and contextual factors in these perspectives is seen as a flaw requiring further investigation.

2.9. Consequences of happiness

Happiness in the form of subjective well-being has a direct positive effect on people's quality of life and on their success in life across multiple domains including marriage, friendship, career, income

level, and health (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005). Frequent positive affect and skills and resources which individuals have developed over time in past episodes of positive moods are the two main reasons for this according to Lyubomirsky, King and Diener (2005). Fredrickson (2001) explored the relationship between frequent positive emotion and particular action tendencies when she developed the Broaden and Build Theory of positive emotion. She argued that positive emotions *"broaden people's thought action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological ones"* (Fredrickson 2001, p. 219). Taking an evolutionary psychological perspective she suggests that positive emotions lead to approach behaviours rather than avoidance behaviours and that their adaptive purpose helps prepare the individual to face future challenges. Key characteristics related to positive affect include confidence, optimism, self-efficacy; likability and positive construal of others; sociability, activity and energy; pro social behaviour; immunity and physical well-being; effective coping with challenge and stress; and originality and flexibility (Demir and Weitekamp 2007).

Positive emotions have been found to have a positive correlation with creativity (Amabile et al. 2005, Baas, De Dreu and Nijstad 2008, Charyton et al. 2009)

Subjective well-being and satisfaction with life has been shown to correlate with increased longevity (Maier and Smith 1999, Danner, Snowdon and Friesen 2001, Lyyra et al. 2006). Additionally, happiness measures have been associated with health more generally (Argyle 1997). Positive affect has been shown to be significantly associated with lower risk of all-cause mortality in people with diabetes (Moskowitz, Epel and Acree 2008).

Consequences of happiness indicate the importance of happiness to both physical and psychological health and wellbeing of individuals.

2.10. Conclusion

Happiness is a complex concept open to subjective and objective perspectives. Meanings of happiness have vacillated between hedonic forms of happiness based on the experience of positive emotions and satisfaction and eudaimonic happiness based on the virtuous living of one's life. Increasingly the psychological literature indicates a convergence of these two positions with both being important to real or authentic happiness. Table 2 provides a diagrammatic summary of happiness.

Table 2 Summary of Happiness

Happiness		
Attributes	**Antecedents**	**Consequences**
• **High levels of positive emotion** (Seligman 2003, Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, 2011, Diener and Tay 2012) • **Low levels of negative emotion** (Seligman 2003, Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, 2011, Diener and Tay 2012) • **Satisfaction** (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, Diener and Tay 2012, Seligman 2003, 2011) • **Meaning or purpose** (Seligman 2003, Snoep 2008, 2011, Mongrain and Anselmo-Matthews 2012) • **Engagement** (Seligman 2003, 2011, Mongrain and Anselmo-Matthews 2012)	• **Good relationships/ friendships** (Argyle 2001, Veenhoven 2003, Demir and Weitekamp 2007, Demir, Özdemir and Weitekamp 2007, Van der Horst and Coffé 2012, Demir, Özen and Procsal 2014) • **Love** (Mastekaasa 1992, Lucas et al. 2003, Easterlin 2006) • **Stable life circumstances** (Fisher 2010) • **Meaningful activity** (Diener and Seligman 2002, Spreitzer et al. 2005, Post 2005, Meier and Stutzer 2008, Snoep 2008) • **Positive self-esteem** (Baumeister et al. 2003) • **Previous history of happiness** (Veenhoven 2003) • **Marriage** (Waite, Luo and Lewin 2009) • **Education** (Michalos 2008, Cuñado and de Gracia 2012, Chen 2012) • **Religious activity** (Francis et al. 2004, Diener, Tay and Myers 2011, Jung 2014) • **Income** (Easterlin 2003, Diener 2012)	• **Creativity** (Amabile et al. 2005, Baas, De Dreu and Nijstad 2008, Charyton et al. 2009) • **Positive self-esteem** (Baumeister et al. 2003, Lyubomirsky, Tkach and DiMatteo 2006) • **Career success** (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008, Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller 2008, Judge and Hurst 2008, Proyer et al. 2012) • **Health** (Maier and Smith 1999, Danner, Snowdon and Friesen 2001, Lyyra et al. 2006, Veenhoven 2008, Christie-Mizell, Ida and Keith 2008, Borghesi and Vercelli 2012) • **Coping** (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005) • **Love** (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon and Schkade 2005) • **Flexibility** (Ashby, Isen and Turken 1999, Carver, Sutton and Scheier 2000, Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005, Friedman and Förster 2005, Fredrickson 2009) • **Originality** (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005, Fredrickson 2009) • **Confidence** (Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005) • **Resilience** (Cohn et al. 2009, Lyubomirsky and Della Porta 2010)

This chapter has provided come clarity in relation to the concept of happiness in general, the focus of this study is happiness in the workplace. The next chapter explores the concept of happiness in the workplace.

Chapter 3: Conceptual and theoretical framework for happiness in the workplace study

3.1. Introduction

The focus of the study is happiness in the workplace. Happiness in the workplace has not been studied extensively until relatively recently (Fisher 2010). The workplace is a unique dynamic and cultural setting and as such it is important to review conceptual understanding of workplace happiness in the literature. Within the workplace literature the term happiness is used interchangeably with that of job satisfaction and terms such as affect at work, organisational commitment, organisational engagement and flow. It is considered important to review these to determine both conceptual alignment and divergences with the concept of happiness outlined in Chapter 2, particularly the presence or absence of defining attributes of happiness previously specified.

This AI study involves a participatory process of designing and developing the happy academic workplace of the future. In order to review previous efforts in this area, the second section of the chapter reviews available research on the promotion of happiness in the workplace and interventions aimed at creating a happy workplace. The identified gaps in the literature of limited research on the involvement of staff in the promotion of a happy workplace provide a justification for this AI study. The third section of the review examines happiness in academic workplaces. The limited available Irish evidence is reviewed. The final section of the chapter considers theoretical explanations for happiness in the workplace. Self-determination theory is proposed as the theoretical lens for the study. In concluding the chapter methodological approaches to the scientific study of happiness are critiqued and an argument made for an action orientated approach to studying happiness in the workplace based upon a qualitative understanding of happiness in the workplace in question.

3.2. Literature Search

A further search of the electronic databases noted in chapter 2 was extended to include happiness in the workplace and related concepts. The database search was primarily limited to peer reviewed journal articles, published research and conference papers. Published books, seminal texts and reports were also sourced relevant to the topic. Keywords used were job satisfaction, workplace happiness, organisational commitment, work engagement. Combinations of these terms were also used. Abstracts resulting from the literature search were examined to identify relevant content. Principles of relevance, depth, breath and honest presentation identified guided the review (Holmes 1996).

3.3. Happiness at work: Job satisfaction

One of the concepts related to happiness studied most extensively in the workplace is that of job satisfaction (Fisher 2003). These studies primarily focus on satisfaction globally with the job or with specific aspects or conditions of the job (Warr 2007). These conditions frequently include items such as the nature of the work, remuneration, promotional opportunities, supervision (Fisher 2003) control, levels of support (Taris and Schreurs 2009) and level of autonomy (Warr 2007). It could be argued that the focus of these studies is on antecedents to satisfaction rather than the nature of job satisfaction itself.

Despite the plethora of studies exploring job satisfaction and effects of job satisfaction there appears to be a lack of agreement within the field of psychology as to what exactly job satisfaction is. Warr (2007, p.34) cites Locke's 1969 definition of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job." This definition focuses on emotion as the primary factor in job satisfaction. Despite the large amount of agreement on job satisfaction as an emotional or affective response to one's job there is also an alternative position proposing that job satisfaction is primarily a cognitive evaluative process which Weiss (2002) argues is consistent with

job satisfaction being an attitude. Evaluation, as an essential component of an attitude, has broad agreement (Weiss 2002). In this context he describes job satisfaction as

> *"a positive (or negative) evaluative judgement one makes about one's job or job situation"* (Weiss 2002, p. 175).

Additionally Weiss (2002) argues that Job Satisfaction, like other attitudes, comprises three separate concepts which are evaluative judgements about one's job, affective experiences at work and beliefs about one's job. Being clear about these distinct but related concepts, as components of job satisfaction, is necessary for more accurate study of the components of job satisfaction and subsequent theory development. Much of the research conducted on job satisfaction has involved cognitive evaluative judgements about the object of one's attitude i.e. the job or aspects, characteristics or facets of the job. Weiss (2002) regards evaluation and affect as conceptually different and argues that job satisfaction is essentially an evaluative process either positive or negative. Within the study of job satisfaction a paradox exists where job satisfaction has been viewed essentially as an affective evaluation where upon many of the scales used to measure job satisfaction are in fact evaluative in nature (Brief and Weiss 2002). Affective states, moods or emotions are transient states and undoubtedly have an impact on the evaluation of one's job but confusing this has done little to advance the study of job satisfaction itself or the study of affective states at work (Weiss 2002). It would seem that such clarity and agreement on this is required in order to ensure that happiness studies which involve the study of satisfaction have greater validity and are of more use in terms of understanding happiness. None the less job satisfaction is central to happiness in the workplace and as such is one of the defining attributes of happiness in the workplace.

3.4. Happiness at Work: Affect

Affect and positive emotions have both been studied in the workplace (Staw, Bell and Clausen 1986, Staw and Barsade 1993, Cropanzano and Wright 2001, Isen 2001, Amabile et al. 2005). Weiss (2002) proposes that the study of affective states is complex. Affective states comprise both moods and emotions which are entirely different states. Core affect has been defined by Russell (2003, p. 147) as *"a neuropsychological state accessible as a simple non reflexive feeling that is an integral blend of hedonic (pleasure – displeasure) and arousal (sleepy – lethargic) values*." Emotions are transient states that are usually directed at some object or someone. Moods, on the other hand, tend in the main not to be directed at anything or anybody and be more diffuse than emotions (Weiss 2002). Particular emotions may have a relatively short time span whereas moods tend to be more long lasting. Consequently, each require separate study and should be clearly defined at the outset of any study exploring affect.

Affect studied within the framework of subjective wellbeing is also problematic (Weiss 2002). In the work context subjective well-being involves both a cognitive evaluation in terms of one's beliefs about the job and an affective evaluation in terms of the amount of positive and pleasurable feelings experienced relative to negative feelings. Primarily researchers interested in the affective component of subjective well-being are focused on relatively stable affect over time rather than momentary changes in affect (Diener 1994). Subjective well-being is normally studied by using self-report scales. A lack of clarity exists in relation to what time frame one should aggregate levels of positive affect for, nor indeed whether more longer term affect has as much impact on subsequent behaviours in the workplace than more momentary levels of affect (Weiss 2002). Additionally it is argued that the complex and multifaceted nature of subjective well-being necessitates that each component is studied separately as each have distinctive causes and consequences (Diener 1994).

A significant study conducted by Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986) explored the relationship between affective disposition of adolescents and their job attitudes in later life. This longitudinal study

conducted over a period of almost fifty years concluded that there was indeed a strong correlation between dispositional affect and job satisfaction. Despite some methodological critique of this study (Davis-Blake and Pfeffer 1989, Diener et al. 2002) dispositional affectivity and personality traits continue to be a source of study in the workplace particularly with regard to their impact on job outcomes (Diener et al. 2002), performance (Wright and Cropanzano 2000, Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006, Wright, Cropanzano and Bonett 2007) and satisfaction (Judge, Heller and Mount 2002). Despite the definitional difficulties with the study of affect in the workplace positive emotions are central to job satisfaction and to happiness in the workplace and as such are one of the defining attributes as are low levels of negative emotions.

3.5. Happiness at work: Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment is a concept that has received increasing attention in the workplace happiness literature. Once again there are operational difficulties with the concept of organisational commitment. Becker (1960) explored the concept of commitment and argued that in general people acted in ways which were consistent over time. In Becker's Side Bets Theory commitment is achieved by individuals acting consistently with previous extraneous interests, which he terms side bets. The major components of this are

> *"1) prior actions of the person staking some originally extraneous interest on his following a line of inquiry*
>
> *2) a recognition by him of the involvement of this originally extraneous activity in his present activity*
>
> *3) the resulting consistent line of activity"* (Becker 1960, p. 36)

Becker proposes that within a work context side bets, such as family obligations, cultural expectations and bureaucratic arrangements, constrain an employee's behaviour. An example of this would be an individual who does not change jobs, despite a potential increase in salary because

the job may be high risk on the grounds that he had previously made a side bet and taken on a mortgage on the assumption of a stable and long term salary.

Meyer & Allen (1991) proposed a three model conceptualisation of the concept of commitment comprising three distinct components: affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment, which is an emotional commitment to and identification with the organisation, is most consistent with happiness. Normative commitment is a "mind-set" of obligation to stay with an organisation or to support change within the organisation (Meyer and Parfyonova 2009) and is consistent with the concept of loyalty (Fisher 2010). Continuance commitment relates to the perceived costs of leaving the organisation or because of inducements offered to stay rather than any positive feelings one has about the organisation (Meyer and Allen 1991). Within this model commitment is defined as a force that binds an individual to a target (social or non-social) or to a course of action of relevance to that target (Meyer, Becker and Van Dick 2006).

There has been some debate regarding this model and the perceived similarities between the concepts of affective commitment and normative commitment (Meyer and Parfyonova 2009) leading to suggestions that the two be combined. Meyer and Partonva (2009) acknowledge the correlation between the concepts but argue that the mind-set of desire in affective commitment is distinguishable from the mind-set of obligation in normative commitment. Solinger, Van Olffen and Roe (2008) reject the three component model of commitment on the basis of inconsistencies in the research which they suggest are because of conceptual reasons rather than empirical inaccuracies. They propose that organisational commitment is an attitude consistent with the Eagly and Chaiken's (1993) model of attitudes. They argue that commitment to the organisation (target) does not necessarily mean commitment to specific behaviours, for example, remaining within the organisation. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) acknowledge the confusion and inconsistencies regarding the concept of organisational commitment and how it affects behaviours in the work place

and note the importance of clarity. They reject the position of commitment as an attitude adopted by Sollinger, Van Olffen and Roe (2008) and maintain the multidimensional model of affective, normative and continuance commitment.

The model proposed by Meyer and Allen (2001) appears to offer a cogent argument for organisational commitment as it seems logical that many factors effect a person's commitment to an organisation including affect and judgement. Enjoyment of work and the pleasure achieved from doing something one likes alone may not be sufficient to guarantee on-going commitment. They are, however, contributors and demonstrate an affective and evaluative component consistent with other perspectives on happiness (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2009, Diener and Tay 2012). These further supports the argument for high levels of positive emotions, low levels of negative emotions and satisfaction as defining attributes of happiness.

3.6. Happiness at work: Engagement

Research on work engagement has increased in recent years and may have much to offer in relation to happiness at work. As with other concepts in the happiness literature engagement is also a contested concept (Macey and Schneider 2008). Engagement has been described as *"positive affect associated with the job and the work setting connoting or explicitly indicating feelings of persistence, vigour, energy, dedication, absorption, enthusiasm, alertness and pride, and as such engagement has components of organisational job commitment, job involvement and the positive affectivity of job satisfaction"(Macey and Schneider 2008, p. 24)*. Within their review of the concept of engagement they note that engagement has been viewed as a psychological state, a performance construct, disposition and or a combination of all three. They propose a three part framework of work engagement incorporating trait engagement, state engagement and behavioural engagement. They also note the organisational conditions within the framework which they believe have a direct effect on work engagement. These include attributes of the work: challenge, autonomy, variety; transformational leadership and trust. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) propose that work

engagement is conceptually distinct from other concepts in organisational psychology including job involvement, organisational commitment or job satisfaction. Within organisational commitment the focus is on the organisation and the employee's allegiance to that organisation rather than engagement with the work itself. Job satisfaction focuses on the individual and their level of contentment and feelings about the work, rather than their engagement with the work itself and, while there is some consistency with the involvement component of job involvement, it does not take account of the energy and efficacy inherent in job engagement. They suggest that work engagement is the antithesis of job burnout. Job burnout they argue is an erosion of engagement with energy becoming exhaustion, involvement becoming cynicism and efficacy becoming ineffectiveness. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) therefore view engagement as three dimensional, that of energy, involvement and efficacy and they argue that it can be measured by using the Maslach Burnout inventory by the opposite pattern of scores to the dimensions of burnout.

Kahn (1990, p. 692) describes engagement at work at a personal level and he views it as a psychological construct primarily relating to role and on the "*self in role*". He defines personal engagement "*as the harnessing of organisational members selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, and emotionally during role performances uncoupling of selves from work roles"*. He defines personal disengagement as the "*uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement people withdraw and defend themselves either physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances*" (Kahn 1990, p. 694). He proposed that people either employ and express or withdraw or defend themselves on the basis of their psychological experiences of selves in role. In developing a grounded theory of engagement and disengagement Kahn (1990) identifies three psychological conditions necessary for personal engagement which are meaningfulness, safety and availability. The absence of these three conditions results in personal disengagement.

Alternatively Bakker and Schaufeli (2008, p. 189) see work engagement as a well-defined psychological state and describe it "*as a positive, fulfilling, affective motivational state of work related well-being characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption*." Vigour refers to high levels of energy when working, dedication refers to involvement and feelings of inspiration, pride, enthusiasm and challenge. Absorption refers to complete immersion in one's work to the extent that time passes very quickly and the individual is reluctant to end the task or work at hand (Bakker and Schaufeli 2008, Chughtai and Buckley 2011). A further engagement concept relating to happiness is that of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi 2002).

3.7. Happiness at work: Flow

Flow is experienced when a person becomes engaged in a task which is both challenging and requires the use of particular skills and which are very intrinsically motivating (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, Csikszentmihalyi 2002). In this state the person becomes so absorbed in the activity that they lose track of time and everything else becomes irrelevant (Bakker 2005, Salanova, Bakker and Llorens 2006). Csikszentmihalyi (1999) describes Flow as an auto telic experience whereby the activity is worth doing for its own sake even though there are no consequences outside of it. Bakker (2005) identifies three components to the peak experience described as Flow. These are absorption, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. Work is an area where opportunities to experience Flow seems possible and there has been increasing interest in the predictors of Flow in the workplace such as resources required (Nielsen and Cleal 2010) and organisational and employee benefits (Bryce and Haworth 2002). Csikszentmihalyi (1999) argues on the basis of his own research that happiness depends on whether a person is able to derive Flow from whatever he or she does. Such experiences and ensuing happiness can be found in the workplace.

3.8. Antecedents to happiness at work

Antecedents to happiness at work include both organisational and job characteristics. Following the recent scandals in the banking and corporate world organisational virtuousness has recently gained attention and characteristics such as integrity, trust and compassion have been identified as important contributors to employee happiness in the workplace (Gavin and Mason 2004, Rego et al. 2009).

Aspects of perceived organisational climate i.e. affective; interpersonal and social relationships including participation, co-operation, warmth, and social rewards, cognitive growth, innovation, autonomy and intrinsic rewards and instrumental: achievement, hierarchy, structure and extrinsic rewards have been shown to result in employee happiness in the form of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Carr et al. 2003). Additionally organisational climate in relation to cooperation and innovation was also shown to be related to employee commitment (Van Vianen et al. 2011).

Perceived organisational justice and equity have also been identified as important for job satisfaction and employee commitment (Colquitt et al. 2001, Simons and Roberson 2003, Abekah-Nkrumah and Ayimbillah Atinga 2013), more helpful citizenship behaviours (Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland 2007) and employee retention (Simons and Roberson 2003). Perceived organisational support including fairness, both procedural and interactional, supervisor support and rewards/job related positively with affective commitment, positive mood at work, job satisfaction, desire to remain in the organisation and turnover intentions (Rhoades and Eisenberger 2002) and adaptability to change (Cullen et al. 2014).

Healthy workplace practices, including work life balance, employee growth and development, health and safety and employee involvement have been noted as a cause of organisational commitment and well-being at work, (Grawitch, Gottschalk and Munz 2006, Grawitch, Trares and Kohler 2007).

Research on leadership behaviours has shown a direct relationship with employee happiness in the workplace. Ethical leadership behaviours were noted to be positively related to job satisfaction, affective organisational commitment and work engagement (Tanner et al. 2010). Supportive leadership behaviours specifically Consideration as defined by Stodgill (1950), has been shown to impact positively on job satisfaction (Judge, Piccolo and Ilies 2004) as has initiating structure (Rowold, Borgmann and Bormann 2014). Furthermore transformational leadership behaviours have been shown to have a positive impact on employee moods including optimism, happiness and enthusiasm (Bono et al. 2007, Rowold, Borgmann and Bormann 2014). Positive leadership behaviours have also been shown to positively relate to employee momentary emotions, subjective wellbeing, organisational performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (Wijewardena, Samaratunge and Härtel 2014).

The relationship of job characteristics and employee happiness has been studied. Hackman and Oldman (1975) identified that job satisfaction was increased when three critical psychological states were present for the employee. These are experienced meaningfulness of the work, experienced responsibility for the outcomes of the work and knowledge of the results of the work activities. These are created by the presence of five core job dimensions. Three relate to meaningfulness of the work: skill variety, task identity and task significance. Experienced responsibility for job outcomes is achieved when a job is high in autonomy and knowledge of the results of work activities is achieved and when the job is high on feedback (Hackman and Oldham 1975). Warr (2007) proposed a number of antecedents to happiness at work: opportunity for personal control, opportunity for skill use, variety, contact with others, availability of money, physical security and valued social position. Additionally Warr (2007) notes supervision, remuneration and career issues as further predictors of happiness in the workplace. He notes, however, that some job characteristics only have limited benefits to the point where deficiencies are overcome and he likens this to the intake of daily vitamins in what he terms the “vitamin analogy” (Warr 2007, p. 96). A Swedish study conducted into happiness of self-employed workers and those in employment of others similar to Warr also found

that personal control, autonomy and independence were important factors identified by the happier self-employed workers (Benz and Frey 2004).

A large research study into happiness in the workplace in the UK found that most staff were happy at work i.e. over one quarter were very happy and over one half were fairly happy (Chiumento. 2007). The following were identified as being important factors which contributed to this happiness: friendly supportive colleagues; a good line manager; enjoyable work; good work/life balance; varied work; belief that you are doing something worthwhile; feeling that what you do makes a difference; being part of a successful team; recognition of achievements and competitive salary. Social support has also been noted by Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) as important to employee happiness.

3.9. Consequences of happiness at work

A number of research studies have considered the consequences of happiness in the workplace. One of these which has been studied extensively is the relationship between happiness at work and productivity (Cropanzano and Wright 2001, Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins 2008, Borgogni et al. 2010, Springer 2011, Bockerman and Ilakunnas 2012, Ouedraogo and Leclerc 2013). Many human resource policies and practices are focused on employee wellbeing on the assumption of a positive causal relationship between happiness and productivity (Howard and Gould 2000). The relationship between happiness and productivity has become known as the Happy- Productive Worker Thesis (Cropanzano and Wright 2001). A number of large reviews have explored this relationship with some conflicting findings (Iaffaldano and Muchinsky 1985, Judge et al. 2001, Bowling 2007). Predominately these have explored the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, with one review concluding that a causal relationship does not exist (Iaffaldano and Muchinsky 1985); exists but it is relatively weak (Judge et al. 2001); and is spurious (Bowling 2007). Part of the difficulties encountered with seeking evidence is the definitional difficulties with the construct of job satisfaction (Fisher 2003). Similar definitional difficulties are encountered with the construct of job performance and its measurement (Fisher 2003). Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins (2008) propose that

clarity on this relationship is required for workplace improvement strategies. Fisher (2003) explored the disconnect between commonly held beliefs and the seemingly contradictory evidence concerning the relationship between the two concepts. Aside from the definitional difficulties already noted she refers to Kluger and Tikochinsky's (2001) Common-sense Theory which proposes that lay people may be aware of a strong relationship at a higher or lower level of analysis or additionally at a longer or shorter time frame. More recent reviews of the relationship between job attitudes, job satisfaction and organisational commitment and contextual job performance, employee retention and organisational citizenship behaviours suggest a more positive correlation from attitude to performance (LePine, Erez and Johnson 2002, Harrison, Newman and Roth 2006, Riketta 2008). Fisher (2010) maintains that despite weak findings in earlier reviews happiness at work in the form of satisfaction as an attitude is directly correlated with positive outcomes for both the individual and the organisation.

Positive affect appears to have had more impact on positive employee behaviours. Cropranzano and Wright (2001) note that affect is a better predictor of job performance than that of satisfaction. A longitudinal study conducted by Staw, Bell and Clausen (1986) concluded that job attitudes can be predicted by affective disposition.

Positive effect and positive emotions are core components of happiness (Diener, Oishi and Lucas 2003). Beohm & Lyubomorski (2008) argue that people who experience mainly positive emotions in the work place experience more positive outcomes.

The study of emotions at work appears to be a better predictor of productivity than job satisfaction (Wright and Cropanzano 2000). Dispositional positive affect appears to lead to more positive outcomes for people relative to those who are less happy, particularly in relation to higher earnings, superior performance and more helpful behaviours (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008). Dispositional affect has also been shown to have a direct relationship with productivity at work when studied over a prolonged period (Staw, Bell and Clausen 1986, Staw and Barsade 1993). Additionally, positive

disposition has a direct positive correlation with better decision making and better staff interpersonal relationships at work (Staw and Barsade 1993). Supervisors review the performance of happy people more positively (Wright and Cropanzano 2000).

Positive emotions have been linked to creativity in the workplace (Wright and Cropanzano 2004). Amabile et al (2005, p. 367) propose that creative activity is an "emotionally charged event". Positive mood in the workplace is associated with creativity and proactivity on the day experienced but also predicts creativity and proactivity on the following day (Amabile et al. 2005). Similarly Fritz & Sonnentag (2009) found a relationship between positive mood and proactivity which lagged from the morning to afternoon and from the day the positive emotions were experienced to the following day. Fredrickson et al (2003) argue that positive emotions contribute to optimal organisational functioning because they broaden people's habitual ways of thinking, enabling more creative ways of thinking. This view is consistent with the view posited in the Broaden and Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson 2003, Fredrickson 2004). Hope, as one positive emotion, correlated positively with creativity and happiness in a study conducted by Rego et al (2009) leading the researchers to note the importance of the promotion of positive emotions in the workplace.

Positive affect is also a predictor of increased organisational citizenship behaviours targeted at both individuals and the organisation (Ilies, Scott and Judge 2006, Rego et al. 2011, Rego, Ribeiro and Cunha 2010). Organisational citizenship behaviour is a component of job performance (Murphy, Athanasou and King 2002) and has been described as individual behaviour that is discretionary such as volunteering, helping others and upholding workplace rules and procedures despite personal inconvenience (Organ and Konovsky 1989). It is not formally recognised and in the aggregate promotes the effectiveness of the organisation (Murphy, Athanasou and King 2002). A Canadian study conducted with over 1,000 registered nurses found that positive job affect was directly correlated with increased organisational citizenship behaviour (Lee and Allen 2002). Eisengber et al

(2005) similarly found that positive affect was associated with increased organisational spontaneity and a broad range of citizenship behaviour.

Despite definitional difficulties associated with the concept of Organisational Commitment, it is expected that the behavioural consequences of it includes lower turnover, reduced rates of absenteeism, improved performance and increased organisational citizenship (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001). Meyer and Maltin (2010) propose that Organisational Commitment contributes to employee wellbeing with Affective Commitment relating positively to wellbeing and negatively to strain whereas Continuance Commitment relates positively to strain. A meta analytic review by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) concluded that organisational commitment correlated positively with motivation, job involvement and job satisfaction while correlating poorly with job performance. Whilst using a broader range of commitment concepts a meta-analysis of organisational commitment noted a positive impact of affective commitment on job satisfaction, performance and job involvement (Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran 2005). A study conducted by Gellatly, Meyer and Luchak (2006) found that organisational commitment particularly Affective Commitment and Normative commitment was positively related to remaining in the organisation and to increased organisational citizenship behaviours.

Engagement at work has also been shown to result in positive outcomes (Rich, Lepine and Crawford 2010) including dedication and commitment (Halbesleben 2010), in role and extra role performance (Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke 2004), and customer loyalty (Salanova, Agut and Peiro 2005).

Flow at work has been shown to relate to a number of wellbeing measures including job satisfaction, enthusiasm and contentment (Bryce and Haworth 2002). Fullagar and Kelloway (2009) investigated the relationship between flow and subjective well-being and found that flow was correlated with positive mood, with momentary flow predictive of momentary mood rather than vice versa.

3.10. Summary

The increasing interest in happiness in general and happiness and well-being at work has led to an increase in the study of workplace happiness concepts. Table 3 provides a diagrammatic summary of happiness in the workplace.

Table 3. Summary of happiness in the workplace

Happiness in the workplace		
Attributes	**Antecedents**	**Consequences**
• **Job Satisfaction** (Wright and Cropanzano 2000, Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza 2000, Weiss 2002, Brief and Weiss 2002, Fisher 2003, Warr 2007, Taris and Schreurs 2009) • **Positive affect:** (Staw, Bell and Clausen 1986, Staw and Barsade 1993, Wright and Cropanzano 2000, Isen 2001, Amabile et al. 2005, Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006, Wright, Cropanzano and Bonett 2007) • **Low levels of negative emotions:** (Wright and Cropanzano 2000, Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter 2001, Wright and Bonett 2007, Judge and Kammeyer-Mueller 2008) • **Engagement (**Eisenberger et al. 2005, Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre 1989, Csikszentmihalyi 1999, Bryce and Haworth 2002, Halbesleben 2010, Bakker 2005, Salanova, Bakker and Llorens 2006, Bakker, Albrecht and Leiter 2011) • **Meaning** (Van Zyl, Deacon and Rothmann 2010, Warr 2007)	• **Autonomy** (Nguyen, Taylor and Bradley 2003, Benz and Frey 2004, De Cuyper and De Witte 2006, Aube, Rousseau and Morin 2007, Warr 2007, Kim, Twombly and Wolf-Wendel 2008, Fahr 2011) • **Perceived organisational virtuousness** (Gavin and Mason 2004, Rego, Ribeiro and Cunha 2010, Rego et al. 2011) • **Perceived organisational justice** (Colquitt et al. 2001, Simons and Roberson 2003, Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland 2007, Abekah-Nkrumah and Ayimbillah Atinga 2013) • **Perceived organizational Support**(Rhoades and Eisenber al. 2014) • **Work life balance** (Hill et al. 2001, Grawitch, Gottschalk and Munz 2006, Grawitch, Trares and Kohler 2007) • **Leadership behaviours** (Judge, Piccolo and Ilies 2004, Bono et al. 2007, Tanner et al. 2010, Rowold, Borgmann and Bormann 2014, Wijewardena, Samaratunge and Härtel 2014) • **Meaningful work** (Hackman and Oldham 1975, Bowie 1998, Kamdron 2005, Macey and Schneider 2008, Hartung and Taber 2008, Steger, Dik and Duffy 2012) • **Achievement** (Annas 2004, Robertson and Cooper 2011) • **Support** (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006, Robertson and Cooper 2011) • **Salary and remuneration** (Warr 2007, Fisher 2010) • **Work variety** (Rauter 2004, Warr 2007) • **Skill Use** (Feather & Rauter 2004, Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre 1989, Salanova, Bakker and Llorens 2006, Warr 2007) • **Friendship** (Sirgy et al. 2001, Markiewicz, Devine and Kausilas 2000, Raile et al. 2008) • **Status** (Feather &Rauter 2004, Warr 2007) • **Goals** (Maier and Brunstein 2001, Judge et al. 2005)	• **Increased productivity/performance** (Staw, Bell and Clausen 1986, Staw and Barsade 1993, Cropanzano and Wright 2001, Wright, Cropanzano and Bonett 2007, Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008, Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins 2008, Borgogni et al. 2010, Springer 2011, Bockerman and Ilakunnas 2012, Ouedraogo and Leclerc 2013) • **Increased organisational citizenship behaviours** (Fisher 2002, Lee and Allen 2002, Eisenberger et al. 2005, Ilies, Scott and Judge 2006, Rego, Ribeiro and Cunha 2010, Rego et al. 2011) • **Organisational Commitment** (Fisher 2002, Cooper-Hakim and Viswesvaran 2005, Gellatly, Meyer and Luchak 2006, Halbesleben 2010) • **Dedication** (Halbesleben 2010) • **Creativity** (Wright and Walton 2003, Amabile and Kramer 2007, Baas, De Dreu and Nijstad 2008, Achor 2011)

Despite the increasing interest in happiness in the workplace, the area is fraught with definitional and operational inconsistencies and debate in relation to almost every one of the happiness related concepts. This is problematic for the continued study of happiness, for developing an understanding of both its causes and consequences in the workplace. The lack of qualitative perspectives on happiness where contextual and cultural factors are considered is evident and such an approach would have much to offer in terms of understanding happiness in the workplace. Such an understanding is required in order to explore ways of being and doing consistent with happiness in specific workplaces.

Despite the lack of clarity of a number of the concepts discussed within this analysis a number of key attributes for happiness have been identified across the concepts. Hedonic pleasure in the form of positive affect seems consistent across many of the concepts and appears to be a core component of happiness. Satisfaction, despite the lack of consistency, also appears to be a component of happiness. In this study satisfaction in the form of a cognitive evaluation and a judgement about one's happiness is important and co exists with positive affect. In addition to hedonic components of happiness, however, more recent happiness concepts such as organisational engagement, organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviours indicate a more eudaimonic aspect to happiness at work. Consequently both meaning and engagement appear to be important attributes for authentic happiness at work. Defining attributes identified are consistent with those of the concept of happiness in general.

3.11. The creation of a happy workplace

Causes of happiness in the workplace identified from the concept analysis provide a platform from which employers, managers and human resource personnel can develop interventions to ensure a

culture where happiness is promoted. This section of the review explores opinion and empirical evidence on interventions taken to promote happiness in the workplace.

Within the last 10 to 12 years there has been a considerable shift in focus from that of personal and institutional deficit and dysfunction to a more positive focus on wellbeing emerging out of the positive psychology movement (Seligman et al. 2005). This new interest and direction involves the development of an understanding of what makes people happy and also how we can help people be happy.

Seligman (2003) previously proposed that for people to be authentically happy they must experience pleasure, have meaning in their lives and be engaged with others and with meaningful activity. He notes that Americans experience considerably more flow at work than in leisure time and he suggests the following *"recipe"* for more flow in the workplace. The employee should identify their signature strengths and choose work which will allow for their more frequent use of these strengths or they should recraft present work to use them more. For employers and managers he advises matching employee's signature strengths with the work and allowing the employees to re craft the work for the more frequent use of the signature strengths. One study conducted by Seligman et al (2005) provides some early evidence i.e. increasing happiness and decreasing depressive symptoms over six months, for the successful implementation of both, using signature strengths in a new way and in identifying three good things that happened every day and why. This study, however, was carried out with a convenience sample over the internet and was not specific to the workplace. A replication of this study carried out in 2012 supported the value of Positive Psychology Exercises for lasting increases in happiness but noted that the effects may be more modest than originally thought (Mongrain and Anselmo-Matthews 2012). The more recent work of Seligman describes an interventional study he conducted to develop happiness with the US army (Seligman 2011). This research describes an intensive educational programme for marines on emotional, family, social and spiritual fitness, post traumatic growth and resilience development.

Some evidence is emerging that these interventions are having a positive impact on soldier wellbeing (Seligman 2011). Fisher (2010) also argues for the matching of employee personal strengths with job content but notes the paucity of empirical research available to evaluate the benefits of such an approach for happiness or organisational effectiveness. She notes 10 recommendations for creating a happy workplace:

1. *Create a healthy, respectful and supportive organisational culture*
2. *Supply competent leadership at all levels*
3. *Provide fair treatment, support and recognition*
4. *Design jobs to be interesting, challenging, autonomous and rich in feedback*
5. *Facilitate skill development to improve competence and allow growth*
6. *Select for person, organisation and person job fit*
7. *Enhance fit through the use of realist job previews and socialisation practices*
8. *Reduce minor hassles and increase daily uplifts*
9. *Persuade employees to reframe a current less than ideal work environment as acceptable*
10. *Adopt high performance work practices (Fisher 2010)*

Evaluation of one positive psychology based wellness intervention programme supported the value of strengths based approaches to improving employee happiness at work but noted the need for ongoing support for this approach (Page and Vella-Brodrick 2013).

Job enrichment is a process whereby within the job people are given more scope for achievement, recognition, more challenging work with greater responsibility and more opportunity for personal growth and advancement (Parker, Wall and Cordery 2001). Job enrichment gained popularity following Herzberg's (1966, 1987) work on satisfaction and motivators at work. Herzberg developed a Two Factor Theory involving motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators were primarily determined by factors intrinsic to the work, for example, achievement, recognition, advancement and personal growth. Dissatisfaction or hygiene factors were primarily determined by factors

extrinsic to the work such as working conditions and remuneration. Job enrichment processes were then focused on ensuring that motivators were built in to the job itself. More recently job enrichment processes have been influenced by the Job Characteristics Model and Sociotechnical Systems Theory as a result of a lack of empirical evidence to support the two fold theory (Parker, Wall and Cordery 2001). Job enrichment has been found to correlate with job satisfaction, particularly increasing levels of responsibility and opportunity for achievement (Rashid and Rashid 2011). Furthermore job design and job design/employee match have been shown to have a positive impact on job satisfaction (Fahr 2011).

Employee development initiatives and perceived organisational support have both been shown to relate positively to both satisfaction and organisational commitment (Tansky and Cohen 2001, Aube, Rousseau and Morin 2007). These are indicators of subjective wellbeing at work as is organisational support for career developments (Barnett and Bradley 2007). Interventions directed at work life balance such as the creation of flexible work schedules and greater perceived schedule control have been shown to decrease burn out and dissatisfaction (Tausig and Fenwick 2001, Hill et al. 2001, Grzywacz, Carlson and Shulkin 2008) and increase happiness (Atkinson and Hall 2011).

An alternative approach to the enhancement of happiness at work has been the notion of managed fun (Bolton and Houlihan 2009). This approach has arisen from the belief that fun in the workplace enhances employee engagement and creativity (Fleming 2005, Jeffcoat and Gibson 2011). To this end, companies have engaged in organising social and fun events with others establishing structures and workplaces conducive to fun and leisure. Flemming (2005), in a study conducted in an American owned call centre in Australia, noted cynicism amongst employees regarding this. Baptiste (2009) interviewed 12 senior managers in a purposeful sample in a UK Local Authority as part of a study investigating HRM practices. Despite the authorities espousal of policies aimed at promoting happiness at work, managers indicated that they were not having fun at work and were more concerned about factors aimed at promoting wellbeing at work which they perceived to be absent in

their work setting. They were more concerned about a sense of purpose and meaning in their work, rewards, support, work life balance and performance, all of which related to their job satisfaction. In this context managed fun at work was perceived cynically also.

3.12. Happiness in the workplace: The academy

The focus of this study is happiness in the workplace in an academic department. For the purpose of this study it was considered important to review the literature both in relation to happiness within academic workplace contexts and within an Irish context. This allowed for a clearer understanding of what is currently known about happiness in the academic workplace and the identification of gaps in the research. Much of the research conducted within academic environments on happiness has been focused on job satisfaction. Gappa and Austin (2010) suggest that the academic world is changing with increased versatility of the workforce, changing student profiles and increased workload because of new budgetary demands and technological requirements of academics. They suggest a number of essential elements for academic staff satisfaction: respect; employment equality; academic freedom and autonomy; flexibility; professional growth and collegiality. One large scale study involving 1,794 faculty staff in 150 Carnegie Research Universities in the U.S attempted to explore factors which affect job satisfaction in an academic setting (Bozeman and Gaughan 2011). The authors found that satisfaction was effected by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Autonomy, work/family balance, recognition of research by colleagues and having a tenured position all contributed to faculty job satisfaction. Whilst most of these factors are consistent with factors which contribute to job satisfaction in the workplace more broadly, the issue of tenure is specific to the academic setting and particularly to the US academic environment.

A 2014 study conducted in Florida investigated nursing faculty job satisfaction and intention to stay in academe (Derby-Davis 2014). This study was conducted in response to a serious shortage of nursing faculty and the perceived need to identify factors which contribute to job satisfaction in order to use these to try to address issues relevant to the shortage. Data was collected by the

completion of online survey instruments, The Job Satisfaction Survey, The Nurse Educators Intention To Stay in Academe Scale and a researcher designed demographic questionnaire. The usable sample response was 137. Findings of the study indicate that Hertzberg's Motivation - Hygiene theory is a strong predictor of faculty job satisfaction and intention to stay in academe. Whilst large scale quantitative studies which explore factors perceived to be pertinent to job satisfaction provide much information they fail to explore contextual and local cultural issues. This is one disadvantage of large quantitative studies and there is a need for more qualitative exploratory studies conducted in situ.

A large study conducted in 17 Universities in Australia explored psychological strain and job satisfaction of both academic and general staff (Winefield et al. 2003). Responses to a general health questionnaire and job satisfaction scale were received from 8,732 accounting for a 25% response rate. The findings of this study indicated higher levels of job satisfaction in general staff than in academic staff. Job satisfaction of academic staff in older, more traditional universities was higher than those in newer institutions. The authors concluded that increased job demands, decreased autonomy and higher levels of scrutiny and accountability were severely impacting the satisfaction and psychological wellbeing of academic staff. How the university is managed, chance of promotion, industrial relationships between staff and managers and rates of pay were identified as influencing factors for lower levels of job satisfaction. The authors note a decrease in job satisfaction in recent years and see this as a result of financial constraints imposed by the Australian government of the time.

A 2013 study conducted by Schulz (2013) in 20 Russell Group Universities found that in general academic staff were relatively satisfied. Perceptions of job satisfaction, organisational climate, role ambiguity and role conflict were explored using questionnaires in this study. Findings indicated multiple organisational climate types namely, Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy and Market. Whilst Clan, Adhocracy and Hierarchy types were related to lower levels of stress only the clan type, described as one of high flexibility, spontaneity and individuality, was directly related to higher levels of job

satisfaction. In such an organisational culture decision – making is democratic, internal relations are positive and leaders encourage teamwork and collaboration. Findings of this study indicated that, despite changes in management styles in universities, collegial/clan climate is still an important contributor to job satisfaction of academics. Whilst the general findings in this study appear to contradict other studies in relation to general levels of job satisfaction in university departments the authors themselves note the potential impact of the research focus of these universities in comparison to other newer more teaching focused universities. The quantitative nature of the method employed here meant that such conclusions had to be assumed. A more qualitative approach to exploring happiness or job satisfaction within university departments would provide an opportunity for a more in-depth exploration and understanding of contextual nuances.

Ambrose, Huston and Norman (2005) note the importance of qualitative institutional specific data in their study of satisfaction and retention in one university department arguing that this provides a deeper and more contextual understanding of factors affecting both. To this end qualitative semi-structured interviews were carried out with a total of 123 faculty members over a six month period. Sources of satisfaction/dissatisfaction included salaries, collegiality, mentoring, reappointment, promotion and tenure process and department heads. It is interesting that two particular contextual findings noted were that of the interdisciplinary nature of the university and the location and local facilities as sources of satisfaction/dissatisfaction. In their study these satisfiers /dissatisfies were factors in faculty staff decisions to leave or stay. It is unlikely that these contextual findings would have emerged in more traditional investigations using a survey method.

Seyal and Afzaal (2013) explored the relationship between emotional intelligence, organisational commitment and job satisfaction in one technical university in Darusalem. One hundred questionnaires were distributed with a response rate of 69%. Findings of this study indicate a strong correlation between emotional intelligence, organisational commitment and job satisfaction in this academic setting. Whilst the sample size in this study is small the findings appear consistent to those

found by Malik (2010) in a similar investigation of two public sector academic institutions in Pakistan. The authors of this study noted a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, with the nature of the work, salary and quality of the supervision being key factors contributing to job satisfaction and organisational commitment, with high levels of both noted. Staff, although generally satisfied, were less so with promotion opportunities and salary. A further study conducted in four universities in Punjab Province, Pakistan found that academic staff in private sector universities were more satisfied with supervision, pay, promotional opportunities whilst those in public sector universities were more satisfied with co-workers and security (Khalid, Irshad and Mahmood 2012). A study conducted by Sharma and Jyoti (Sharma and Jyoti 2009) identified both intrinsic and extrinsic factors for high levels of job satisfaction. This study was conducted in one university in Jammu and questionnaires based on the Job Descriptive Index were used to explore job satisfaction. The sample size was small consisting of just 150 university teachers. Findings of the study indicate high levels of satisfaction particularly with autonomy, creativity, sense of achievement, idealness and appropriateness of the job. Opportunities for further growth and development affected job satisfaction as did recognition for achievement. Some variation was noted in levels of satisfaction between grades of staff with professors being more satisfied than lecturers and lecturers being more satisfied than readers. A decline in level of satisfaction was noted in those aged between 36 and 50 years with the authors attributing this to potential promotional ambition and work - life stressors. Whilst this study shows some interesting findings, again it is a small study and no mention is made of the research requirements of the academic role with a concern that the study was primarily focused on academic staff who only teach.

3.13. Happiness in academia in Ireland

Little work has been conducted in the area of Job satisfaction in the Irish academy. A study involving 1,178 participants across higher education institutions in Ireland found that participants expressed concern about deteriorating working conditions as a result of the Irish economic situation and

changes resulting from Higher Education Policy (Clarke et al. 2015). Notwithstanding this, participants reported relatively high levels of job satisfaction (58%) while just 18% reported very low levels of satisfaction. One study conducted by Bryne et al (2012) with accounting and finance academics indicated that, aside from dissatisfaction with promotional prospects and time available for research, participants were generally satisfied with most aspects of their jobs. The study explored both job content and work context factors on participants' satisfactions at work, and included autonomy, promotional prospects, recognition, salary, hours of work, job security, physical working conditions and work undertaken. A population of 243 accounting and finance academics were identified in higher education institutions throughout Ireland and these full time employees were sent a questionnaire. One hundred responses were returned yielding a response rate of 41.2%. The findings of this study are interesting in the context in which the study was conducted. The study was conducted during the same period of economic uncertainty and austerity as my own study. Increasing student numbers, more professional accountability and decreased salaries were the wider contextual factors. Without a qualitative dimension to this study it is difficult to identify in detail why satisfaction levels remain reasonably high and to what extent the contextual factors had or had not impacted on their satisfaction levels.

3.14. Summary

While levels of satisfaction in Academic departments seem relatively good, variances are noted between grades of staff, types of universities and local factors such as age of the university and possibility of tenure. The importance of contextual and local cultural factors must be considered when exploring happiness in the workplace. The absence of qualitative perspectives is a gap and this requires redress. This study attempted to address this gap by incorporating a qualitative exploration of happiness in the workplace within the AI Process.

3.15. Theoretical explanations for happiness in the workplace

A number of psychological and sociological theories have been posited to explain human behaviour and have application to and may help to explain happiness in general and more specifically happiness in the workplace. These theories were reviewed in order to consider their value to this research study.

3.16. Self-Determination Theory

One theory which is helpful in explaining happiness in the workplace is that of Self-Determination theory developed by Deci and Ryan (Deci and Ryan 1985, Ryan and Deci 2000, Ryan, Huta and Deci 2008). Self-Determination Theory is a theory of human intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that when people are free to choose an activity they will choose one which presents challenges and by meeting the challenges the activity presents a sense of competence is achieved. Central to Self-Determination Theory is the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. The need for autonomy refers to a sense of personal control, choice and volition in the determination of behaviour. The need for competence refers to the need for mastery and efficacy in both the external and internal environments and the need for relatedness refers to the need to be connected, part of a something, to care for and be cared about (Ryan, Huta and Deci 2008). These are essential for facilitating optimal functioning and personal growth as well as for social development and personal wellbeing. Meeting needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence is consistent with a eudaimonic way of living where engaging in meaningful activity is more likely to be prosocial, thus benefiting others as well the individual (Ryan and Deci 2000). Additionally Self-Determination Theory is interested in the social environments which promote or which are antagonistic towards the achievement of the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Ryan and Deci 2000). Intrinsic motivation, which is internally driven motivation determined by interest in an activity itself, rather than extrinsic motivation, which is externally controlled by either reward or coercion, is the focus of Self-Determination Theory. This form of internally driven motivation is the *"inherent*

tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities to explore and to learn" (Ryan and Deci 2000, p. 70). Motivation is therefore autonomous rather than controlled. When people are internally and autonomously motivated they experience volition and self-endorsement of their actions and when they are externally motivated they experience pressure to behave and think in certain ways (Deci and Ryan 2008). A further feature of Self-Determination Theory is the belief that the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence are basic and universal rather than learnt. The environment is therefore central to their achievement. Ryan, Huta and Deci (2008) propose that many elements of eudaimonia, as espoused by Aristotle, are at the heart of Self-Determination Theory's understanding of psychological wellness and they propose that eudaimonia is *" a way of living that is focused on what is intrinsically worthwhile to human beings"* (Ryan, Huta and Deci 2008, p. 147).

Self-Determination Theory has much to offer in the context of happiness in the workplace. The emphasis within the Self-Determination Theory on the environment and the extent to which it supports or thwarts the meeting of an individual's psychological need for competence, autonomy and relatedness appears to provide a lens through which the experiences and values of the participants in this study can be explored. Workplaces are environments where both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are at work. Within a university academic department there would appear to be scope for those basic psychological needs to be met. The role of an academic is to develop new knowledge and the structure of academic departments requires that academics frequently choose their own area of research interest and lead programmes of research. These research programmes are increasingly collaborative both nationally and internationally and offer academics great opportunities to develop expertise in discrete areas. The School of Nursing, which is the focus of this study, is a relatively new academic department with a non-traditional academic evolution. Notwithstanding this, the goals of the department are similar to that of any other university department and this study will help to illuminate how well the psychological needs and subjective wellbeing of the academic staff are being met.

Whilst Self-Determination theory appears to offer a possible lens within which to explore happiness in this workplace a number of other theories were reviewed, considered and subsequently discounted for this study.

3.17. Human Needs Theory

An alternative humanistic needs theory considered as a framework for the study was Human Needs Theory (Maslow 1943). Needs, Maslow argued, were satisfied on a hierarchy extending from basic physiologic needs, to safety needs, love and belonging, esteem needs and finally to self-actualisation. Maslow proposed that while all were essential to happiness the achievement of the higher order needs such as esteem needs and the need for self-actualisation were essential to true happiness. Maslow subsequently extended his own theory to include a further level which he called self-transcendence relating to transcendent experiences (peak experiences) and transcendent values. Self-transcendence and its inherent values are consistent with the good and virtuous life espoused by Aristotle. While Maslow's work is widely cited (Koltko-Rivera 2006) and also appears relevant to happiness in a work context it has also received criticism both related to the theory itself (Neher 1991) and in relation to a lack of empirical evidence (Soper, Milford and Rosethal 1995). In contrast, Self Determination Theory has been the focus of much empirical validation (Gagne and Deci 2005). The authors further argue that Self Determination theory has more to offer than other humanist theories is so far as it addresses motivation from the perspective of how behaviour is energised but also how it is directed. In Self Determination Theory, building on earlier needs theories, needs are determined as innate rather than as acquired motives and needs are defined at a psychological rather than physiological level (Deci and Ryan 2000). These are important in the context of the workplace. Having considered Human Needs theory it was discounted for this workplace study.

3.18. Social Comparison Theory

Festinger (1954) proposed that people self-evaluate and develop self-knowledge by making comparisons with other people. Social comparison theory is one sociological theory which has been applied to happiness particularly when happiness is viewed in hedonic terms (Lyubomirsky and Ross 1997) or as utility as in the area of economics (Diener and Lucas 2000, Easterlin 2006). Lyubomirsky and Ross (1997) note that comparisons are relatively automatic in a world where we are surrounded with information about others successes, achievements actions and lifestyles. While the workplace would appear to be an environment where social comparison would be automatic, particularly in terms of achievement, success, workload, appraisal, remuneration and promotion there is little empirical evidence of this within the literature either in terms of the process of happiness or of hedonic consequences. Other emotions such as burnout have been explored in the workplace from the perspective of social comparison theory (Buunk and Schaufeli 1993). Social comparison appears to have applicability to happiness in more hedonic terms rather than eudaimonic terms so this theory has limitations in the context of this study and as such was discounted.

3.19. Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) explained human behaviour from the perspective of the exchange of activity, tangible and intangible, between two individuals or actors. Within this process an evaluation of both costs and benefits occurs and individuals basically engage in a process of mutual reinforcement maintaining the social relationship. Whilst Homan's Social exchange theory explained exchange behaviour in behaviourist terms and uses prior experience and previous rewards as a factor in determining behaviour, Blau (1960) alternatively framed social exchange theory in terms of anticipated rewards in a more utilitarian way. Although the nature and timing of the reward is unspecified the notion of reciprocity is central to Social Exchange Theory. Within the workplace employees experience two sets of social exchange relationships: one with their immediate supervisors in terms of leader member exchange and one with the organisation in terms of

perceived organisational support (Masterson et al. 2000). Social exchange theory has been investigated within organisational settings from the perspective of justice and fairness, procedural and interactional (Masterson et al. 2000). Such justice and fair treatment requires reciprocity in the form of performance. Justice and perceived organisational support have, previously, been identified as antecedents of happiness in the workplace (Colquitt et al. 2001) rather than components of happiness itself. This theory was also discounted for its utilitarian and hedonic focus which although present in the defining attributes identified in the concept analysis is not reflective of the more eudaimonic perspective indicated by the defining attributes of engagement and meaning.

3.20. Summary

While the theories discussed provide alternative ways of explaining happiness at work Self-Determination Theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study. Self-Determination Theory seems to help explain happiness from a more eudaimonic perspective consistent with the defining attributes of happiness previously identified within the concept analysis. Self-Determination Theory, therefore, seems most appropriate to provide a theoretical lens for the study. Whilst data analysis was conducted inductively, both the concept analysis and Self Determination theory were considered in interpretation and discussion of the findings in this study.

3.21. Conclusion and implications for happiness in the workplace research

The lack of operational clarity of workplace happiness concepts noted in this review leads to concern about subsequent research findings and ensuing truth claims. This is particularly so in relation to correlations with outcomes such as productivity, creativity and organisational citizenship. Emotions, cognition, activity and purpose all appear central to happiness in the workplace and defining attributes of happiness in the workplace are consistent with those identified for happiness in general. The concept analysis undertaken and Self Determination Theory provided a framework for

the study. These became particularly pertinent during the Discovery and Destiny phases of the study where meaning and interpretation were essential.

Happiness, happiness in the workplace and happiness in the academy has been studied overwhelmingly within the positivist philosophical paradigm. Previous research studies have been overly reliant on survey and quantitative measures of happiness including variables associated with happiness including satisfaction, affect and emotions. Increasingly a variety of self-report rating scales have been used to study happiness including the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al. 1985) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills and Argyle 2002). Within the workplace scales such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis and England 1967), the Job in General Scale (Ironson et al. 1989) and the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector 1985) measure job satisfaction with a particular focus on job and work characteristics. Similarly, organisational commitment (Mowday, Steers and Porter 1979) and work engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova 2006) have been measured by using survey type questionnaires. Affect has been studied more recently by use of both self-report measures and independent observer rating scales (Amabile et al. 2005). Surprisingly, despite the contextual nature of happiness, satisfaction, engagement and commitment fewer qualitative studies have been found. This is a significant gap as many factors contribute to happiness and subjective wellbeing with culture and context being central to the happiness experience. Quantitative approaches measure factors previously identified but do not allow for contextual or cultural nuances within particular workplaces nor the exploration of how a particular individual or group experience happiness. Whilst there has been some small movement in terms of involving employees in happiness enhancing activities there is little evidence of this within academic departments. This study sought to address these gaps by undertaking an AI action oriented study involving a qualitative exploration of participants' understandings of happiness in their own workplace. A qualitative approach allows for the elucidation and emergence of contributors to happiness not previously identified. These would subsequently inform a positive process of designing and delivering a happy workplace in one academic department.

There are major gaps in the happiness in the workplace research, namely that of the lack of empirical evidence on happiness enhancing interventions, the lack of research studies on involvement of employees in happiness interventions in the workplace and the significant skewing of happiness research within a positivistic deterministic paradigm. The next chapter outlines the philosophical position and AI methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter 4: Appreciative Inquiry Design And Application of Methods to Happiness In The Academic Workplace

4.1. Introduction

In order to address qualitative or action focused gaps in the research an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Design underpinned by a social constructionist philosophy was adopted in this study. The importance of clarifying perspectives on ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology for providing direction for all phases of a research study is noted by Cresswell (1994, p. 231.). This chapter provides such clarity and justifies the position adopted. The AI study was conducted within the interpretive paradigm consistent with that of social constructionism. The impetus for this study was not based on the identification of a problem in the workplace. Rather the impetus for the study was one of personal interest in something which I believed to be important at any time but in which I believed was increasingly important at this particularly difficult and challenging time both in the internal and external environment. As an employee of the School for ten years I observed an absence of discourse in relation to school strengths or indeed happiness in the workplace. There is minimal evidence in the research literature of the involvement of employees in the development of interventions which promote their happiness at work. This study sought to do this and as such contributes something new to the emerging body of knowledge in relation to happiness in the workplace.

At the outset of the chapter the aims and objectives of the study are presented. A rationale for the use of AI for achieving these aims and objectives is provided. A description of AI, its underpinning assumptions and philosophy and a critique of the approach is provided next in the chapter. Methods of sample selection, the position of the researcher in the study i.e. insider researcher and also manager, and ethical considerations are discussed. An outline of the data collection methods and data analysis across the three stages is provided in diagrammatic form. The chapter concludes with an account of measures taken in this study to address issues of validity and legitimacy of the

study and its subsequent findings. The study was completed over a twelve month period in a large nursing school in a higher education setting.

4.2. Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study was to develop, in collaboration with staff, a workplace which facilitates staff happiness at work.

A number of specific objectives were:

- To engage staff in a critical reflective process to identify meanings of happiness in the workplace
- To engage staff in a dialogue about current processes and activities which facilitate happiness at work
- To instigate with staff a cycle of change that promotes a happier workplace
- To generate knowledge about happiness in the workplace through practice that will contribute to management practice
- To critically evaluate AI as a method for researching workplace change

4.3. Research Design: Appreciative Inquiry

AI (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008) is the methodology chosen for this study. It is one of many approaches on the continuum of action research (Reason and Bradbury 2007). AI has been described as both a philosophy and a methodology (Coghlan, Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas 2003). A subtle yet important difference between AI and more traditional forms of action research is a greater emphasis on the underpinning social constructionist philosophy and its generative capacity (Bushe 2010). Reed (2007, p. viii) describes AI as

"… a form of "social construction in action." Within a constructionist orientation, emphasis is placed on language practices. This means that knowledge, what we "discover" as researchers, has less to do

with any sense of matching observations with the "factual evidence" and has more to do with what questions we ask, how we ask them, and who is involved."

AI is a process which allows for a re-examination of and challenge to knowledge which is taken for granted and provides an opportunity to consider new possibilities for ways of being and acting (Bushe 2010). It further differs from other forms of action research in its focus on what is working well within an organisation and building on this, rather than on problem solving. Those involved in developing AI as a research approach also critique traditional forms of action research for their focus on action at the expense of theory development (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987). It is argued by Cooperrider & Srivasta (1987) that the focus on the positive within AI is uniquely suited for discovering generative theory. The negative focus, for those involved with AI, is seen as problematic and it is seen to restrict potential for creating innovative theory (Ludema, Cooperider and Barrett 2006). In contrast, AI focuses on the amplification of already existing solutions within organisations particularly on their "life giving forces" (Hall and Hammond 1998, p. 2). Consequently AI has the potential to create positive change in organisations by challenging existing patterns of discourse and subsequent behaviours. A more practical benefit of AI is that is identifies examples of existing good practice and allows for good practice to be clearly defined.

AI is a positive, asset based approach to organisational change/development and research simultaneously (Coghlan, Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas 2003, Reed 2007). It has received much interest as an organisational development tool (Bushe and Coetzer 1995, Bushe 1998b) but more recently it has become popular within the world of research in healthcare (Reed et al. 2002, Carter 2006, Carter et al. 2007, Reed 2006), particularly because of its positive focus and implications for practice transformation. (Carter 2006, Reed 2006). The benefit of AI with particular relevance to this study is that it is a participatory approach to researching best practice within an organisation and to the expansion of these to further strengthen the organisation (Troxel 2002, Carter 2006). The AI, methodology, therefore served the objectives of the study previously outlined.

Although the focus of AI is different, it shares the major tenets of action research which are collaborative working, a process of change and the generation of knowledge, all of which are required in this study. According to Reason and Bradbury (2007, p.1) action research is *"A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes… It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concerns to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities."* In addition to collaboration through participation and acquisition of knowledge Masters (1995) previously identified empowerment of participants and social change as features of action research. Similar to other action research approaches, AI proceeds through cycles, starting with reflection on action to new action which is then evaluated and further researched (Wadsworth 1998). This differs from the linear progressing of traditional positivist research.

AI was chosen as the design for the study as the affirmative and positive nature of the approach is consistent with exploration of the positive subject of happiness in the School. The aims and objectives of the study required an action research approach and the focus on both inquiry and action within these aims and objectives are congruent with my own values and beliefs i.e. that research should have some practical and immediate use for those involved, both by virtue of the knowledge developed and actions taken during the course of the inquiry. Furthermore the affirmative nature of the inquiry process inherent in AI is consistent with my own values and beliefs about the process of change.

4.4. Key features of AI

AI was first developed by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) because of their frustration with traditional problem focused action research approaches and the deficit based language associated within it (Bushe 1995). It is described as

"……. the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. … AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential." (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003, p. 3)

AI, as a process, is based on the belief that in every society or organisation there is something that works and, that making these explicit by asking those involved, opens possibilities for a new and different future. This belief informs the process of both knowledge development and collective organisational action involving a number of key processes: appreciation, application, provocation and collaboration. (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008).

Bushe (1995, p. 14) proposes that AI is

"… a method of changing social systems, in an attempt to generate a collective image of a new and better future by exploring the best of what has been."

An AI study should, therefore, produce knowledge that is useful and applicable for those involved in the inquiry. It should also be provocative, producing innovative and creative propositions for organisational action and change. Finally, it should be collaborative and involve all necessary stakeholders (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008, Bushe 1995).

AI commences with the identification of an affirmative topic for the study. In this study the affirmative topic was happiness in the workplace. The Four D Model of AI was chosen as the process for the study and the four phases of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny applied in this study were:

- Discovery: AI is an affirmative approach and central to a study is the acknowledgement that in every system something works. The first stage of the process is uncovering and valuing what works. This is done by asking the unconditional positive question. Within this study

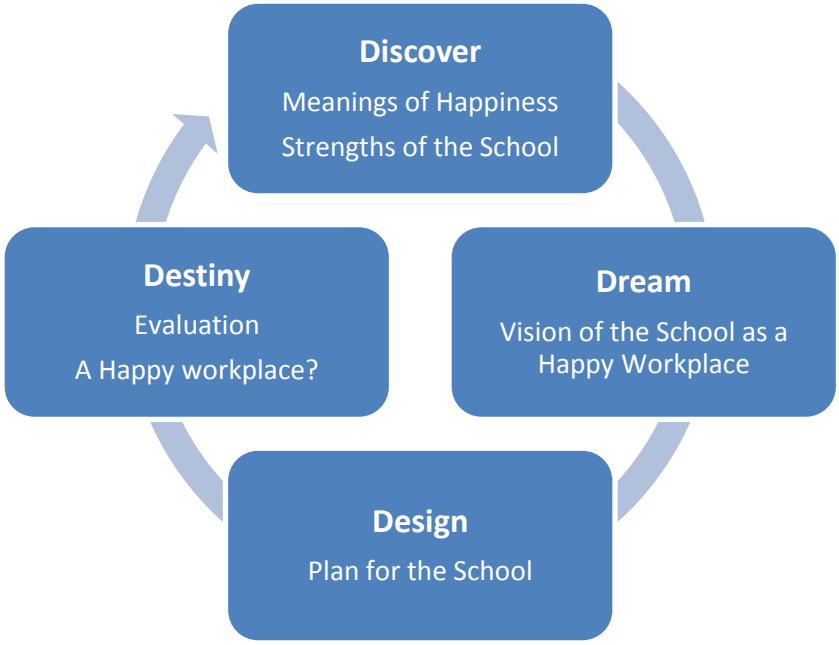
the process involved exploration and identification of understandings of happiness at work and current strengths of the school which particularly facilitate happiness at work.

- Dream: During this phase participants extend what they know works well to a vision of how they see the future. Participants reflected on their previously espoused understandings of happiness and the strengths of the school to look forward and imagine a happy workplace in the future.

- Design: During this phase the development of "provocative propositions" is encouraged where the steps to making the desired future are identified. Participants identified how the "school of the future" would be realised by identifying particular actions. In this phase participants were encouraged to be creative and provocative in terms of collaboratively designing a plan for the future happy workplace.

- Destiny: This is the implementation phase of an AI Study. The implementation phase involved enacting the plan which included actions such as promoting the work of the School, being more respectful to others in the school, getting to know more about the activities of others in the school, getting to know the students better as individuals. These and others actions will be detailed more in Chapter 5. An evaluation was also conducted during the destiny phase to complete one cycle and note progress. More traditional forms of action research include evaluation as part of one action research cycle. The four stage approach of AI does not include an evaluation at a specific point in time but it is implicit in the on-going Destiny phase. This is a limitation of the approach and for the purpose of this study an evaluation was conducted six months after the completion of the Design stage to evaluate both the process of change and any impact of the change at that point. Figure 2 adapted from Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008) graphically illustrates the process of AI in this study.

Figure 2. Affirmative Topic: Happiness in the workplace



This AI Study offered a new and novel way for participants to become involved in something of interest and potential benefit to them in the workplace. It provided an opportunity for colleagues to engage as co-researchers in a process of meaning-making and shared action in the workplace.

4.5. Underpinning philosophy: Social Constructionism

AI is underpinned by a social constructionist ontology and epistemology (Reed 2007, Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003). Social constructionism is a critical response to, and rejection of, a positivist and realist philosophical stance on the nature of life and society. Understandings of the world are gained through a reflective and interpretive process rather than through description of observable phenomena (Burr 2008).

This AI study, in adopting social constructionism as an underlying philosophy, recognises that knowledge is developed through social interaction and that knowledge development cannot be separated from the historical and cultural context of the school itself (Burr 2008, Gergen 2009).

Understanding, meaning and knowledge are socially constructed (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008) by the study participants and language is a key component in determining their multiple realities.

> "*Understandings of the world are achieved through co-ordinations among persons-negotiations, agreements, comparing views and so on."*Gergen (2009, p. 6)

Knowledge developed in this way can subsequently shape social interaction (Reed 2007, Burr 2008) and within this AI study the possibility existed for this work group to

> "*shape their world through the way they talk and think about it" (Reed 2007, p.56)*

This study explored how happiness is experienced and understood in a particular workplace by those who directly experience it. Knowledge generated about happiness in the workplace directly impacted on practices relating to happiness in the workplace now and in the future. Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008) note the agency of those involved within societies and organisations to change and reconstruct realities. They argue

> *"The only non-contingent fact of collective existence is its ultimate plasticity"*

(Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008, p.162)

Critics of social constructionist philosophy argue that its stance is primarily relativist (Crotty 1998, Nightingale and Cromby 2002, Cromby and Nightingale 1999) leaving it particularly open to criticism of a moral nature. Social constructionists, however, proffer a contrary position which claims to not prioritise one set of values over another (Burr 2008, Gergen 2009, p. 169). This, they argue, is important in challenging "the truth" of the dominant order.

In this AI Study the value stance adopted within social constructionism is embraced, as is the value of such a position to social action. AI is a mode of action research that

"…engenders a reverence for life that draws the researcher to inquire beyond superficial appearances to deeper levels of the life-generating essentials and potentials of social existence. That is the action researcher is drawn to affirm, and thereby illuminate, the factors and forces involved in organising that serve to nourish the human spirit." (Ludema, Cooperider and Barrett 2006, p. 155)

The values articulated both within social constructionism and the methodology of AI are consistent with the collaborative nature of the present investigation, the topic of happiness in the workplace and my own personal and professional values about the wellbeing of colleagues and the workplace community.

4.6. Further key AI Principles

While adhering to social constructionist principles in undertaking this study a number of other AI principles were adopted. As with other forms of action research, both inquiry and action are valued within the study and the simultaneity of both are acknowledged. Reed (2007) notes that inquiry is intervention and AI questions are seen as actually creating what there is (Bushe 2011). Within AI this is known as the Principle of Simultaneity.

A further principle of AI is the Poetic Principle: The metaphor of organisations as an open book is one which Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008) use to explain this principle. The story of the organisation is constantly being co-authored by those involved in the organisation. The participative nature and action focus of this study facilitated participants to "co-author" the future of the School.

Within AI a belief exists that a vision of the future directs or guides current actions. This is known as the Anticipatory Principle. In this AI study positive visions of the future directed efforts towards exploring new and imaginative ways in which the future happy workplace can be achieved.

The final principle is The Positive Principle: The positive principle relates to the belief that people respond better when there is lots of positive affect. Organisations and people tend to move in the

direction of their inquiries and it is in this context that the positive question gains its importance in AI. Reed (2007) suggests this is because people naturally tend to move towards ideas and images that provide nourishment and energy. This study used this principle when encouraging participants to articulate school strengths which facilitated their happiness at work.

The focus of the inquiry was happiness in the workplace. This study aimed to unearth, explore and reflect upon, constructions of happiness in the workplace and, in reflecting on these, to collaboratively transform the workplace by changing practice. Implicit to this is the underlying ontological belief in multiple realities and the co-construction of these realities in context (Greene 2007).

4.7. Critiques of AI

In addition to the common critiques of more traditional action research, for example, lack of objectivity (Baskerville 1999, Hope and Waterman 2003), localism (Bryden-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire 2003) and lack of documentation (Moller 1998), a number of criticisms have been specifically directed at AI . One of the more common of the criticisms noted is the focus that the approach has on the positive and that it ignores or denies problems (Coghlan, Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas 2003, Rogers and Fraser 2003, Grant and Humphries 2006). They argue that this focus on the positive in AI could potentially overlook some very real problems which may remain unexplored, leading to a continuation of the status quo. The purpose of AI is transformational change and Bushe (2011) argues that transformational change will not take place unless it addresses problems of real concern to those involved, including those things perceived as problematic. McNamee (2003) argues that problems are not, nor should not, be ignored when using AI but suggests that weakness and problems are easier to address when taken from an appreciative stance. In such instances, mining the organisation and processes for existing strengths and resources should allow for their use to address or improve things which are not working. Coghlan et al. (2003), while noting concerns, refute the criticism that AI ignores problems. They argue that problems and weaknesses are

reframed within AI into a focus on strengths, solutions, what works well, why and how there can be more of what works well. Within AI, therefore, problems are addressed implicitly. It was never my intention to ignore concerns or problems raised by participants in the study as I considered it essential to the integrity of the process that participants could contribute to the process without censure and that they would feel that they could address issues that were important to them. This was particularly important in light of my role in the early part of the study as Head of School. I was conscious of my own management biases and was concerned that these be minimised by being completely open to participants' perspectives whether positive or negative. While the focus of this study was on the strengths and life giving forces within the School, no attempt was made either to censor any negatives raised or to ignore any identified problems. Any such concerns raised were explored with participants in an attempt to see how they could be addressed within the Design and Destiny stage in a constructive and transformative way. It was interesting to note, however, that minimal problems were raised and that, in general participants, engaged enthusiastically in the identification of school strengths and those things which contributed to their happiness at work.

4.8. Summary

This AI study involved a process of self-reflection and joint learning about happiness in the workplace. The four D Cycle of AI: Discover; Dream; Design and Destiny provided the structure for the study. The use of one full AI cycle allowed participants to explore happiness in their workplace and to develop new and better ways of being and relating by taking action consistent with shared understandings of happiness (Ludema, Cooperider and Barrett 2006). The study took place over one full calendar year from June 2011 to June 2012.

4.9. Method of sample selection

The study was conducted within a School of Nursing in a mid-size University (annual student body of 11,000 students) in Ireland. The School had a total of seventy full time staff, academic, technical and

administrative. The method of sample selection was one of purposeful sampling (Cohen et al. 2007). The aim of the study was to engage co-workers in a process of collaborative critical reflection and transformative action leading to change within the School and an open invitation was emailed to all staff members to participate in the study. The nature of the topic for the study meant it had relevance to all staff and it was important to be inclusive, consistent with the participatory nature of AI. All full time staff (N = 80) employed in the school were invited to participate in the study. Part time temporary employees (N = 4) and PhD Students providing teaching (N=- 2) were excluded from the study as they would have been unable able to participate in all phases of the study.

A total of twenty three staff volunteered to participate in the study. Volunteers were willing to participate in either individual or focus group interviews. Participants came from teaching, research and technical roles and across all disciplines i.e. the four branches of nursing, psychology and psychotherapy. None of the administration staff volunteered to participate despite a number of invitations. Whilst respecting staff's right not to participate as a manager this caused me some concern. The reason that administration staff did not wish to participate may have been because of my role as Head of School, but it also may have been because of their unfamiliarity with research or because of workloads. Regardless of the reason it was disappointing not to have participation from that group of staff. As with any action research study conducted within an organisation over time life events affected participation. Twenty three participated in the Discovery phase of the study, twenty two in the Dream and Design phases, and nineteen in the Destiny phase resulting in an attrition of four participants over the course of the study. Retirements, maternity leave and resignations from the organisation accounted for the decreased number of participants and one participant was unavailable to attend either of the evaluation groups.

4.10. Positionality within the study

In addition to conducting the study in my own workplace, my role in the School during the first stage of the study was that of Head of School. Coghlan & Brannick (2005) propose that being an insider

can be advantageous in terms of familiarity with the context and participants. Despite the fact that I was a manager in the department at the commencement of the study I had worked with staff members as a lecturer for over 6 years prior to becoming Head of School. I had a clear insight into the culture and my perception was that I had good working relationships with most of my colleagues. I experienced no difficulty negotiating the process with participants, which is an additional advantage of being an insider (Reed 2007). Furthermore, as the culture and raison d'être of the University and School is about supporting research and the development of new knowledge, there was no difficulty with gaining access to School staff to invite them to participate in the study.

I was cognisant of the potential impact of my role as Head of School at the outset of the study which subsequently changed to lecturer during the course of the study. The relationship between me, as Head of School, and staff members in general seemed to be very open. I was, however, conscious that this may just have been my view and that this may have been a deciding factor for some staff members to choose not to become involved in the study.

The interview, individual and focus group, was chosen as the method as it was considered most appropriate in meeting the objectives of the study. I was careful to ensure that the ambiance at the meetings was respectful and relaxed. During the course of the interviews and focus group meetings, at each stage of the inquiry, rapport was good and there didn't seem to be any difficulty with participants articulating their views. I cannot out rule the possibility of participants only expressing views which they may have felt I wanted to hear but the discussion was vigorous and enthusiastic. Regardless of my role participants were asked to focus on strengths of the School rather than weaknesses. During the course of the study I was conscious of the interactional nature of these interviews and my position within them. Rejecting neutrality I acknowledge the co constructed nature of the study findings (Holstein and Gubrium 1997).

4.11. Reflective Journal

During the course of the study I kept a reflective journal. Reflective journals are not uncommon in qualitative or action research studies (Ortlipp 2008). They are used to aid the researcher to be reflexive about their research and their on-going process of analysis during the research. It was particularly useful for me because of my position as an insider researcher and my role as Head of School. Additionally they assist with transparency regarding decisions made during the course of the research (Ortlipp 2008). The diary assisted me with a documented record of the process and my thinking and changing perspective over the course of the study. It allowed for an on-going internal critical dialogue concerning many pertinent issues during the research. These included reflections on my position and changing role within the study, examinations of my own biases, reflections on the analysis and on the emerging findings, and a critical examination of the methodological process which was one of the objectives of the study. While, in general, this was kept as a separate document to the thesis some reflection was noted during the analysis using the memo option in Nvivo and were stored within the programme. Where relevant, elements of this reflection will be used within this report to highlight points of note.

4.12. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee. (Appendix Two). Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, (2000), note the complexity of ethics in social science research and suggest that, rather than following an overly prescriptive set of guidelines, each research study should be explored in its own right for a " spectrum of possibilities" (Cohen et al. 2007, p.50). Coghlan & Brannick (2005) highlight the ethical issues when conducting action research particularly when researching in your own organisation. They argue the importance of the relationship between researcher and participants and propose negotiating between the parties on issues such as consent and confidentiality which can be problematic in the shifting messiness of an action research project. Staff were invited to participate in the study and were informed of the aim

and objects of the study and what would be involved should they choose to participate (Appendix Three). Staff members agreeing to participate were invited to sign the consent form (Appendix Five) at the first meeting, having read the information leaflet (Appendix Four) and were advised that they would not be named in any dissemination of findings. Participants were not asked to sign consent forms at each subsequent phase of the study as this was implied in their attendance and participation. Because of the participatory nature of the study and the use of interviews, focus groups and other group meetings participants were made aware that maintaining complete anonymity would not be possible. Confidentiality was, however, assured. Recordings of interviews were transcribed and then stored in a locked cabinet along with hard copies of transcriptions of these interviews. Data maintained on the computer in NVivo was stored in files which were password protected. At the start of each interview/group meeting participants were briefed on the project and asked for their input. Additionally, participants were advised, as per normal research ethical protocol, that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point.

4.13. Diagrammatic Overview of the AI Study: Happiness in the workplace

While adhering to the four phases of the 4 D AI process, phase two and phase three were both conducted during the second round of focus group meetings with participants. I called this round of focus groups "Consensus Group Meetings". The four phases of the study incorporating data collection and data analysis are illustrated in table 4.

Table 4. Overview of AI study

Phase	Data Collection	Data analysis
Phase 1:Discovery: What is working well, What are the strengths of the school in relation to happiness at work	2 Focus group interviews Group 1: N=10 Group 2: N=9 4 individual interviews Total: 6 interviews	Thematic analysis developed from template of analysis of first focus group. The template was subsequently modified as subsequent interviews were analysed: (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, 2012)
Phase 2 Dream and Phase 3 Design were carried out simultaneously at two months **Phase 2: Dream** Imagine a happy school in the future. What will it look like **Phase 3: Design** Design a plan of action to ensure the school remains a happy workplace and to implement some interventions to make it a happier place	3 Focus group/consensus group meetings. Group 1: N =7, Group 2: N=4, Group 3: N=11 Review of themes generated in phase one. Group discussion to identify ideal school. Group discussion to develop provocative propositions and plan.	Thematic analysis developed from template of analysis of first focus group: (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, 2012)
Phase 4: Destiny/ evaluation What has worked well and what can we continue to do? What has the experience of the process been?	2 focus group interviews Group One: N= 14 Group Two: N=5 2 individual semi structured interviews: Head of School , Director of Quality	Thematic analysis of outcomes and process.

4.14. Quality of the study

Exploration, understanding and action were central components of this AI study. Qualitative methods were employed to develop an understanding of happiness in the workplace. This shared understanding subsequently informed the action component of the study. McNiff and Whitehead (2006, p.157) note the "inseparability" of validity and legitimacy in terms of ensuring authenticity and application of action research. Demonstrating attention to methodological rigour and establishing relevance are, therefore, essential components of an action research study. Consistent with the participatory nature of the study and of AI, I chose to regularly check back with the participants themselves in relation to ensuring participants perspectives were represented as accurately as possible. During the course of the interviews member checking (Lincoln and Guba 1985, Guba and Lincoln 1994) was employed by me to ensure shared understanding between me as the researcher and the participants. Transcripts of focus group interviews and individual interviews were sent back to participants prior to analysis and input invited. Lower order categories from the initial analysis of individual and focus group interview transcripts were returned to participants at the consensus meetings where again input was invited both in terms of accuracy, analysis to date and in terms of identifying any higher order themes or categories. Returning data and early interpretation of findings to participants enhanced the validity of the subsequent findings of the study (McNiff and Whitehead 2006). Further reflection on authenticity of the participatory process in this study is also provided in Chapter 8 page 148.

In this study the use of a reflective journal, theoretical and analytic memos and documentation of the methods and process of analysis and interpretation of findings provide an audit trail (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and provide transparency. Examples of these will be provided in subsequent chapters/appendices where relevant. An overview of coding, category and theme formation is provided in Appendix Twelve. This thesis itself and the detail provided in chapters 5, 6, and 7 provide

an opportunity for review and critique of both the process and outcomes of this AI study and address legitimacy of the study (McNiff and Whitehead 2006, Reason 2006).

In adopting a social constructionist perspective in this study the cultural and contextual influences on understandings of happiness are acknowledged. This thesis and contextual detail within provide an opportunity for external review and consideration of relevance and transferability of findings to another setting (Seale 1999).

4.15. Conclusion

With its focus on appreciating already existing strengths AI provides a novel way to engage colleagues in a collaborative process of change. Within this approach there is potential for participants to create and shape the workplace of the future in line with what is important to their own happiness in the workplace. Theory development and action are equally valued in AI. The approach chosen provided a practical way for this researcher to study an increasingly important topic with colleagues in a constructive and participatory manner. Conducting research within one's own place of work raises many issues. My position as Head of School and researcher within the process was acknowledged and appraised in this chapter. Mechanisms for ensuring validity and legitimacy of the process and findings were made explicit. In line with the social constructionist principles it is acknowledged that findings from this study represent multiple realities of participants in one particular organisation at a particular time. The next chapter presents the research methods incorporating one AI cycle.

Chapter 5: Appreciating What Is and Creating What Is To Be

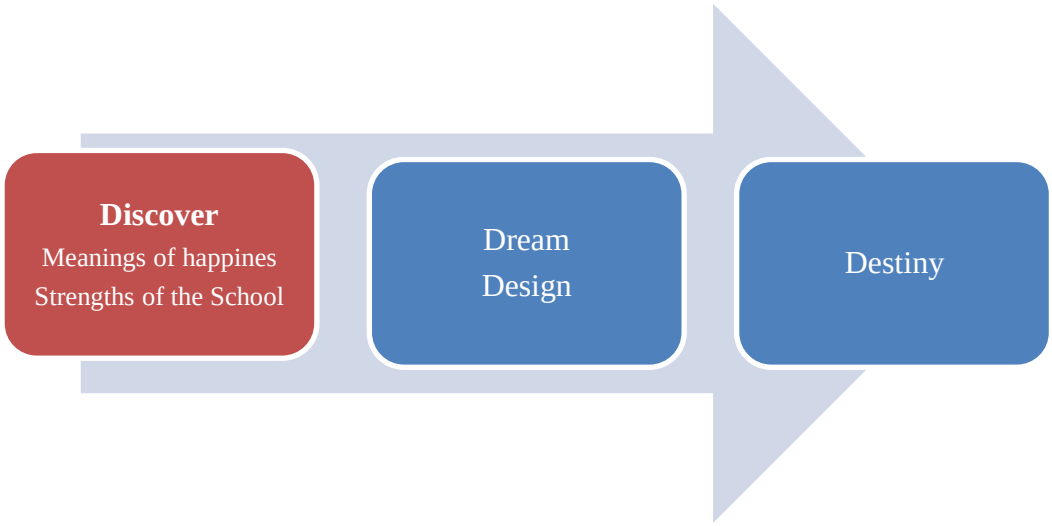
5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the four phases of the process in one AI cycle. The journey from Discovery, through Dream and Design to Destiny is described. Methods employed in all phases of the study i.e. individual and focus group interviews and thematic analysis using King's (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, King 2012) Template Analysis are outlined. Following the Discovery phase of the study participants engaged in a process of envisioning and designing a happy workplace for the future in the Dream and Destiny phases of the study. This process is described. Resulting vision and action statements agreed by participants in this process are made explicit. Finally experiences of participants of ensuing changes and of the AI process itself are sought and explored as part of the Destiny or evaluative phase of the study.

5.2. Discover

In the Discovery phase of the study meanings of happiness and strengths of the School in relation to happiness at work were explored and explicated.

Figure 3. AI Process: Discovery



5.3. Process of discovery

Two focus group interviews and four individual interviews were convened in order to engage in the process of discovery. As this study was about working with colleagues to develop an understanding of constructions of happiness in the workplace and to collaboratively develop a plan to facilitate and enhance happiness in the workplace, interviews were considered the most appropriate method of data collection. Interviews are a common method for data collection in qualitative (Parahoo 2006, Kvale. 2007) and action oriented research studies (Baskerville 1999, Meyer 2000, Coughlan and Coghlan 2002). Kvale (2007) describes the qualitative interview as a conversation through which an interviewer gets to know another person, gets to learn about their experiences, their lives, their dreams, hopes and fears. It is an interactive process where, through question and answer, knowledge is constructed between both parties (Kvale. 2007). Seidman (2006, p. 9) proposes that

"At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of the experience."

Focus groups are frequently used in AI and other forms of action research because of the focus on participation, the democratic nature of the focus group and the interaction within focus groups (Patton 1990, Kitzinger 1995, Reed 2007, Carter et al. 2007). The participatory nature of focus groups has been identified as potentially empowering for participants (Gibbs 1997, Williams and Katz 2001). Race, Hotch and Parker (1994) identify the focus group as a forum for change as participants can be involved in making decisions during the course of the focus group or may contribute to decisions made by management as a result of feedback from a focus group. In addition to developing an understanding of workplace constructions of happiness this study involved participatory change and consequently the focus group was chosen as an appropriate method.

A total of 19 individuals participated in the focus groups, the first comprising 10 participants and the second 9 participants, and a further four individuals volunteered to participate in individual interviews.

Suitable times were negotiated with participants for the meetings and these were held in one of the communication suites in the School as this was felt to be comfortable and less formal. As I was very conscious of my role as Head of School I was anxious that I meet with participants in an environment where they would potentially be more comfortable. Additionally, it was hoped that the less formal layout of the room would facilitate a relaxed atmosphere where participants would feel more comfortable talking about the workplace.

Influenced by the underpinning social constructionist perspective broad, open ended questions were asked in order to try to understand the topic of happiness in the workplace from the perspective of the participants who had volunteered to be involved (Appendix Six). Consistent with AI, questions were framed positively and participants were asked to reflect upon their experiences of being happy in the School. They were prompted to do this by focusing on telling the story of a particular time that they were involved in working on something that they particularly enjoyed. They were also asked to articulate strengths of the school which contributed to their experience of being happy. A number of prompts identified from the concept analysis were also used to encourage discussion e.g. emotions, the nature of the work itself and satisfaction.

Discussion in both focus groups was robust with active participant interaction. The tone of the discussion in the groups was positive and, at times, humorous. There was minimal disagreement as participants articulated strengths of the school and the importance of these for their happiness at work. My diary entry following the first focus group indicated that I was surprised at the amount of positivity and how easily people spoke about the strengths of the School. I was conscious that, as a manager, I may have just noticed the positive reactions more strongly than the negative ones so I listened to the tape again to ensure that my own perspective wasn't biased towards what I had

heard. Re listening to the tape recordings confirmed the strong positivity of the contributions. Similar positivity occurred in the subsequent focus group and individual interviews. All participants contributed with minimal prompting. I was conscious to ensure that all participants contributed, as focus groups have been criticised for being susceptible to the dominant voice as a result of coercion or group censorship of the minority opinion (MacDougall and Baum 1997).

Focus groups have been critiqued because of the perceived possibility of "group think" (Powell and Single 1996). I decided to use one to one interviews in addition to focus group interviews in the Discovery phase of the study in order to identify whether themes identified during exploration were consistent across focus group and individual interviews thereby identifying potential group think. This allowed for the subsequent examination and comparison of meanings these participants attributed to happiness at work compared to those expressed during the focus groups. In addition, it allowed for a number of participants to be involved in the study who were unable to participate in either of the two focus groups.

Four individual interviews were conducted in the Discovery phase of the study. Individual interviews were held in participants own offices. I believed that it was important to ensure a location where participants were comfortable but also where there was likely to be as little distraction as possible (Turner 2010). The same interview questions were used in the individual interviews as were those for the focus groups. Individual interviews lasted from twenty minutes to an hour and participants were also positive and enthusiastic requiring minimal prompting.

5.4. Developing understanding

All interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and typed. Transcripts were returned to participants for verification and correction if required. One participant provided clarification in one of the individual interviews and a further four participants verified the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Data was analysed during this phase of the study using Template Analysis (King, Cassell and Symon 2004, King 2012). While mindful of the concept analysis conducted at the outset of the study I decided not to impose a priori codes on the data but rather to develop the template inductively from the interview data. This was necessary in order to try to develop an understanding of the meanings participants attributed to happiness in the workplace. Furthermore an inductive approach allowed for an exploration of participants' perspectives on the strengths of this particular workplace at this particular time.

Data from the first focus group was coded line by line having imported the transcribed interviews into Nvivo9. One hundred and thirteen codes were identified in the first focus group. Codes were reorganised, then clustered into categories and categories defined. A template was developed from this and this was then applied to the second focus group and four individual interviews (Appendix Twelve). The template was modified as new codes and categories emerged (King, Cassell and Symon 2004). When all the transcripts were analysed and categories developed the categories were listed and returned to participants in the next round of focus group meetings in the Dream and Design phase of the study. Cooperrider , Whitney and Stavros (2008, p. 6) propose that identification of the "best of what is" commences a process of envisioning what might be, which takes place in the Dream phase of the study. This subsequently informs the development of action statements of new ideas for the future which are consistent with past successes and strengths. This takes place in the Design phase of the study. Table 5 presents the categories developed following the focus groups in the first phase of the study.

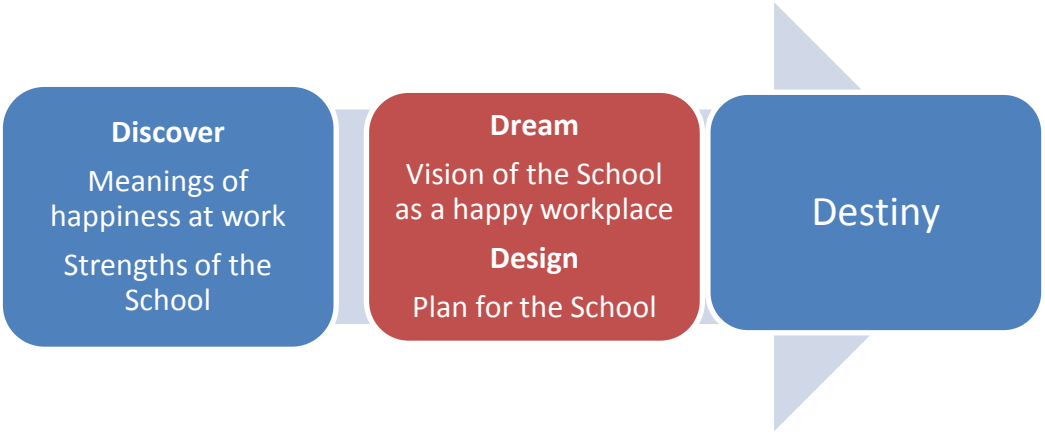
Table 5. Categories

Category
A place of values
Autonomy
Achievement
Collegial characteristics
Collegial support
Developmental
Flexibility
Identify with the School and organisation
Good infrastructure
Managerial support
Good relationships
Team work
The work itself: Meaningful, creative and varied

5.5. Dream and Design

AI has been noted for its generative capacity (Troxel 2002, Bushe 2010) and the Discovery phase provided participants with a new way of talking about their workplace and their wellbeing within it. The act of uncovering those elements in the School, which participants perceived as contributors to their happiness at work, commenced a process of transformation consistent with one of the objectives for the study. In the next two phases of the study, Dream and Design, participants extended this transformation by working together, collaboratively thinking further about, imagining and planning for the workplace of the future.

Figure 4. AI process: Dream and Design



5.6. Consensus meetings

Participants were invited to attend one of three focus group meetings which I subsequently called consensus meetings (Appendix Seven). Consensus meetings were held in December 2011 and January 2012. One of the original participants was unable to attend either of the meetings and elected to drop out of the study while wishing it every success. Consistent with my commitment to accommodating participants, they could choose which consensus meeting to attend, depending on their availability. The four participants who had participated in the individual interviews in the Discovery phase of the study were also invited to join the groups. This was considered important in terms of the objective of collectively constructing the workplace of the future. The purpose of these groups was to present back to participants initial analysis from the Discovery phase , invite them to comment on, validate or reject categories developed and then to engage participants in the Dream stages of envisioning the future of the school and the Design stage of proposing ideas about how to achieve these (Appendix Eight). Each of the consensus meetings took about two hours. The

proceedings of each workshop were audio recorded and vision statements and identified action statements were also noted by me on a flip chart as they were identified during the workshop.

5.7. Clarifying what we know: Validating categories

Participants were presented with the categories developed from the Discovery phase of the study. Whilst codes had been grouped into categories these had not been developed into hierarchical themes at this stage as I felt that it was important to invite participants input on the data analysis.

A modified nominal group technique, i.e. use of the round robin method, was used during each of the groups to ensure that all participants' views were presented and consensus was reached in an equal and democratic way (Delbecq 1974, Carney, McIntosh and Worth 1996). Participants were asked for their views in turn without interruption from others first. When all perspectives had been heard and no new ideas presented the groups were opened to a more free discussion. Across the three groups there was agreement that the categories presented were the main ones which reflected discussions in the initial interviews. Some discussion took place regarding a number of the categories, particularly autonomy. Participants were invited to suggest a further hierarchy but, aside from identifying a relationship between flexibility and autonomy and a suggestion that self-esteem was a component of many of the categories in Group C, they left that to me as the researcher.

5.8. Towards a better future/ Dream

Participants were then invited to imagine the school of the future. They were invited to make statements in relation to how it would look. All participants were encouraged to participate and present their views. Again this was done by eliciting each individual's suggestions in turn. This was followed by some group discussion. Participants were encouraged to be creative and provocative. A list of agreed statements or propositions was drawn up.

The first group struggled a little with this process in their workshop. In my reflection on this particular workshop I note that I was uncomfortable with this and felt that this may have been

because of my lack of experience of moderating this kind of group. This group was smaller than the other two (n = 4) of the three groups and struggled to achieve consensus on either the vision of the future and the plan. The small size of the group also may have been perceived by the participants to be a little threatening and Carney et al (1996) propose a minimum of six participants in order to promote a sense of safety. Originally there were to be more than six participating in this workshop but a number were unable to attend on the day. The four participants who were available chose to proceed with the workshop as they had made the time available and might have difficulty doing so again. Despite attempting to use the round robin technique I found it hard to prevent the group from engaging in a more discursive format and to redirect the focus of the workshop into more concrete thinking and making statements about the future. The group got a little engrossed in discussing autonomy, the responsibility inherent in that and negativity of some of the School staff. I was conscious of my role and position on democratic participation and so was reluctant to be as directive as I possibly should have been. Having reflected on my experience of this group, I was more focused and structured in the subsequent two groups. I found it easier to manage the stages and to direct the discussion on to the vision statements after an appropriate amount of time.

All of the groups spent a little time talking about the negativity of other School staff members and the difficulty with managing that. One of the key principles of AI is that of focusing on the positive. I was conscious however of the criticisms of AI in relation to only addressing positives (Rogers and Fraser 2003, Coghlan, Preskill and Tzavaras Catsambas 2003, Grant and Humphries 2006). It was important to me that my colleagues had the opportunity to express negatives as well as positives if it was to be a truly authentic and respectful process. It was interesting to note the small amount of time across the groups and across phases of the study spent on discussion negatives. The negative issues raised were also interesting as they were raised primarily as exceptions to the positive issues e.g. supportive colleagues, autonomous workers, and strong administrative processes. Much of the discussion focused on the negativity of a small group of staff and the perceived destructive impact on participants and others in the school. Whilst this was important for participants, they quickly

looked to address these negatives in a positive manner in the Dream and the Design stage of the study. In each of the groups a list of vision statements were drawn up. These were subsequently amalgamated in to one master list with duplication removed. Table 6: Presents the integrated Vision of the School in the Future generated from the Dream Phase.

Table 6. Vision of the School

Vision of the School in the future: How the School will look

- The school will embrace all its entities and there will be more respect for the different contributions people/disciplines make.
- There will be more shifting group involvement. In the future we will be more of one big "squad"
- A wider range of people will step into key roles of responsibility.
- Overall people will have a sense that they are supported
- There will be more peer accountability
- We will know the students better as individuals
- We will have more opportunities for review, feedback/acknowledgement
- The school will be smaller, more diverse and more virtual
- Our meetings will be focused and more productive
- The School will be a place where having fun is ok
- We will be a centre of academic and practice excellence
- Staff will be competent and knowledgeable
- The School's expertise will be more visible
- We will have more international linkages, both staff and students
- We will continue to be innovative
- The school will be more proactive in responding to funding opportunities
- The school will be recognised as a place that students will want to come to as a place of excellence in particular areas.
- The school will value teaching and learning equally with research.
- The school will comprise a focused research centre in a specific area
- The School will support the development of publications
- The school will invest further in the Health Living Centre
- The School will raise its profile nationally and internationally
- The school will maintain its positive flexible practices
- The School will have a strong administrative system
- The school will care for people more than processes.

5.9. The how of a better future/ Design

Following the Dream stage of the consensus meetings people were asked to think about how their vision of the school in the future could be achieved. Discussion took place at each group meeting and a list of actions drawn up. The groups were advised that actions should be practical, realistic and achievable within the current constraints. Participants at each group meeting were also advised that their list of actions would be amalgamated with the list from the other two groups. Overlapping actions would be streamlined and an integrated list developed. Each group drafted a list of action statements which were subsequently integrated into one master list. Table 7 presents an integrated list of the agreed actions generated from the Design phase.

Table 7. Action Plan

Plan: How will we do this?

We will

- create more openings for people to take on roles
- have more school events to "celebrate" activities and make explicit individual's contribution and enthusiasms
- match interests with work e.g. teaching.
- engage with students in ways that are meaningful to students at different levels. We will initiate some of these but will also respond to requests from students. We will invite students to let us know what they are involved in.
    - e.g. icebreaker exercises for first years.
    - Social and sports events
    - Charitable /voluntary basis e.g. strictly come dancing, rag week events etc
- recommend the recommencement of some form of formal review opportunity for staff to set and review goals and receive feedback
- organise a number of opportunities annually as part of a process for staff to get together to explore future possibilities and collaborations, cross fertilisation of ideas, work sharing, idea generation and project progression e.g. Creativity think tank, staff day, research sharing day and follow up.
- develop a new format for additional seminars for people to present on their areas of interest/expertise e g short 15 minute presentations. There will be a social element to it
- host an interdisciplinary conference
- use the digital signage to display school/ individual staff activity and successes. Posters on poster boards will be moved rotated and replaced regularly to display ongoing activity.
- explore the organisation of a facilitated day or half day open to all staff on how to be creative and innovative
- organise and encourage attendance at training for staff for the constructive management of and contribution to meetings. We will also encourage the premature endings of meetings which become destructive.
- organise more informal social events or start a social club which would organise more regular social nights out
- identify particular areas of expertise which we will profile and which will make a contribution to the National and International Debate. We will do this by being proactive and putting ourselves forward for comment, availing of media training and sharing our experiences after we have been on radio or TV etc.
- explore other models of academic and practice excellence and benchmark against them. We will liaise with the new Director of Quality on this
- become better informed about the university structures which will enable us to make better linkages within the university and take on roles on wider university committees. This may require some formal input
- be constructive and positive in our day to day language and celebrate successes in the school in an attempt to refocus negativity
- respond to and avail of all supports/training made available to develop our technological skills, we will avail of university supports to set up our own websites
- respond to external and economic drivers for more virtual delivery of activity
- have a consultation regarding more flexible administration processes and structures

Some discussion took place in each of the consensus group meetings regarding the implementation of these actions in the Destiny phase of the study. It was agreed that in general participants would take personal responsibility for taking them forward. I agreed as facilitator to talk with the Head of School and the Director of Quality in relation to those which required School support in terms of resources. This improvisational approach rather than a more formal implementation change management process has received support by more recent proponents of AI (Bushe 2007, Bushe and Kassam 2005). This approach is presented graphically in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Improvisational Destiny

Source Bushe 2007

Bushe's (2007, p. 6) improvisational model is based upon the four key elements

1. Creating collective agreement on what is to be accomplished
2. Ensuring that people believe that they are authorised to take actions to move the organisation (or themselves) in the direction of the design
3. Creating commitments by everyone to take some kind of initial action
4. Looking for any and all acts that move the organisation and individuals in the desired direction and find ways to support and amplify these ideas.

I was also particularly conscious of ensuring that, as a consultative and participatory process with my colleagues, I was guided by how they wanted to follow up and enact the vision. It was agreed that I would meet with participants one final time in June to review progress and evaluate the process.

Following the three consensus meetings each of the lists were reviewed. Some of the statements were combined where there was overlap of intent. An integrated list of vision statements and an integrated list of actions were developed as above. These were subsequently circulated to all participants for comment. Aside from one dissenting comment received all were agreeable to the vision and the plan. Communication with this individual indicated that whilst they had some difficulty with the final integrated plan there was much in it that they could subscribe to. I considered that consensus had been reached at this point.

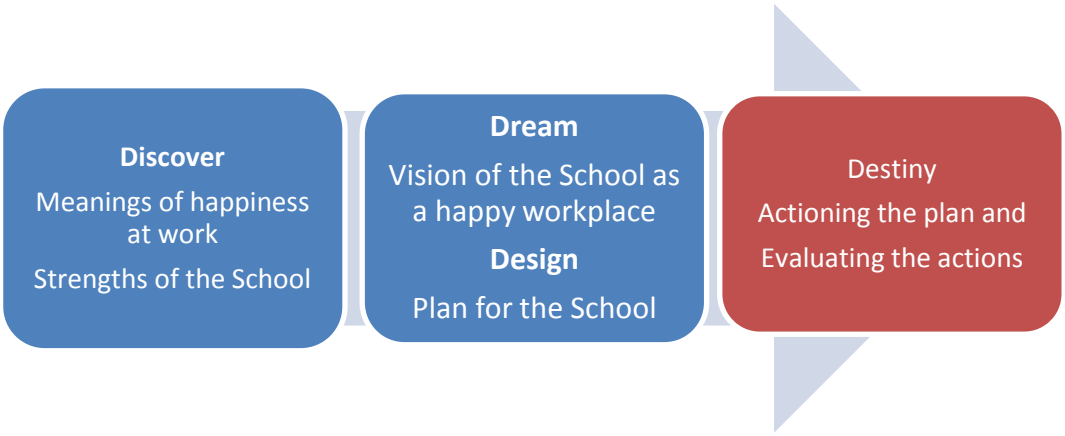
My reflections on this stage of the study particularly focused on how constructive the process had been in general. Participants were supportive of each other's ideas and happy to build on them in the discussions within the groups. The interactions of participants were supportive, collegial and enthusiastic about the process of generating a vision and plan of action for the school of the future.

While the vision statements and the plan of action were the main outcome of these two phases of the study, transcripts from the three consensus group meetings were also coded and analysed using the template previously developed. This I felt, was important in order to see if an analysis of these meetings added anything new to our growing understanding of happiness in this workplace. At this point emergent categories were collapsed into more global overarching themes. Four main themes were generated from data collected during these phases of the study. These themes were Being Happy, Self-Determination, Fulfilment, and Community. These themes are presented in detail in Chapter 5.

5.10. Taking stock: Destiny

It is acknowledged that six months is a relatively short period of time for evaluation of the process considering that many of the actions specified would take significantly longer to achieve the vision outcomes. However some of the actions were completed during this time frame and I considered it important to review progress.

Figure 6. AI Process: Destiny



Destiny is usually the fourth and final phase of an Project. Although it is the final phase of the process Cooperider et al. (2008) note that destiny is the continual and on-going phases of discovery, dream, and design. Having completed a time limited study, I saw the lack of evaluation at a particular point in time as a flaw particularly in the context of conducting a study in my own workplace. I believed an evaluation was essential from an ethical point of view having availed of collegial participation and work time. It was important to me that participants had an opportunity to comment on whether they thought the process had made or was making any difference to happiness in the workplace. Additionally one of the reasons for conducting this particular type of research was that I believed that it was important for research conducted in one's workplace to have some practical outcomes. This phase of the study therefore focused on practical and perceived outcomes.

Four participants were no longer available to participate in the study during the evaluation phase. One participant had retired early and a further participant had commenced maternity leave. One participant moved to other employment and one participant was unavailable to attend the evaluation groups. It is normal in a work study conducted over a year long period to have some movement of staff.

Participants were invited to attend by email (Appendix Nine). They agreed to attend one of two focus group meetings for the final evaluation phase. In these focus groups participants were asked to evaluate both the outcomes of the study and the process itself (Appendix Ten). Additionally meetings were held with the Director of Quality and the Head of School as a follow up to those conducted, with each of them following the consensus meetings. Both were asked about progress on issues raised during the course of these initial meetings (Appendix Eleven).

My reflections of the focus group meetings indicate that participants were slow to articulate the impact of the study and were more reflective than spontaneous in these groups than they had been in the previous two rounds of engagement during the Discover, Dream and Design phases. Again I was conscious of the changed roles of a number of participants particularly that of the new Head of School and the New Deputy Head. Both were participants of the first of the evaluation groups. This may have affected participants' reluctance to be open about their perceptions of changes or of being critical in any way of the school and its management. The second group, however, were similarly less spontaneous and it appeared to me that in both groups people needed a little time within the groups to reflect on changes within themselves or external changes that they personally were involved in since commencing the project.

Two subsequent semi structured interviews were held, one with the Head of School and one with the Director of Quality. These were held two months after the evaluation focus groups due to the non-availability of the participants over the summer months. Questions for these interviews were based on the implementation plan developed during the study and focused on determining the

success of those elements of the plan previously discussed with both following the consensus meetings (Appendix Eleven). Data from the focus groups and interviews were analysed thematically. Themes were developed inductively following three phases of analysis. Transcripts were coded line by line and then categories developed. The small numbers in the two focus groups in the evaluation phase impacted on the emergence of patterns in the data. Two main themes emerged. These were: Rethinking Happiness in the Workplace and Taking Action on Happiness in the Workplace.

5.11. Conclusion

During the four phases of the AI study participants engaged enthusiastically in the process despite its novelty i.e. the topic of happiness and the appreciative focus of the methodology. Although a number of participants left the study due to changes in their employment status none left because they no longer wanted to participate in the study. Consistent with their expressions of happiness in the workplace participants decided to enact the action plan in a non-structured, autonomous way. Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study, elucidates meanings of happiness in this workplace, identifies outcomes achieved and presents changes at school level and within participants as a result of their engagement in this study.

Chapter 6: Understanding Happiness and Change in the Making

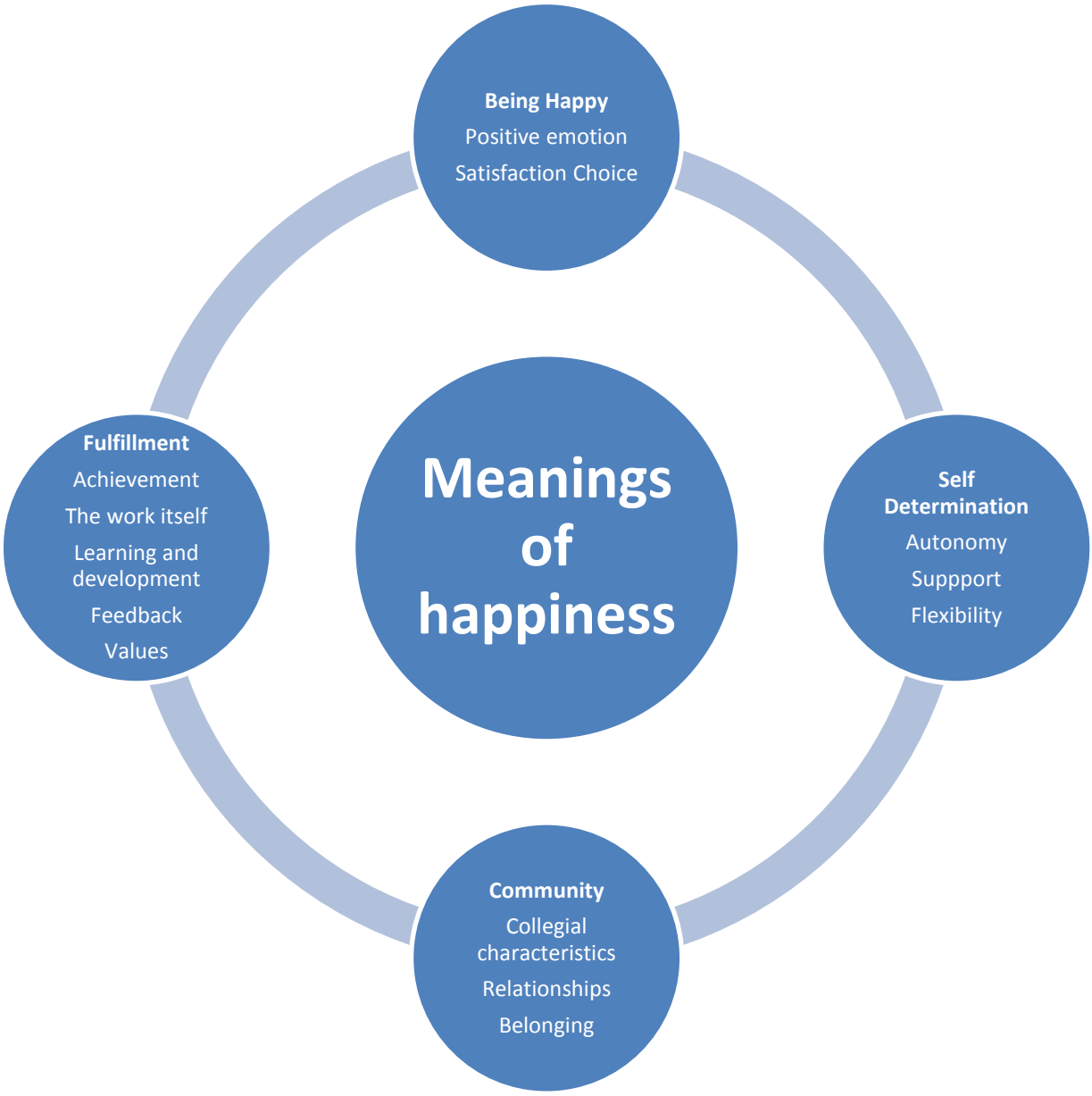
6.1. Introduction

Emergent meanings of happiness in this workplace are revealed in this chapter. Meanings of happiness comprise: positive emotional and cognitive processes and actions; having the autonomy, support and flexibility to be self-determined; being fulfilled i.e. successfully engaging in meaning full work consistent with personal values and feeling part of something with like-minded colleagues. Consistent with the AI process these constructions provided the underpinnings for the development of the action plan on page 85. Consideration is given to changes achieved during the action phases of this AI study, acknowledging some of these remain outstanding and many remain in progress. As with all forms of action research, difficulties arise in ascertaining which changes are attributable to the study and which are occurring for other reasons. Notwithstanding this a number of changes were attributed to the process, including more positive staff interactions with University and Faculty processes, more positive interactions with students, more opportunities to celebrate and gain more knowledge of school activities and raised profile of school activities in the media. A final key objective of the study was to critically evaluate AI as a method for researching workplace change. As part of the evaluation process participants expressed satisfaction with the AI process and indicated changed thinking and behaviours as a result of their involvement. These changes are also presented here.

6.2. Meanings of happiness in the workplace

This section presents the four emergent themes in the meanings of happiness in the workplace: Being happy; Self-Determination; Fulfilment and Community. Subthemes which gave rise to the main themes are explored. Happiness is a complex, dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon and thematic findings are interrelated. Figure 4 provides an illustrative diagram of meanings of happiness in this academic workplace.

Figure 7. Meanings of happiness in the workplace



6.3. Being happy

In this study participants had some difficulty with expressing how they experienced being happy particularly with identifying those components which they saw as attributes of the experience of happiness itself. Happiness was not something which they naturally thought about in the context of work. When encouraged to think about it in this study participants described happiness as both an emotional and cognitive state. Personal agency involved in promoting one's own satisfaction was

also noted by a number of participants. Being happy therefore involved feeling happy, judging oneself to be happy and choosing to be happy.

6.3.1. Positive emotion

Positive emotion was perceived by participants, across individual interviews and focus groups, to be an essential and central component of their happiness at work. Passion and enthusiasm were positive emotions identified by many participants in terms of the work itself. Passion was usually experienced when working at something the individual found meaningful or congruent with ones values and interests. This was illustrated by one participant when he spoke about the development of a new programme in the School.

The whole design of this programme you know a number of those modules reflect the background and interests of the lecturer and we said didn't we, in the design of it, they should. So there's something about people, you know, going in the direction of people linking, you know aspects of the work to what they genuinely are enthusiastic about, you know rather than it being given, rather than it being a syllabus. (P: 15, C M: 2) [1]

This was supported by another participant when she stated

The interesting thing is I think, the nursing group, dare I say it, needs to reflect on that a bit more because there is an element of I'm a nurse therefore I'm teaching on the nursing group rather than I am passionate about this. Now I'm not saying for one minute that that's everybody, and I think some people are passionate about what they do, but I think, you know. (P: 6, C M: 2)

Combining work with individual interests, which one is passionate about, was perceived to contribute to a happier workplace.

A number of participants spoke about the positive emotion of pride which they experienced at work. Pride was experienced in the context of individual, school and institutional success and was synonymous with achievement. The feeling of pride was particularly so in relation to the students, to their development and to the perceived success at the quality of the educational programmes.

[1] Source code: P: Participant, II: Individual Interview, FG: Focus Group, CM: Consensus meeting, EG Evaluation Group

I think that you feel that pride mostly as well, funny that we are 20 minutes into it and we haven't mentioned the students, but em you feel that pride mostly when you see the students in action so like if you go to clinical practice and see you know you get good kinda feedback. (P: 12, F G: 1)

A second participant noted pride in the student's development. She notes this in the context of a special mass held for a student who had died during the previous summer. The students demonstrated great maturity and responsibility during the mass and in their interactions with the academic staff and the student's family.

I think about that, when we had that mass for (student name), and you meet the students on a whole different basis, as a whole, as a different… there's a different dynamic, it's not a teaching, it's not for a teaching purpose. You meet them as people, as opposed to a student and I wonder if…and for me that was really affirmative of my job as a lecturer, meeting those students and knowing that, actually in those students, I was a very small part of their development through our hands here. But that made me very proud and I just wonder if that is something that is demonstrable, that we could maybe do more of in the school. (P: 12 C M: 1)

Participants identified joy as a positive emotion that they particularly felt at work. This was felt when they were engaged in work which they found particularly meaningful or engaging. Additionally joy was frequently felt when working with other staff.

*Mine's a bit more basic than that, in that I have a very short attention span in a lot of things, a lot of jobs and this one for some reason, whatever it is, I don't mind coming to work or want to come to work, where normally I would be trying to find reasons for something but I actually enjoy coming and I don't know what way to describe it other than saying that there's something that wants me to keep coming back and a lot of that is to do with people. (*P: 2, C M: 1)

In the main positive emotions were seen by participants as integral to their experience of happiness at work. In contrast to this pragmatic perspective, however, one participant argued that for him happiness was not a subjective state of well-being. Rather he viewed it more philosophically in line with Aristotle's view of eudaimonia.

I think I don't know. I'm not sure. Personally I'm not sure that it's good to think of happiness as a kind of state of being. Do you know? I think for me, I've been, by the way I've been looking at Aristotle. There's something about the good life, do you know what I *mean, but the good life has its struggles, it has its downs, all that, but when you kind of put it all together it's a kind of good life. So that's how I think of it in the workplace. Happy workplace is not a workplace where everyone's going*

*around with smiles on their faces or people are content all the time. For me happiness in the workplace has all the s**te and struggle and so on, but on the whole, when you put it all together it's a good life. That I think is probably how I would see it. It's not a subjective state of well-being.* (P: 15, C M: 2)

Additionally he notes

I think in both research and teaching there's an element of grind. You know there's an element of grind whatever way it goes. So I suppose that's the kind of thing I'm talking about. It's a good life. It's not like, oh yeah all the time you're in these kind of states of great enthused kind of engaged, intellectual pursuit and so on, but that has to be there to make the grind bearable. You know. (P: 15, C M: 2)

6.3.2. Satisfaction

Satisfaction was a second manifestation of happiness noted by participants. Participants across interviews and focus groups noted satisfaction in relation to the work and in relation to the people they work with. A number of participants noted a sense of satisfaction which appeared more like a feeling or positive emotion. Alternatively satisfaction was construed by other participants in terms of a thinking process. This involved making an evaluative judgement about some aspect of the work and its impact. For some this concerned evaluating achievement against meeting personal goals and objectives.

If I do things well I tend to have a high level of satisfaction, I can come out of the class and think Oh God that didn't go quite so well or I won't feel quite so competent around some areas and that will lower my level of happiness and satisfaction with my own performance and I think a big thing for me around my happiness is whether I should get my work done. (P: 13, C M: 1)

Yea I think you are right about job satisfaction is important so I suppose it depends on what makes me personally get satisfaction from work and I suppose for me I am not as involved obviously in research as everyone else. For me the teaching and I know when I was starting off here first I got a big module and I thought I will never be able to do this so but getting confidence in doing that and knowing that you are doing it well, at least you think you are doing it well increases your job satisfaction as well so I suppose it is about what your own aims and objectives are and your own perceptions I suppose. (P: 5, F G: 1)

The temporal nature of happiness was noted in some participants' expression of satisfaction. This related to both looking back and also projecting forward. This distinguishes satisfaction as a cognitive state rather than a more transient emotional state at a particular point in time.

Well I think so, it's like you were saying. There is that kind of overall, more long-term look at it as well. Over a day that you could think of it like that, but over a year you could maybe think, well. At certain times of year we're being asked to update the RSS[2] page, and things that can make me feel quite happy. Like on a yearly kind of thing, coz you look and think I've done that and I've done that. And I know at the same time you think oh bloody hell I've to update that bloody RSS thing is a pain in the ass, but at the same time that could be kind of a more long-term looking back feeling of satisfaction of the things that you've done that you rarely get a chance to reflect on. (P: 12, C M: 1)

The whole thing for me brings out the forward looking nature of happiness at work. That it's not just about what we've done or what we're doing today, but it's about a contentedness with where we're going. And I think what makes us happy in work has to fit in with that. (P: 6, CM: 3)

6.3.3. Choice

Whilst happiness was construed in terms of thinking and feeling it was also construed in terms of action, agency and behaviour. A number of participants spoke about making a choice to be happy and then having to work on happiness. One participant spoke about the importance of personal attitude and of taking action or changing behaviour in order to be happy

I would say there is, there's a good part of it about choice and the choices that we all make. You know you can either chose to be happy with what you're at or you can chose not to be. But if you chose not to be that means you've neglected to take any stance on why it is you're not being happy, or what it is that's not making you happy. So there's, to me there's a bit of learning in it as well. (P: 2, CM: 1)

Happiness was perceived as something which could be sought out by choosing who to engage with, what to engage with and particularly what not to engage with or at least control.

Well I think where people only see the grind, then they're not likely to derive happiness from that. But I think there's an element of thinking about that and also making choices about what you do and you how you are going to push yourself. It's not like we can say oh poor a lot of people, stuck in the ground, we have to rise up a bit. (P: 6, CM: 2)

While participants on the whole were positive about the workplace, a number of participants noted the presence of negativity amongst a small number of staff. This negativity, whilst only perceived to come from a small number of people appeared to have quite an impact on others. A number of participants noted the importance of controlling this negativity in order to maintain their own happiness at work. They did this by either choosing to ignore it or by challenging it.

[2] University Research Support System: Database of research activity

I was just wondering, I suppose it's a comment also, was that one of the things in managing your own happiness is also controlling negativity and so in some ways I suppose we tend to avoid situations or we avoid perhaps individuals who are overly negative. I mean that's part of a happy workplace. (P: 19, CM: 1)

A further participant elaborated on how she has started to challenge the negativity.

*Actually on that note I actually made a decision in the New Year was to challenge the negative and I find it great now. If someone wants to come in and be, you know, unhappy, I'll just say have you looked at it, where before I would have said I know what you mean. Now I'm going, have you looked at it from this perspective and I go on the, not offensive, but I go on the alter notion and it's just interesting, the reaction. (*P 20, CM: 3)

Personal responsibility for one's own happiness was seen as an important component of happiness.

And then I suppose, like an extension of that is, you know, we can only ever be responsible for ourselves, do you know. So when you think about happiness in the workplace, you know there probably is a collective happiness, you know, absolutely you want to be in a nice ambience and a good place and you want to get people who are maybe not quite as happy as you and vice versa. I don't know if we can rely on other people to make us happy either or unhappy. At a certain point we have to make a choice ourselves and say this is who I am and the way I want to be. (P: 21 CM: 2)

6.4. Self-determination

Self-determination comprised aspects of the workplace which were perceived to be facilitative and enabling in terms of self-determination. The importance of self-determination at work was consistent across interviews, both group and individual, with all participants identifying aspects of self-determination as central to how they work and to their happiness at work. Self-determination comprised a number of subthemes namely autonomy, support and flexibility.

6.4.1. Autonomy

All participants across focus groups and individual interviews identified autonomy as central to their happiness at work. Autonomous working and personal control over one's work were identified as key strengths of the School and participants were anxious to ensure that practices which facilitate autonomous working would remain constant despite the pressures being placed on the School because of the current economic climate. Autonomy was construed by some participants as being able to work independently without being overly directed or supervised. Self-management allowed

for participants to manage both work and personal needs in a way which was consistent with their particular likes and needs at a point in time. The following excerpt indicates how important this self-management is for one individual in this workplace.

You know, last semester was a difficult one, I suppose, in terms of my family circumstance because I had some parents that were quite ill and I often think that if I wasn't here that would have contributed a lot to my unhappiness. Because it certainly contributed to my happiness, that I was able to control a lot of my workplace, and you know, my work time and that, because if I couldn't have done that, you know, I probably couldn't have… it was a difficult semester for that reason. (P 19, CM: 1)

The ability to self-manage in this workplace also allowed for participants to make decisions about their work and to make plans about when and how to work without reference to a higher authority.

So it comes down to self-management, a little bit, but I like that for the whole year you pretty much know what you are doing and it allows you to plan extracurricular maybe research and know where can I fit that in or you know say for me my clinical link I know what days I am going to be teaching, once the timetable comes out and that gives me flexibility then in terms of if I want to go down to the clinical environment and work I can plan that over the year and I guess back to autonomy again you can do all of that planning yourself. You know you don't have to write off every time you want to go somewhere and so something I'm going down there it's very very,(pause) that's all autonomous. There's a lot of self-management really which is great. (P: 11, FG: 1)

Autonomy was also construed in terms of scope to choose what to get involved in and the scope to develop new things. This was important for participants as these developments comprised new school activity consistent with their own interests in terms of teaching, research and clinical practice. The following excerpt highlights this.

But we also have to some degree a sense of control about where we are going with our research and I do think that's incredibly important and certainly that is something that has given me a great sense of satisfaction that I have had the opportunities to go out there and do the type of research that I wanted to do and go forward, that's important and that's a key piece about keeping people happy within the workplace is giving people control over what they want to do. (P: 20 FG: 1)

Despite the overwhelming agreement of the importance of autonomy for happiness in the workplace the initial experience of working autonomously was perceived differently by participants on commencing work in the School. A number of participants indicated that working autonomously had taken some time to get used to following assimilation from the health care sector. The

healthcare sector had been clearly identified as having a command and control style of management during the industrial unrest in the late 1990s (Government of Ireland 1998). This is demonstrated in the following two quotes from participants

I would agree with that, you know, about having that level of autonomy. I suppose having worked in a good number of hospitals over the years you certainly did not have that level of autonomy that you know you enjoy when you come here. It takes a little bit of a … it took a while to get used to that as well that you have that autonomy. You know yea the autonomy and the flexibility really kinda makes me happy in work at least contributes to it. (P: 18, FG: 1)

I came from a school of nursing; I have been involved in nurse education for a long time, twenty odd years now at this stage. I am one of the people that came in, one of the few here probably, that probably would have come in in 2002 so I have a strong background in nurse education, but coming in to academia was completely different and it certainly took me a while to adjust to that and for all the reasons that you have mentioned flexibility in the workplace, the fact that you are autonomous, that you have got you work on your own direction and trust. (P: 19, FG: 1)

Despite articulating some initial difficulty with working autonomously, it is interesting to note that those participants now appear to have adapted and they recognise autonomous working as a key strength of the school directly impacting on their happiness at work.

Trust and a minimal level of scrutiny by management were perceived by participants to be central to autonomous working. This was articulated by a number of participants.

One participant noted:

I suppose, my point of view following on from (name of other participant) would be trust, I find that prior to coming here I worked in private industry where you didn't really have that amount of trust everyone was always checking up on what you were doing where here I'm not sure where here I am not saying that nobody checks up on you, I don't know whether they do or not (laughter) but I'll say that it's left to your own integrity. You have a job to do and it's up to you to go and do it. I do find as well on trust that you are left to your own devises, you are able to manage yourself and do what you have to do and it's your own integrity that's at stake and if it's not done then you have to account for it. (P: 22, FG: 1)

While autonomy was seen as essential to participants' happiness at work participants were clear that they valued autonomy as part of a professional role where accountability was also part of autonomous working. This sense of accountability as integral to autonomy was articulated by a number of participants. They recognised the work that had to be done and which must be done well.

As one participant noted that autonomy was not about just doing what one likes, which he proposed would amount to being controlled by one's whims.

So autonomy is about having, its self-made law, do you know what I mean, and it's the kind of obligations that come from committing to a particular selfhood. (P: 15, CM: 2)

So autonomy and responsibility are absolutely linked together, obligation, duty comes with autonomy. (P: 15, CM: 2)

6.4.2. Support

Support was perceived by participants as very strong in the School and essential to the way people work and to facilitating autonomous working and self-determination. This support was forthcoming both from work colleagues and from management, formally and informally. Support from colleagues was, to a large extent, construed in terms of helping behaviours i.e. receiving help from colleagues and giving help. Participants noted that help was very forthcoming both from other academic colleagues and administrative staff when requested.

When you think about happiness at work you think oh Christ there's too much work but I often have that sense of, not being overburdened by work maybe a little bit overwhelmed by the volume of it but I think what kind of rescues me all the time is the abundance mentality that the colleagues that I have here have. So you have a load of work to do but people row in with it all the time and think oh God can we do this and there is some sense that people can and find ways around managing things. (P: 10, FG: 1)

In addition, participants noted the importance of reciprocity and of giving support to others when needed. In essence, they note support as a cultural way of working within the School.

No but strength in numbers really in the sense that we are stronger if we help each other and I do think that we do that or I would certainly find for me, from my personal experience that I have never approached people who haven't been willing to help on many different levels, which again that it makes my life easier, makes my job more enjoyable than if I was all on my own and no body willing to share, struggling all of the time. So yea I would say I don't tend to struggle a lot because there's support. (P: 11, FG: 1)

Whilst giving help or advice were the primary activities associated with collegial support sharing was also considered by a number of participants as an important part of supporting behaviours.

Yea I think the willingness to share. People come to me looking for something I am more than happy to give it. I am not competing against people you know whereas you do find that in some places competitiveness, there's closed doors, there's an unwillingness to share. And that can make, you know what that's not sharing the wealth, you know I would see that maybe, in a, it's a selfish approach because I suppose numbers are power, numbers are power you know. (P: 11, FG: 1)

Yea, I think, I am coming from the perspective of being, I had been out of teaching for five years and came back and I was in a terrified state and I think all these things about support and that's what struck me very strongly in the first few months cos I was convinced that I couldn't do this but the number of people who would give you things and support that was most incredible thing that people really wanted you to do things. That's down to individuals but it's because its individually driven I think it drives… people individually want to help you and that stretches across everybody wants to help you and I think that has been a great source of happiness for me here. (P: 7, FG 1*)*

Collegial support is seen as being central to enabling an individual to try something new and see it through. One participant noted

*And I think that then from wanting to do something different, try something different, well I have found personally the Clinical Education Centre the staff there are absolutely..(pause) but if you want to try something out, want to try new technology I'm terrified that it is going to and will break down that there's people there that you can access and say I'm doing this this morning, try it out first time will you come over? That sense that there is people willing to row in behind you. (*P: 7, FG: 1)

A further participant stated:

I had to recruit patients, simulated patients for the video and eh I had trouble finding that but actually it was another colleague, collegial support and a member of staff whose mother agreed to be the patient and also her cousin agreed to be the em the nurse and so that was good that there was a willingness and a kind of a I guess, we saw the idea and we saw the end in sight and that was good. (P: 3, II)

While on the whole support was seen in terms of helping behaviours one participant noted the impact of the supportive and encouraging attitude of staff, who wanted others to succeed had on them.

I suppose for me personally when you see that it's not I mean, it's like a set of stairs. You keep wanting to climb more because everyone around you is actually encouraging so you think I'll keep on going and when people come to you, when they ask you something I'm always willing to say you're grand I'll show you. I might not always know what to do but you go along and help as best you can. I suppose it's that element that's there within the place. (P: 22 FG: 1)

Support from management appeared to have a direct impact on how staff worked and felt about their work. Supportive management behaviours have been identified as having a positive impact on

job satisfaction (Judge, Heller and Mount 2002). In this study management were perceived as being very supportive both in terms of providing resources and also in terms of listening, responding to and supporting staff ideas and suggestions.

The following excerpt highlights this

Well I suppose the thing about it is I can't really say because anything I have ever asked for has been facilitated. I mean I have dyslexia and different things and anything I have looked for I haven't had a problem. (P: 2, II)

Research was not an activity associated with traditional schools of nursing in the healthcare sector. Within this environment teaching and learning was the main focus. Research activity, however, is an essential element of an academic unit in the university sector. In this study support was perceived to be forthcoming for development of individual research skills and activity. These were seen to be essential in building capacity in an emerging academic unit. A number of participants acknowledged and appreciated these supports.

I think the School research committee, again over the years, the amount of opportunities for travel, the amount of opportunities for funding, the studentships even this morning. They're fantastic strengths and I am not sure how they go in other universities. Certainly it is here. Yeh it's a big bonus moving forward and it should help us a lot to be sustainable I think. (P: 20, FG: 1)

In terms of my PhD I got enormous support in terms of School. One I got a semester to concentrate on my PhD and I didn't have any modules to teach. I had a supervisor from the School, my fees were paid by the university so you know everything that could have been done to help me to do it was done and I was extremely privileged to be able to do my PhD in the way that I did it compared to how a lot of people are, you know, with salary etc. do your PhD and have access to all of that. (P: 15, FG: 2)

Organisational structures and processes were widely seen as supportive and facilitative of participants work. These included physical structures, administrative processes and policies. The organisation and structure of the academic year and particularly the early allocation of teaching was seen as a positive. Participants noted that this enabled them to plan their year and work in advance.

One of the strengths, again I have mentioned it is that thing of there's a structure here, the year that happens and I think that's really useful that we have this skeleton that we hang on to but I think within that there's a constant shifting environment and I think there's change all the time like new

programmes, new modules, new staff, new research pieces, there's always something new within it so I think there's the opportunity to become bored by what's happening here is very limited unless you have just decided you're going to be bored anyhow. (P: 10, FG: 1)

*I remember starting off here first and to do the right thing or be effective could be quite difficult because there are a lot of ropes to learn. There were a lot of specific bureaucratic ways that things had to be done and when you learn those and you know when you can do the right thing and produce appropriate outcomes, exam boards I am thinking about at the minute and it's easy and you think; that used to be a nightmare. But now it's fine. And when you get that then that kind of frees you up time wise and cognitively to do other things. (*P: 9, FG: 2)

The location of the campus and the excellent physical and technological infrastructure were viewed as key strengths of the School and enabled flexible and autonomous working.

Well I think there a couple of things. This is a beautiful building to work in. it's absolutely gorgeous. We are lucky because we generally have rooms on the communication corridor to do our work. It is really conducive to what you do and all the natural light. It's absolutely beautiful. So we are very lucky in that it's quite uplifting to come into this building as it were. (P: 4, II)

It's a good point though the actual infrastructure for that is fantastic. (*P*: 20, FG: 1)

And

Being able to pick up your messages at home and being able to do everything remotely. And even to the point now that you can actually download software from the ISS department that you wouldn't be normally able to get. Em get onto your machine remotely as if you were on campus which I think is brilliant. (*P*: 20, FG: 1)

Participants also noted the extensive supports available for students in terms of policies and procedures. They stated that, in the main, these are supportive and enabling.

And then that we have kinda annual programme boards because I think it gives the students every possible opportunity to succeed in what they are trying to do. I think it would be very easy for us without those policies to start viewing the students as problematic if they fail or if they miss something. But those kind of policies force us to review what's going on for this person, what can we do to sort it out. When can we repeat this board, how can we get a repeat assignment in? It really forcers us all the time to look after them as customers but as people who have issues that need to be worked with. (P: 10, FG: 1)

6.4.3. Flexibility

It was acknowledged by participants that staff had a great deal of flexibility at work. These flexible working conditions were noted by most participants as being essential to their happiness at work. In

particular flexibility relating to how, where and when they worked was what participants seemed to value. Whilst recognising the requirements around timetabled teaching and programme meetings it was recognised that times of work or place of work were flexible. This flexibility facilitated autonomous working and was important in terms of people's perception of the amount of choice they have over important aspects of their work. This flexibility also appeared important for facilitating work – family balance.

Flexibility of work hours and workplace was perceived to facilitate more productive work. One participant noted

Yea and I think this issue of flexibility really helps someone like myself, who may not work in the timeframe 9 to 5 but who is capable of working at other times and indeed prefer to do that so you can actually get very productive work done. You are ready to work you know you can meet deadlines that kind of generates a synergy in itself. You know you can frame that achieve that in a different time than office hours, I must be in my office, I think that openness. That for me, that flexibility gives me great freedom and the ability to even provide more work. (P: 7 FG: 1)

And a second:

Well the policy of, em is it a policy, just the flexible working arrangements. It's basically the notion that once the job is done and whatever time it takes. That makes me very happy. One of the side effects of that actually is that you become more productive because, I suppose I can speak for myself, but I do check emails at night time. I work mostly, a lot, at night. I work at weekends so the ending, my locus of work is actually my person and my computer, where ever that is. (P: 3, II)

The need for self-determination for happiness is evident from the emphasis participants place on autonomy, support and flexibility. It is interesting that participants perceive that factors which facilitate such self-determination are key strengths of the school.

6.5. Fulfilment

Fulfilment was identified by participants as being central to their happiness at work. Achievement, the work itself, feedback, development and learning and a strong value base for conducting the work were essential components of fulfilment.

6.5.1. Achievement

Achievement, individual and organisational success were identified as important to people's happiness. A number of participants noted the importance for them of seeing a task through to completion and the joy and satisfaction that that brought with it. The following excerpts demonstrated this.

*It was probably one of the happier weeks I have ever had, and I'm coming here Monday to say that but I really really enjoyed it. I suppose, so, it's that notion of having a project and seeing it through to completion. (*P: 19, FG: 1)

I already know now that I have a huge new skill here which was the e learning project which at the start was like ohh !!! a stricture almost around my neck and then after it was all over it was like that's brilliant. I have done that. That is something really good that I have achieved. (P: 17, FG: 1)

In addition the sense of achievement encountered positively impacted on one of participants' motivation.

That and the fact that then when it does work that sense of achievement and it does spur on other things love to try something new now you know that does contribute significantly to happiness. (P:7, FG:1)

Whilst personal achievement was important participants also noted the importance of School and university achievements to their positive feelings about working here.

Last week to me was a really good week because we had a Bologna conference here and I really really enjoyed that. I enjoyed that fact that from the perspective of DCU how well we had come out in terms of our response to Bologna in our university and I was really proud of that and really happy with that. (P: 19, FG: 1)

and

It's the same for me. I worked like that, the whole way through, and it goes back to achievement for me and is more or less looked at the whole way through, and it's a sense of that personal achievement, group achievement, then corporate, if you want to put it that way, in that sense. Even in the face of when other things aren't happy, there still seems to be some sort of a sense of achievement the whole time you're at work. (P: 2, CM: 1)

A number of participants noted the importance of student achievement and the symbiotic relationship with their own sense of achievement. One participant noted the impact of success with the students achieving conceptual clarity as a result of her efforts.

When I am in a group and I am working with the students and I am kind of educating and you feel that there has been a kind of a click click click, maybe you had been labouring away at a concept and trying to bring the students with you and then all of a sudden you get into some sort of a discussion and then the students get it, and you come out and you think yea that was really good . You know and you say to yourself that was really excellent. (P: 4, II)

This sense of personal achievement and pride in student achievement was most notable at student events such as the graduation ceremonies.

And whilst its stressful it is probably the most happiest you'll stand from pride actually for every single student you know whose going up because you know you have been there yourself . You can relate to them and it is just the fruits of your labour. You see the end of it, there's nothing nicer watching out for all the students to pass by and yes it is actually. (P: 11, FG: 1)

One participant indicates the importance she attributes to this.

There's a tremendous sense of achievement on the occasion. Graduation and Conferring are great ceremonies for both families and students that's what I think. Its' just for me it's the most important occasions in the calendar. (P: 19, FG: 1)

6.5.2. The work itself

The second sub-theme relates to the work itself and the nature of the work. The work itself was very important to the participants and there was consistency across interviews in relation to the importance of the work to participants' experience of happiness at work. Creativity, meaning, variety and challenge were all perceived as essential elements of work and happiness at work.

Both creativity and innovation were seen as School strengths. These were seen, by a number of participants, to provide a key strategic advantage over other similar university departments of nursing. Creativity was construed by participants as the development and leadership of something novel or new. Two examples of this were provided. One was the development of a health clinic within the School and another was the leadership of service user initiatives in the mental health arena.

One participant noted the importance of this for student education and the perception of these students externally.

Well I actually, just following on from that the creativity in the School of Nursing is nothing short of phenomenal and I was recently out with the psychology students on a site visit to two mental health service providers and they both commented on the high level of quality from the students here in (University Name) and particularly mentioned the fact that (University name) is miles ahead in terms of the recovery model of mental health and using service users and you the work that was recognised in (staff Name) and the team last week and the work that you're doing as well(Participant's name), really quite cutting edge stuff that is highly creative. I think that comes from being happy. Creativity comes from having that flow, being able to have that creativity. (P: 13, FG: 1)

The culture of trust and flexibility which facilitated people to choose work to be involved in was seen to contribute to this innovation and creativity. This allowed for staff to be opportunistic and progressive. A number of participants noted how the School had benefited from what they perceived to be a progressive attitude.

I think that thing that …… said before is right about that kind of have a go orientation. And I think the School has done well out of have a go orientation and I think you know that's reflected in the kind of diversity, you know, it's a much more diverse school than most schools of nursing are. Do you know what I mean, you know, a psychology programme, psychotherapy programme, nursing and so on. There is a wide range of activity going on. (P: 15, FG2)

So I suppose one of the things that I really like about the school is the fact that as I see it is innovative and you know while all innovations don't get off the ground I think that there is an openness to innovation and an openness to trying to work together to benefit the student and alongside it being meaningful, I think you have to have that, well I have to have that bit which is like new areas of innovation in your particular field. (P: 4, II)

Creativity was also perceived by participants as essential for their own happiness at work. The academic role was described in creative terms. Developing new knowledge, disseminating this knowledge and teaching were all seen as creative endeavours.

You are allowed to, for want of a better way of describing it dream of something and try it. If it goes well, thanks be to God it quite often does. Sometimes it just doesn't go the way you wanted it to go. But when it doesn't go the way you wanted it to go it doesn't feel like a weight on your shoulders, you have made a mistake and now you need to cover it up or whatever you need to do. You get on with it. You get past it. (P: 3, II)

And

So I guess being involved in the development, creation and utilisation of something that's useful and meaningful to students also brings happiness. (P: 3, II)

Creativity had been shown to correlate with positive affect in the workplace both in terms of being a consequence of positive affect and of being a cause of positive affect (Amabile et al. 2005). This is essential in a changing and challenging internal and external environment. It is interesting to note that participants in this study identified its importance for their happiness at work and furthermore perceived this to be an existing strength of the School.

Meaningful work is essential to how many of the participants saw their happiness at work and most participants noted this.

But I suppose there's just a slight difference there for me anyway. I think the work is very important, the actual work, do you know. Obviously your colleagues are extremely important, you know, but the work itself, I could be surrounded as I am by people I would consider to be very dear friends but if I'm not doing some work that I consider to be meaningful, I'd rather have those friends outside of work than in the workplace, where I can really get my teeth stuck into it. (P: 21, CM: 2)

Meaningful work was perceived in terms of work that was congruent with participants' values and with how they perceived themselves as people. The following two quotes demonstrate this congruence.

You know I really feel like that, in that congruence is very important to me that things fit together. You know my values of my person who comes into work, fits, and I think I do feel happy when that happens. When I feel that I'm having a meaningful something, you know experience. (P: 6, CM: 2)

We don't go out to aim for happiness or to explicitly pursue happiness. Happiness is something that comes out of doing things that are consistent with what's important to us and in some sense, kind of, happiness comes out of being what we are, do you know. (P: 15, CM:2)

Meaningful work was also construed in terms of the impact that the work had either on the students, their patients or the academic community at large. One participant noted this as a contribution to *"the greater good".* People perceived that their work contributed either directly or indirectly through others to improving the wellbeing of people either through the education of students or the development of new knowledge related to health and wellbeing.

I feel that I am making a difference in a few different ways and the happiest way, I am putting this in order of import, the happiest thing is that I believe that I am making a difference is to the care of

people, sick people out there eh, albeit indirectly at this point . I wish it was more direct but at the moment my role is in indirectly. I feel I am making a difference to the progression of students to the (pause) and I guess to the difference to nursing, a difference to the standard of care that's administered to people. (P: 3, II)

*So I was trying to think about things that kind of where, you know, you could say that you are actually being happy in work and I think for me that's very much about doing something that's meaningful and something that I feel makes a difference. In my case I think it makes a difference to the students and in turn makes a difference to peoples' lives. (*P: 4, II)

Variety and diversity in the work were perceived by participants as something which contributed to their happiness at work. Varied work was noted by participants to be strength of the School. The academic role is itself varied with teaching /learning, research and administration being the three main pillars of academic work. Within these areas, however, there much variety which was perceived by participants to be a contributor to their happiness on a day to day and sometimes minute to minute timeframe.

I actually think one of the really interesting notions about this work, the work we do here, is that even the concept of having a bad day is actually quite a difficult one, because you might have a bad hour and then you go to do something else and that shifts the mood around completely. I've had mornings where I come in and things wouldn't be going right, and you'd be going, Oh my God, and then I have to go down to teach a class and my mood is completely lifted by the time I've come out of that. (P: 13, CM: 1)

Variety in the day to day work and variety within areas such as teaching were perceived by participants to contribute to their interest in and motivation for work. One participant noted

You know there is a great amount of variety and it helps you not to get too bored. Just when you are about to get really bored with something then there is something that you can kinda do. (P: 13, CM: 1)

This variety allowed for people to engage in and choose work which they perceived to be challenging, which stretched them and as one participant put it

Actually going outside of your comfort zone. (P:3, CM: 3)

A number of participants noted the importance of challenging work for happiness. When talking about one approach to teaching on a module a participant noted

But I see how the other way is more challenging. Drugs in Society[3] *is a much more challenging way to teach but it's better, but I think you know it's kind of bringing the motivation into that, to do it, something that's probably more difficult that what's been done before. Fulfilling!* (P: 6, CM: B)

A number of participants noted the importance of choosing and seeking out challenging work in order to find fulfilment and satisfaction. The following excerpt demonstrates the significance of this for enduring happiness at work.

But I think even as a positive person you have to work at being happy and everything in work becomes habitualised, you know, and eventually the happiness with each activity that you engage in, it plateaus and then starts falling so. And I kind of recognised that, I think when I came in here, because I guess I love nursing, but I left when my happiness had reached a level where I wasn't getting the satisfaction anymore. Stress was out-weighing happiness and I felt I wasn't able to give as much as I could, the person that I wanted to be and so I came here and loved everything, and you know found happiness in the newness of jobs in lecturing, in educating, in being able to bring people on a learning journey. But then eventually you can go, oh, the job satisfaction eventually starts waning with that too, and I recognise it and I say, oh gosh, that's something I'm missing again, so how do I get that back again. (P:11, CM:3)

Variety, creativity and meaning in work are all components of challenging and engaging work. They provide opportunities for individuals to grow reach their potential and self-actualise.

6.5.3. Development and learning

Development and learning is the third subtheme of the main theme of Fulfilment. Again participants identified these as strengths of the school and of significant importance to their happiness at work. A number of participants noted the importance of doing their doctoral programmes while working in the School. They noted the significant support for these studies both financial and time to advance and complete their studies. Doctoral work was perceived as an essential part of research training and the development of academic expertise. One participant noted

I guess that's thing happiness relates to having a confidence in what you are doing and that comes with learning, I guess expertise. What I am talking about this my personal expertise, I'm afraid I am cautious using the word expertise in my name but there is a personal expertise in terms of dealing with people and that and I feel that the environment certainly develops that. But on an academic expertise, that's developing. That's coming with the doctoral study and that. But it's a very happy place to be. (P: 3, II)

[3] Module name

Other existing opportunities and support for professional development were noted by staff as were a number of actions proposed in the plan for the school developed by participants. Expertise and competence were identified as important both individually and for the School by participants. This development of expertise was considered particularly pertinent in terms of competing in the current economic climate.

*I think em, I don't know maybe people don't agree with me but I actually think the fact that we have got nearly 50% of our staff with a PhD. level and we have grown an awful lot in house has got to be one of our best strengths because moving forward with the economic turn we need to know that we have the capacity within our school to develop out. (*P: 20, FG: 1)

A number of participants also noted the importance of learning on the job and through the work and how that contributed to their growing competence and happiness.

6.5.4. Feedback

Feedback was seen as an important aspect of participants' fulfillment at work. Participants valued both formal and informal feedback and were happy if it came from students, colleagues or management. Feedback from students seemed to be particularly meaningful. This was important in relation to making a difference to students learning or alternatively just being acknowledged. One participant noted

And then you know I suppose what's also nice about that is the students give you feedback. They say that was really helpful or I hadn't thought about it that way, or can we do more of that. When they say that, you come out feeling really happy. (P: 2, II)

Another participant added

Yea I suppose moving on from what you are saying is kind of getting feedback as well. It increases for me anyway job satisfaction come back to what you are saying but even I think not just from colleagues but from students and getting student recognition which isn't very often done and I know like recently with our current fourth years we have had a lot of difficulties with them and at the end of it they sent a bunch of flowers. That to me was worth anything cos it made me feel well ok there wasn't much I could do about it but we work together and that kind of meant well at least we must be doing something right. Mightn't have been but I felt that, job satisfaction. (FG: 2, P: 8)

While acknowledgement was important to participants, receiving formal feedback from management was viewed by participants as an important part of progressing their work. Participants noted that at one point there was a formal performance review system in the School this had had discontinued some time before because of industrial relations difficulties. In the main participants appeared to value this in terms of having an opportunity to spend individual time with someone from management, review performance from the previous year, receive feedback and set goals for the upcoming year.

I think it think it makes a difference when people tell you that you are doing it right you know that you are meeting your objectives and you are where you should be. You know it makes a big difference to hear that because I would never, from my point of view I would never be sure myself, so the more people tell me that the better I perform. So I suppose I'm happier to know that I am doing what I should be doing. (P: 14, FG: 2)

In addition to reviewing the achievement or not, the provision of formal feedback encouraged participants to take on new opportunities and new challenges. This was perceived as being developmental in nature.

But I do, I think the performance review were good in a sense that, you know, that they might make you push yourself to maybe a role you wouldn't or you know I think I'll take a role up here or there that, fearful maybe then the someone would say oh no you will be ok, you know. I think that is good because it does push you, you need to be pushed to a certain level. And getting, as you say, getting feedback on how you are doing because we don't get that like we are always going on about feedback for students and how important it is and sure we could be sailing along and we could be making like one hundred and one mistakes and I might never know it. (P: 8, FG: 2)

and

And being given positive feedback, which was invaluable to me. I think like that that has really helped me progress in what I do. (P: 8, FG: 2)

6.5.5. Values

The final subtheme in the theme Fulfilment at work is Values. Participants saw values and their enactment as an important part of their happiness at work. Participants' perceptions of how both they and students were treated were seen to be integral to how they worked. Participants in the

main felt that they were treated respectfully and were trusted to do their jobs without over scrutiny.

This enabled participants to work autonomously and with a sense of integrity.

Prior to coming here I worked in private industry where you didn't really have that amount of trust everyone was always checking up on what you were doing where here I'm not sure where here I am not saying that nobody checks up on you, I don't know whether they do or not (laughter) but I'll say that it's left to your own integrity. You have a job to do and it's up to you to go and do it. I do find as well on trust that you are left to your own devices, you are able to manage yourself and do what you have to do and it's your own integrity that's at stake and if it's not done then you have to account for it. (P: 22, FG: 1)

Participants also perceived that this culture of trust enabled them to be more creative and to try out

new things

Also that project itself enabled me to be creative about my teaching and learning and that was innovative in itself I guess and had I not have worked in this environment I wouldn't have been facilitated to do that and so eh, I guess that involved an element of trust between the School, the Head of School to believe in my work and also, that was nice. That's one of the foundations I think of happiness is trust. (P: 3, II)

So now I work in, the reason why I am telling you this is so that it does relate because it is a complete contrast and so the feeling that I am being trusted and having flexibility is I think in people who (pause) are happy to take responsibility fosters that development and fosters personal growth and you know, it makes me happy anyway. (P: 3, II)

Treating each other respectfully was also noted as being important to happiness in the work context.

Staff were seen, in the main, as respectful irrespective of level of authority or discipline.

I think we do and the other thing I was thinking about isn't it, well for me it is fundamentally about how people treat each other. If we treat each other well I am more likely to be happy and by that I mean people not being rude, bullying, you know, what else? (P: 6, FG: 2)

Nice and that they respect. I think it is all about respect. (P: 21, FG: 2)

Some participants noted an attitude and culture within the School which facilitated staff to engage

in work that was consistent with their values and beliefs. The following excerpt highlights this

You know I really feel like that, in that congruence is very important to me that things fit together. You know my values of my person who comes into work, fits, and I think I do feel happy when that happens. When I feel that I'm having a meaningful something, you know experience. (P: 6, CM: 2)

6.6. Community

The fourth main theme identified was that of community. Other staff members, their personal characteristics along with working and personal relationships were integral to how the participants went about and enjoyed their work. This was a consistent theme across interviews and focus groups.

6.6.1. Collegial characteristics

Workplace collegiality was extremely important to participants in this study and the nature and characteristics of workplace colleagues were central to people's experience, sense of community and happiness at work. The workplace was perceived as a friendly and open environment as a result of work colleagues and their personal and professional characteristics. This friendliness amongst staff, irrespective of levels of authority, resulted in an informal working environment where people could seek help or work together on things which particularly interested them. Participants described the friendliness and niceness of work colleagues and in particular, one participant noted the significance of work colleagues for her motivation to come to work, indicating more than just a collegial relationship.

I wouldn't really be here if somebody got me stuffing envelopes. I probably would, but I think it's that sense that you would actually miss people if you weren't going to work, like if you won the lottery. (P: 6, FG, 2)

The importance of this for the working experience and for opportunities to extend oneself was highlighted in a further excerpt from that participant

I was reminding myself it's definitely the nicest place and I only ever worked anywhere for about two years before and really feeling my horizons now are really shifting but I was talking to someone who worked in a former department I worked in, an academic department and just even the way he was talking about it in a very dreary way made me really think of what we have. From a sociability point of view, general niceness of people, you know, willingness to get involved in things. It reminded me, and they have a much smaller department which maybe then they are under more pressure in various ways but it's quite a contrast to my experience now. (P.12 FG: 1)

Willingness to take a risk with something new was construed as a further characteristic of colleagues which enriched the working experience and collaborative working.

Staff knowledge and professional expertise particularly in the context of the interdisciplinary nature of the staff group and their willingness to share this expertise when working collaboratively, was also viewed as important and a strength of the School. One participant noted

I would say that when we were developing the Health and Society Degree to be able to develop a new degree drawing on existing colleagues although they won't be talking to us by the end of it (laugh) none the less being able to draw on those and people genuinely being interested in that. (P: 6, FG: 2)

It was perceived that there was a huge amount of interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise in the school and this was a significant competitive strength in the current economic climate when the school was seeking to differentiate itself from other similar schools in other institutions.

Generally participants noted the friendliness of staff as a School strength in contrast one participant noted that people were not always as friendly as was being presented. The following illustrates a sense of isolation experienced by a new member of staff raising questions about the friendliness of staff indicated by other participants.

But then as someone who was new, I often think before R (Colleagues name) moved into the office that I could die in the office and I wouldn't be found until the smell, so that's just as a new person in the place. So that's not about happiness, that's about unhappiness. (P: 5, FG: 1)

While in the main friendliness of staff had a positive impact on others in the school this particular viewpoint indicates the importance of ensuring that new staff and people unfamiliar with the department are included from the outset.

6.6.2. Relationships

Characteristics of colleagues were perceived to contribute to the relationships that existed among staff within the School and how people worked together. Relationships within the school were viewed as strong. These were perceived as collegial with staff members wanting to be involved with each other and happy to work together. This was perceived by a number of participants as different to previous or other workplaces.

But there is a real sense that people want to be engaged with each other. The majority want to be engaged with each other. I think that makes a big difference, like there isn't the kind of cynicism that you might come across like again having come from the health services there is always a kind of cynicism about what might happen or what might change. That cynicism doesn't seem to have come with the majority of us who have come from the health system and brought forward into this department and that's really useful that that's not there. (P: 10, FG: 1)

It was just, I think there are places still other Schools of Nursing where there relationships would not be as good. I am not saying people are all one hundred percent smooth or whatever but just generally there is a good working relations. (P: 6, FG: 2)

While normally good working relationships were perceived to exist within the School resulting in effective teamwork, similar good relationships were perceived to exist more broadly with other university colleagues and with the students. Such relationships were construed in terms of respectful, collaborative and engaged activities. Teamwork was noted as being strong in the school with openness in relation to how teams construct their membership. Aside from programme teams, staff were usually invited to become involved in and put themselves forward for other School activities.

Generally speaking when you go in to have a programme team meeting there's a good atmosphere, a bit of humour. You get work done. Em you throw in ideas, sometime they are accepted, sometimes they are thrown out but generally speaking you feel like there is a sense of collaboration and that like we are all singing from the same hymn sheet and we have a kind of a similar vision and so that kind of collaboration and the working together is very helpful. (P: 2, II)

Diversity of the staff members' backgrounds was perceived to contribute to the strength of programme, research teams and to the larger School team. Good working relationships were considered to be the norm and relationships across the school were considered to be like that of one big team.

Social relationships were also perceived to be important. Such relationships were important from a support perspective, particularly considering the flexible and autonomous work practices which exist within the school, the potential for working alone could be isolating. One participant noted the importance of such relationships

but you also then for me I also look forward to the days that you are in here and you get to meet your colleagues and get to feel like debrief on whatever is going on. You kind of appreciate that as well when you are here. (P: 14, FG: 2)

The importance of the social side of relationships was noted in the context of building work which was being carried out in the School and necessitated the temporary closure of the informal coffee area on the staff corridor.

You know in terms of when you are talking about the happiness feeling you go around there and you maybe sit for twenty minutes of a half an hour at lunch time and you have a bit of crack with people and there's a bit of fun and a laugh and I actually miss that and you tend to feel a bit more isolated because that's the only time I meet people who aren't in our programme cos you don't have structured or I don't have a structure to do that. (P: 4, II)

6.6.3. Belonging

Participants noted that they were happy to be identified with the School and to see themselves as part of something bigger than themselves. They were proud of the successes and achievements of the School in what they perceived to be a relatively short period of time and were proud of the diversity of the staff group. This, they believed, differentiated the School from other similar schools and had ensured the development of a number of novel educational programmes unique to the School.

And then I suppose moving on from that I suppose you get a sense of pride in where you are actually working, I'm talking too much here, but you get a sense of pride about the organisation you are in and I'm sure, people often say to me where are you working and you say you're working in ……and then I always say the School of Nursing. I sort of feel that you sort of look at …… and you sort of sink down to where you actually work and you can see there the pride that's in that. I'm proud to say that I am in …….and I'm also proud to say that I'm in the School of Nursing and that's where you effectively are. So it's that pride element also that comes into it which makes you feel happy. I'm sure people have worked in organisations where you don't really want to say where you work. (P: 22, FG: 1)

Particular events were important to the identity of individuals themselves but more importantly the identity of the School and the University. The graduation ceremony was perceived to be an important exposure of the work done and the success attained by staff and students was an opportunity to proudly identify with the organisation.

I think that's important. Like the graduation ceremony I think that, probably identify with your organisation. There's a tremendous sense of achievement on the occasion. Graduations and Conferring are great ceremonies for both families and students that's what I think. Its' just for me its the most important occasion in the calendar. (P: 19, FG: 1)

Visibility was perceived to be important for participants' identity. Participants expressed pride when the University or School was represented on the media and were anxious that this was something that there should be more of.

*One of the things, in terms of our work, and it was mentioned about being knowledgeable an*d *I suppose there's so many TV programmes on at the moment. I'd love to see the perhaps School of Nursing being more visible at a national level, coz I think there's some extraordinary work going on and I think, about the sense of identity when you see DCU and that, and we talk about it the following day at coffee, but like when it's on the radio, I think it's just great to see, you know, our school. I'd just love to see our school more visible in terms of the media. You know I think the general public pay an awful lot of money through taxes for us here, and I would really like to see us contribute more, even to Vincent Browne[4], or any of the TV or radio programmes. I think that is really important.* (P: 19, CM: 1)

Being part of something and contributing to something bigger than themselves was noted by two participants as important for happiness at work

It's a sense of being. It's a sense of being part of something and it's a sense actually being able to come to contribute to something. So there's the element of satisfaction in it, but the satisfaction in it as an employee, as a workmate, but it's also about knowing that there's a sense of being part of something bigger. I think that's essentially part of it ….Its identity. (P: 2, CM: 1)

That it's a sense of belonging to your organisation or belonging to part of something, for me anyhow, what makes a big difference about happiness is a couple of things and I suppose that have happened in the last week when I was off work, where there were (name of university) related things, that had nothing to do with me, and I went oh yeah I work there, I'm part of that. And you know they were simple things, like I was watching some ridiculous programme on TV last night on (name of TV show) or something, in the (name of venue) and oh that's in (name of university) that's where I work, you know. Or earlier on in the week I'd been watching Operation Transformation[5], I watched it on telly, and here's one of our colleagues appearing on that or whatever, as somebody who's actively engaged in working with the programme, and thinking, oh that's really nice so it's kind of it's really nice to be part of something that is relevant, that is kind of part of Irish society. (P: 10, CM: 1).

[4] TV current affairs programme
[5] TV reality programme

6.7. Summary

The Discovery phase of the AI process uncovered many strengths of the School consistent with participants' constructions of happiness in the workplace. By exploring these strengths constructions of happiness were elucidated. In this workplace happiness is more than feeling happy at particular points in time or judging oneself to be happy at one particular point. Rather it involves feelings, judgements, choices, autonomy, meaning, learning and development and collegial relationships all consistent with a more long lasting experience of happiness that can be viewed both subjectively and objectively. The significance, relevance and implications of these to eudaimonic happiness will be explored and discussed in the Chapter 7. The applicability of the concept analysis, conducted during this study, to findings will be examined and Self-determination Theory will be proposed as one way of understanding happiness in this workplace.

Whilst developing knowledge is a core component of AI, taking action and making change are integral to the process. This AI study effected actual and ongoing changes in the academic workplace and these are presented next.

6.8. The changing academic workplace

A diagrammatic overview of positive action outcomes of the study is presented at the outset of this section in Figure 8. This overview presents noted changes identified by focus group participants, and both Head of School and Director of Quality in subsequent individual interviews. Table 8 presents these findings as they relate to the vision statements and action plan previously developed in this study

Figure 8. Positive Action Outcomes

Evaluation Group Participants

Increased aware ness of contributions to happiness

Thinking more positively

Thinking more about happiness at work

Acknowledgement of feedback

Positive contribution to faculty review

Increased use of studentships to develop new relationship

Improved staff/ student relationship

Development of roof garden

Acknowledgement of impact of roof garden

More responsive to opportunities

Head of School

Increased awareness at management level

More reflective with each phase of the study attempt to change focus at management level from negative to positive

More effort made by him to acknowledge effort and work by email

Positive contribution of staff to faculty review

Increased number of staff student activities

More celebratory events organised in the school

Engaging staff in taking ownership of their workplace: Roof garden

A process of involvement of administration staff commenced

A meeting of senior staff convened to commence looking at leadership roles and the development of a Centre of Excellence

A number of appearances in the media encouraged and noted

New school newsletter: Positive feedback from staff

Review of research groups /activity underway

Liaison with other key university stakeholders regarding development of Centre of Excellence underway

Destiny

Director of Quality

The study topic of happiness helped to frame her thinking regarding her role

Noted increased number of conference and celebrations

Staff involvement in roof garden

Increased media activity of staff

Media training organised: No uptake yet

Led development of newsletter

Discussion regarding adjunct professors

Table 8 Vision, Plan and Outcome

Vision of the School in the future: How the School will look	**Plan: How will we do this?** We will	**Outcomes: attributed to the AI process**
• The school will embrace all its entities and there will be more respect for the different contributions people/disciplines make. • There will be more shifting group involvement. In the future we will be more of one big "squad" • A wider range of people will step into key roles of responsibility.	• organise a number of opportunities annually as part of a process for staff to get together to explore future possibilities and collaborations, cross fertilisation of ideas, work sharing, idea generation and project progression e.g. Creativity think tank, staff day, research sharing day and follow up. • create more openings for people to take on roles • have more school events to "celebrate" activities and make explicit individual's contribution and enthusiasms • match interests with work e.g. teaching.	• More staff engagement by staff in taking ownership of their workplace: Roof garden • Noted increased number of conference and celebrations
• Overall people will have a sense that they are supported • We will have more opportunities for review, feedback/acknowledgement • There will be more peer accountability	• recommend the recommencement of some form of formal review opportunity for staff to set and review goals and receive feedback	• Increased awareness at management level • More effort made by Management to acknowledge effort and work by email • Acknowledgement of this feedback by participants

• We will know the students better as individuals	• engage with students in ways that are meaningful to students at different levels. We will initiate some of these but will also respond to requests from students. We will invite students to let us know what they are involved in.
	  ○ e.g. icebreaker exercises for first years.
	  ○ Social and sports events
	  ○ Charitable /voluntary basis e.g. strictly come dancing, rag week events etc.
		• Increased number of staff student activities
		• Increased use of studentships to develop new relationships
		• Improved staff/ student relationship

• The School will be a place where having fun is ok	• organise more informal social events or start a social club which would organise more regular social nights out	• More celebratory events organised in the school
• The school will be smaller, more diverse and more virtual	• respond to external and economic drivers for more virtual delivery of activity.	

• The School's expertise will be more visible • The school will be recognised as a place that students will want to come to as a place of excellence in particular areas. • The School will raise its profile nationally and internationally	• develop a new format for additional seminars for people to present on their areas of interest/expertise e g short 15 minute presentations. There will be a social element to it • host an interdisciplinary conference • use the digital signage to display school/ individual staff activity and successes. Posters on poster boards will be moved rotated and replaced regularly to display ongoing activity. • identify particular areas of expertise which we will profile and which will make a contribution to the National and International Debate. We will do this by being proactive and putting ourselves forward for comment, availing of media training and sharing our experiences after we have been on radio or TV etc.	• Media training organised: No uptake yet • A number of appearances in the media encouraged and noted • New school newsletter: Positive feedback from staff
• We will continue to be innovative • The school will invest further in the Health Living Centre	• explore the organisation of a facilitated day or half day open to all staff on how to be creative and innovative	
• Our meetings will be focused and more productive	• organise and encourage attendance at training for staff for the constructive management of and contribution to meetings. We will also encourage the premature endings of meetings which become destructive.	
• We will be a centre of academic and practice excellence • The school will be more proactive in responding to funding opportunities • The school will comprise a focused research centre in a specific area • The School will support the development of publications	• explore other models of academic and practice excellence and benchmark against them. We will liaise with the new Director of Quality on this	• Liaison with other key university stakeholders regarding development of Centre of Excellence underway • Review of research groups /activity underway • Discussion regarding adjunct professors
• Staff will be competent and knowledgeable	• become better informed about the university structures which will enable us to make better linkages within the university and take on roles on wider university committees. This may require	• More responsive to opportunities

	some formal input • respond to and avail of all supports/training made available to develop our technological skills, we will avail of university supports to set up our own websites	
• The school will maintain its positive flexible practices • The school will care for people more than processes.	• have a consultation regarding more flexible administration processes and structures • be constructive and positive in our day to day language and celebrate successes in the school in an attempt to refocus negativity	• Positive contribution of staff to faculty review • Thinking more positively • A process of involvement of administration staff commenced
• We will have more international linkages, both staff and students • The school will value teaching and learning equally with research.		
		• Increased aware ness of contributions to happiness • Thinking more about happiness at work • Development of roof garden • Acknowledgement of positive impact of roof garden

Whilst noting particular specified outcomes two main themes were identified in the data. These were Rethinking Happiness in the Workplace and Taking Action on Happiness in the Workplace. Both themes were interrelated with thinking about happiness having a direct relationship with actions on happiness. Each of the themes comprised two subthemes.

6.9. Rethinking happiness in the workplace

6.9.1. Raised awareness

While participants in the evaluation focus groups were slow to identify actual changes in how things were done they noted the value of the study in foregrounding something which they felt was important but about which, prior to the study, they hadn't given much thought. In general participants described thinking more about happiness and how it is facilitated in the workplace since being involved in the study. A number of participants described how they had become more conscious of what makes them happy in work. This raised consciousness about workplace happiness and contributing factors was new for participants.

It's realising that It's loads of things that feed into my happiness I think that's what I have become more aware of. I live in quite a black and white kind of world. I don't have many shades of grey. There's not many shades of grey in (Name)'s world. So it's realising that there are lots of things feeding into making me happy. I am not just quite as simple as I thought I was. Laugh. My life isn't as simple as I thought it was. (P: 1, EG: 2)

One participant noted the fact that while working with students involved teaching them how to reflect on their practice or experiences that we didn't often reflect ourselves on our own circumstances or experiences. This had to some extent been facilitated by the study.

Yea I have similar kind of experiences about it and like we kind of teach people about reflective practice but we don't do very much reflecting ourselves what it's all like apart from what as (Name) said that kind of when we grab an opportunity to moan about things and it's no harm to have something focused where we have to think about what's positive or what's good about the better parts of it. (P: 10, EG: 1)

Thinking about happiness as a result of the study led to an increased awareness of what needed to be done in order to ensure a happier workplace.

Before and after each email about the study or meeting I start to reflect upon the relevance of happiness on a day to day basis and what needs to be done to achieve it here. (H o S. II)

6.9.2. Changed thinking

In addition to developing more awareness about happiness itself, how it is experienced at work and contributing factors for happiness, participants noted the value and benefits of uncovering and making explicit strengths of the school in relation to their happiness at work. Participants in each of the focus groups noted their previous tendency to focus on the negative and highlighted how the appreciative process created an opportunity for them to think and act differently in the School in a more constructive way. This they believed was more consistent with their natural way of being.

This gives you a legitimating, if I have these thoughts and as (Name) said it gives you a safe place and you can legitimise oh actually it is not so bad. The negative is very easily talked about in spaces like coffee times and lunchtimes but the actual deep thought about the good things generally doesn't have a place unless we make that place through friendships or in each other's office in a conciliatory so when you come in going argh, argh, argh and then listen it's not that bad the things about that and that positive restorative happiness intervention technique or whatever it is it is done in a private capacity. I think that we have a group, I am not sure about the words but the groups effect is helpful;. Sometimes you wonder its helpful in a supportive way. (P: 3, EG: 1)

The positive interplay between dialogue, reflection and subsequent action was highlighted by the following quote

Well that's the thing about dialogue, it's not just dialogue it does change social realities so that's what I was trying to is that by having had that discussion I thought differently, I was different. So it's not easy to make a cause and effect relationship between things I have done and the way I have been but I did have different awareness of what makes me happy and that impacts on how I encounter things that happen. Like it's a complex contingency to try and work out what happened because of what and I don't think you can in a really meaningful way but at the same time I do believe that sitting and talking about the conditions that enabled me to be happy did change me on some level. It changed my social reality. (P: 3, EG: 1)

6.10. Taking action on Happiness in the workplace

6.10.1. School Action

During the course of the study a concerted effort was made by management to be positive and to acknowledge staff effort and success.

We have made a deliberate attempt to encourage staff by email and to acknowledge good work.

(H o S, II)

While participants acknowledged more positive feedback and encouragement from management as a result of this study, particularly in the form of acknowledging emails, a number identified some initial difficulty with this. This was predominately in relation to receiving numerous positive congratulatory emails from different members of the School Management Team on the same issue. One participant noted an initial personal cynicism which she resisted as a result of this study when she reflected about how more feedback and acknowledgement was something which had come up in the focus groups and consensus meeting. In acknowledging that this form of feedback was something that was frequently requested and something which had come up during the course of the study participants were appreciative of the mails and recognised that this was probably just enthusiasm emanating from the project and in fact noted this perceived over response had reduced over time. One participant noted

You know what I mean cos I don't want to be negative about happy emails, cos I am all for them do you know but there is just that fine line. In the same way that we don't want, it's totally wrong to have negative emails going around the place; I think it is just getting that balance. We are getting there, you know. (P: 21, EG: 2)

Despite the general level of support for this type of positive feedback one participant however felt that such emails were annoying and unnecessary.

In general there was a sense that there was increased positivity in the School. This included the positive contributions of staff to the Faculty review Process.

I know one thing I was quite impressed with in relation to the faculty review, at one stage we were asked about community involvement so that meant obviously community stuff plus Boards plus the extracurricular stuff that people are involved with and that was a very impressive list, lots of things are going on that I certainly didn't know about, now that some people are doing in their own time and some people as part of their role. (D o Q, II)

Across the board the development of a roof garden and social space was noted as a positive activity with a good outcome. The beautiful environment developed, which was utilised well in the summer months, and the spirit of co-operation engendered by the endeavour was noted by all. While participants in the focus groups were unable to directly identify this as an outcome of the Happiness in the Workplace study they believed that it was indirectly influenced by it. The overwhelming acknowledgement of the garden by participants and what it has to offer may be a reflection of participants changed thinking in relation to their workplace and those things which contribute to their happiness including the environment.

6.10.2. Personal Action

Using an appreciative approach in the study enabled participants to reflect on the positive and they perceive this to have inevitable knock on effect on their actions. Whilst participants struggled to identify specific actions they did acknowledge that the process of thinking differently inevitably influenced how they behaved at work, the choices they now made and how they responded more positively to new opportunities. This, they proposed, was different to how they had behaved before. This was mainly in relation to things identified by them in the earlier phases of the study such as more meaningful and positive engagement with students and colleagues. One participant noted the change in thinking and the knock on effect of this thinking

I think the appreciative inquiry approach had an empowering side effect in the sense I guess what (Name) was saying, I have a saying thoughts become words become actions. And when you think about things, and it mightn't be that you have contributed, it might have been something that somebody said here you went away thinking about it. It might have been something that you said out loud for the first time and I hadn't before and it might come back into your mind you might notice something on an email or you might register something from your group that then eventually became an action like you were saying with your students. You don't know if it was because of here. And you don't always at that moment but I think just talking about a topic in a very positive way empowers you to think about it in a positive way and therefore can allow you to identify how you can

act in a way. (P.11, EG:1)

For me it was more like by provoking us to have that conversation and listen to other people's views on what conditions made them happier it was more like they were in my mind more so I would look for them more so when things came along like the studentships and there have been other examples, I can't just think of them off the top of my head. (P: 12, EG: 1)

And also

And then just being, having been provoked to make you think about well what are the conditions that make you be more happy I think I have sought those out more like actively but I don't think it's something I would find easy to see particular instances of. But I think that having thought about the list of things that we said that we would do, yea I think I have sought them out and given more feedback myself as well. (P: 12, EG: 1)

Participants acknowledged the value of the AI process and indicated how this process had helped them to focus on the positives in their work situation and the environment. While there are at this point a small number of specific observable outcomes of the study, discussions about school strengths and happiness in the workplace were perceived by participants to have contributed to a change in their thinking and how they act. Both the nature and mode of the inquiry are perceived to have contributed to this. Involving colleagues in a participative inquiry focused on the promotion of happiness in the workplace seems consistent with their identification of what is important to their happiness at work, namely being self-determined at work, fulfilled, and competent and their relationships with others at work. While they acknowledge that albeit there are minimal observable changes within the school at this stage their changed way of thinking about happiness within the school has affected both overtly and subliminally their way of being at work. Such changes may contribute in the longer term to the enhancement by participants of those things within the School which they now believe are important for their happiness. Some evidence of this is emerging as a number of the outcomes noted by the Head of School were initiated by staff who were involved in the study after the evaluation focus groups.

The discovery phase of the study allowed for an uncovering of and articulation of the positives and strengths within the school. Participants appeared both energised and enthusiastic to be talking about things which they really valued and loved about work and this particular workplace. During

the dream and design phases of the study, where participants were envisioning the workplace in the future, discussion sometimes turned to the negative elements within the school and the dominant discourses about the workplace which tended to be negative. The opportunity to be positive and the support and legitimisation of this received within the groups provided participants with an alternative discourse with which to challenge the perceived dominant and unhelpful discourse about work and the workplace among the wider staff group. The positively framed contribution of the School to the Faculty Review processes attests to the subsequent comfort in articulating the positives.

6.11. Conclusion

As with other forms of action research findings emerged at different points in the process in this study. The purpose of AI is to focus on an issue of mutual importance and to strategise effective actions with the intention of bringing about deliberate changes. This AI cycle set out to explore the concept of happiness in the workplace and to use this knowledge to initiate change resulting in a happy workplace in the future. The very act of asking questions about happiness has impacted on participants' thoughts and actions. The use of affirmative questions in exploring happiness in the workplace further effected perspectives and subsequent changes. Change is already noted in this workplace. Chapter 7 further explores and discusses these findings and derives implications for relevant stakeholders in the study.

Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1. Introduction

Participants expressed meanings of happiness in the workplace during a time period of severe economic downturn. Recession, austerity and transition were the dominant external contextual factors. The enthusiasm which participants displayed for the study and the ease with which they identified strengths of the school are noteworthy within this context. Meanings of happiness identified in this workplace across the AI phases are considered in the context of the defining attributes of happiness i.e. high levels of positive emotion, low levels of negative emotion, satisfaction, engagement and meaning or purpose identified in the concept analysis conducted in Chapters Two and Three, pages 21 and 39. The chapter also discusses how Being happy, Self Determination, Fulfilment and Community, give rise to the belief that happiness is achieved through the satisfaction of human needs resonant of Self Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 1985, Deci and Ryan 2002). The significance and implications of these to the happy workplace of the future and the subsequent changes arising from the study are examined against the background of the literature reviewed in relation to happiness in the workplace and the paucity of literature in relation to the creation of a happy workplace. The value of Appreciative Inquiry Methodology as a positive means of engaging with people in the workplace is discussed, particularly in relation to its impact on changing participants' thoughts, discourse and actions on happiness as an important factor at work at a particularly difficult time that was dominated by national economic recession. The topic of happiness and the AI methodology are new to the academic workplace and as such the findings are significant and have relevance for future research and management practice. In the final section, key recommendations are made for i) management practice within schools in third level academic organisations, ii) development of an educational programme for management and iii) future research to build on the change management process initiated in this Appreciative Inquiry.

7.2. Being Happy

It is interesting to note that in a time of financial and human resource constraints and a shifting focus towards a more neoliberal philosophy within the higher education sector (Cohen 2014) the participants in this study had no difficulty identifying the strengths of the school which they saw as consistent with their happiness at work. High levels of positivity have been identified as integral to the AI process (Finegold, Holland and Lingham 2002, Singh 2013). However, it is unlikely that the AI process could have influenced the extent of positivity that was articulated in the initial Discovery stage. My reflection notes/memos of the discovery phase of the study indicated my surprise at the high level of positivity articulated by all participants. Minimal negativity and considerable energy and good humour was evident both within the individual and group interviews. This was unexpected and interesting in the context of salary cuts, budgetary cuts, reduced staffing levels and increased workloads which were associated with the national economic crisis of the period. Notwithstanding this the School was perceived as being strong in things which they believed to be important for happiness at work and participants were anxious that these be maintained in the future. The findings of this exploration in relation to how participants construe happiness are consistent with previous work on happiness in the workplace i.e. meaningful and challenging work, autonomy, and relationships with other work colleagues (Herzberg 1966, 1987, Carr et al. 2003, Grawitch, Gottschalk and Munz 2006, Grawitch, Trares and Kohler 2007) It is interesting that those things which participants acknowledged as key strengths of the School i.e. autonomy, support, meaning and relationships, are consistent with those previously identified as antecedents to happiness in the concept analysis in Chapters 2 and 3, pages 21 and 39. In this study participants had difficulty in explicating these strengths from the experience of being happy and they were integral to participants' constructions of happiness in this workplace. Whilst participants had no difficulty identifying strengths of the School which they believed contributed to their happiness at work, they had some difficulty with expressing how they experienced being happy, particularly in identifying those components which they saw as attributes of the experience of happiness itself. Talking and

thinking about happiness at work or strengths of the workplace were new for participants. The focus in the literature on other concepts akin to happiness such as job satisfaction (Weiss 2002, Warr 2007, Fisher 2010), organisational commitment (Solinger, Van Olffen and Roe 2008) and engagement (Macey and Schneider 2008) rather than happiness attests to the relative newness of the concept of happiness itself within organisational culture. More negative concepts such as job dissatisfaction, stress in the workplace and burnout receive much attention in workplace literature and organisational discourse (Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter 2001, Harkness et al. 2005). Harkness, et al. (2005) note the importance of changing negative organisational discourses by involving staff in community activity consistent with their wellbeing. This study provided a unique opportunity for participants to explore and reflect upon happiness within the workplace. The ensuing changed thinking impacted positively on participants' behaviours, including how they talked about and acted in the workplace.

Participants broadly viewed happiness as a positive feeling, as an evaluative judgement and as a low level of negative feelings consistent with the concept analysis conducted in Chapter 2. However the further identification by some participants of happiness as a choice moves beyond the explanations provided by the concept analysis and suggests that agency in their own happiness in the workplace and intentional activity are important factors to happiness. The identification of feelings and satisfaction as factors in happiness in the workplace suggest a hedonic experience of happiness consistent with subjective wellbeing in this workplace (Diener 1994, Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz 2003) However, participants found it difficult to identify feelings of happiness or satisfaction at work, outside of being self-determined, fulfilled or being part of the workplace community. The joy, enthusiasm and pride articulated by participants about their work and working with others indicate an engagement with their work in this workplace consistent with Macy and Sneider's (2008) definition of employee engagement. Engagement, meaningful work which is congruent with participants' value systems, and collegial helping relationships, involving growth and development of all, are reflective of a more eudaimonic concept of happiness (Deci and Ryan 2008). They are also in

keeping with the defining attributes of happiness in the workplace identified in the concept analysis conducted at the outset of this study page 39 and with the notion of flourishing articulated by Seligman (2011). Nussbaum (2008, p. 342), in referring to the Aristotelian perspective on happiness (Eudaimonia) describes this as

> *" flourishing human living , a kind of living that is active, inclusive of all that has intrinsic value and complete, meaning lacking in nothing that would make it richer or better"*

Within this study self-determination, fulfilment and community were integral to participants' constructions of happiness and being happy in the workplace.

7.3. Self-Determination

A key finding from the discovery phase of the study was the importance of self-determination to participants. Participants identified the facilitation of self-determination at work as a major strength of the School. This was fundamental to their happiness at work and is consistent with findings from previous work on happiness. Self-determination, autonomy and personal control have been identified as antecedents to happiness in general (Diener, Kesebir and Tov 2009) to happiness at work (Chiumento. 2007, Warr 2007) and to happiness within academic work departments (Bakker et al. 2010). Self-management, as a component of self-determination, is also recognised as a factor in happiness at work particularly, within the self-employed sector (Benz and Frey 2004, Benz and Frey 2008). Deci and Ryan (1985), in their Theory of Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination proposed that people are intrinsically motivated by a need for competence and self-determination. They argued that these are intrinsic and innate needs and that they function as important "energisers of behaviour" (Deci and Ryan 1985, p. 32). They further argue that people are most autonomous when they act in accordance with their interests, values or desires (Deci and Ryan 2002).

The recognition in this study that autonomous working involves accountability and integrity demonstrates an awareness from participants that autonomous working is not an individualistic or completely independent endeavour but rather one which contributes to the overall working of the School. The support provided by work colleagues and the flexible working conditions all contribute to the participants sense of control over their work and their ability to self-determine in the workplace. It is argued that autonomy support and conditions which enable self-determination are important for intrinsic motivation in the workplace (Deci and Ryan 1985, Gagne and Deci 2005)). Intrinsic motivation involves acting with a sense of volition for the love of and interest in an activity. Such motivation is not contingent on external rewards or subject to external pressures. Organisational cultures which foster conditions such as these are likely to be more competitive and are likely to both attract and retain workers (Eversole, Venneberg and Crowder 2012). This could be seen as a significant advantage in the current climate.

Academic environments, with their emphasis on the creation and dissemination of new knowledge underpinned by the notion of academic freedom of inquiry and speech, are workplaces which traditionally value autonomy (Hamilton 2006). However, internationally, increasing neoliberalism, decreasing resources, increased managerialism, and centralisation of decision-making within academia, have led to concerns as to the impact of these on the academic department particularly in relation to erosion of autonomy, academic freedom and identity (Currie 2004, Holborow 2012, Cohen 2014). The impact of this on decreasing levels of satisfaction amongst academics in established university departments has been noted in Australia (Winefield et al. 2003), Canada (Catano, Francis and Lozanski 2010), with increased levels of stress noted in UK universities (Tytherleigh et al. 2005). Despite perceived deteriorating working conditions within higher education institutions in Ireland job satisfaction remains relatively high (Clarke et al 2015, Clarke, Kenny and Loxley 2015) A further exception to this in an Irish context is a study of job satisfaction in accounting and finance academics in Irish higher education institutions conducted by Byrne et al (2012) who found that participants were generally satisfied with most aspects of their jobs including autonomy

as one aspect of job content. It is noteworthy that in this present AI study participants identified that they continue to have considerable support, autonomy and flexibility and these provide much opportunity for self-determination. Whilst neither happiness nor job satisfaction were measured, participants had no difficulty identifying those factors which they perceived to be consistent with their happiness at work particularly self-determination. Both this AI study and Byrne (2012) appear to be at variance with international perspectives on reduced autonomy and happiness in higher education. They may be an anomaly even in an Irish context and it is acknowledged that happiness in the workplace is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Nonetheless, the findings of both of these studies are interesting in the current difficult policy and economic climate in Ireland. The findings do, however, appear consistent with findings from the world happiness research which indicates that despite the impact of the financial crisis National happiness levels have not declined significantly and Ireland still rates highly in world happiness studies (Helliwell et al. 2013, OECD 2013, Helliwell, et al. 2015).

Participants were eager to identify local structures and processes within the School which they perceived to be supportive of self-determination. These structures and processes facilitated participants to initiate and actively engage in activities which they perceived to be congruent with their value systems and interests with minimal control and direction from management. Such activity is reflective of Aristotle's view of the good life or eudaimonia consistent with human flourishing (Waterman 1990). Participants understood that there were certain activities which were prescribed such as particular administrative processes and the requirement for teaching and research but that outside of that there was much scope for individual advancement of one's interests and work. Implications for management involve recognising this was an important consideration for participants and they were anxious that this way of working would continue in the future despite increasing workload demands.

7.4. Fulfilment

The importance of reaching one's potential, achievement and creativity have been identified as important for psychological wellbeing (Maslow 1943, Maslow 1968, Deci and Ryan 1985, Deci and Ryan 2002)

> *" what a man can be, he must be"* . (Maslow 1943, p. 382).

In this study participants articulated the importance to them of the nature of the work itself and the value of being able to develop oneself to meet the challenges of the work. Development, achievement and feedback on achievement were important to this process. In Chapter 4, during the Discovery, Dream and Design phases of the study, participants acknowledged the importance of these. They were anxious for increased levels of feedback on achievement in the future, particularly in a more formal, structured process where staff could negotiate and set goals for themselves and get feedback annually on progress. It is interesting that in the Destiny phase of the study participants acknowledged that there had been a noticeable increase in feedback from management in terms of individual or school success. This feedback was primarily given in the form of congratulatory emails and often came from more than just one of the management team. Whilst some participants welcomed this it was interesting to note that this was not a universal response. A small number of participants articulated their scepticism on the amount and repetition of these emails and felt that they were unnecessary. One participant felt that such emails were annoying. Self-Determination Theory focuses on how people are intrinsically motivated and what environmental supports and processes facilitate this motivation (Deci and Ryan 2002, Carr 2004). The authors caution against the use of external controls, including both rewards and punishment. Whilst they propose that rewards such as feedback should help to increase competence for a task well done, if the perception of this feedback is one of control then such feedback will decrease rather than increase motivation. Achieving a balance in providing feedback, therefore, is important in facilitating fulfilment.

Whilst in general feedback on achievement was welcomed, the implications for School Management is the need to be cognisant of the potential destructive effects of providing feedback for interesting and challenging tasks as some participants may be sceptical about the motivation for such feedback. If feedback is perceived to be patronising or manipulative it could be counterproductive. The more formal type of feedback, given in a performance review system where goals are set, achievements acknowledged and supports agreed for personal development would appear to be more resonant of Self-Determination Theory and participants needs for autonomy and fulfilment.

The nature of the work itself i.e. meaningful, challenging and varied work emerged as central to participant's fulfilment at work. Meaningful activity and engagement have been highlighted as defining attributes of happiness in the workplace in the concept analysis conducted as part of this dissertation. These are also consistent with the position adopted by Seligman (2003, 2011) and a more eudaimonic form of happiness. The facility afforded to develop one's own area of interest for research and teaching enables school staff to engage in work which is meaningful and congruent with their values and interests and to develop themselves in this regard. Meaningful work has been identified as important for happiness at work (Argyle 2001, Diener et al. 2002, Warr 2007).

Achievement was also fundamental to participants' fulfilment at work. Achievement, which participants identified as important for their happiness in this study, has been noted as important for the attainment of psychological wellbeing and happiness (Ryff 1989, Fisher 2010). It is also one of the components of Seligman's amended theory of happiness which he now calls a Theory of Flourishing (Seligman 2011). Working towards particular goals and the achievement of these is essential for happiness at work (Locke 2002). Success and a sense of achievement are integral components of self-actualisation and fulfilment where individuals are attempting to grow, develop and realise their potential (Maslow 1943). Deci and Ryan (2002) note the importance of competence for self-determination. They argue that competence is increased in the light of achievement and feedback. This is only so, they propose, so long as they feel they have some level of control over the

activity itself. The strengths identified within this workplace and the vision to extend these within the action plan demonstrates a commitment by participants in this study to those things which contribute to their happiness at work.

7.5. Community

A key finding of this study was the importance of community i.e. supporting and helping each other in building a new academic unit. Social support in the workplace (Morgeson and Humphrey 2006, Ilies, Nahrgang and Morgeson 2007), good working relationships (Carr et al. 2003) and helping behaviours have been clearly linked to happiness in the workplace (Amabile and Kramer 2007). The importance of relationships has also been identified within psychological needs theories as essential to happiness (Maslow 1943, Deci and Ryan 1985). Therefore, this finding should not be surprising. The School, however, is at an early developmental stage academically. Early stage academic work is primarily individualistic (Gappa and Austin 2010). The academic is expected to develop an area of interest, engage in scholarly activity at a high level with the development of new knowledge and to disseminate this knowledge to the international academic community, relevant industries or service providers and to the next generation of practitioners or scholars as students. Many of the staff have undertaken doctoral work over the course of the last 10 years and those coming off doctoral programmes have just begun to engage in post-doctoral work i.e. preparation of tenders for research grants and the supervision of doctoral students. Whilst there is rhetoric about the requirement for collaborative working in many of the research programmes, at this early developmental stage much of the work is solitary. Whilst there is an open plan coffee area and a number of large meeting rooms all academic and technical staff have their own offices and much of their work is done alone. The solidary nature of the work is, therefore, reinforced by the environmental layout. The flexibility afforded to work at home or out of the office also facilitates working alone. Therefore, it is important to consider other explanations regarding why community emerged as important within the context of an individualistic academic culture.

In this study participants noted collegial characteristics, relationships, identifying with and belonging as strengths of the school and important for the happy workplace. Helping each other and engaging in respectful supportive relationships were perceived to be the norm and essential to how people engaged in this workplace. The reciprocal nature of relationships was also important, with helping and being helped equally valued. Whilst participants noted these as strengths of the school contributing to their happiness in the workplace, such behaviours and activities are resonant of Organisational Citizenships behaviours which proponents have argued are the consequences of affective wellbeing and happiness at work (Ilies, Scott and Judge 2006, Rego, Ribeiro and Cunha 2010, Rego et al. 2011). Positive relationships and belonging have been identified as important factors for wellbeing (Ryff and Singer 2008) and for happiness at work (Carr 2004, Chiumento. 2007, Fisher 2010). Actions developed during the subsequent Dream and Design stage involved developing a better knowledge of others and their work in the School and improving and strengthening existing relationships with others and with students. While participants in this study identified actions which built upon the already perceived strong relationships, management also need to take cognisance of the value and importance of community to participants. Attending to environmental factors and work processes which facilitate community building are important managerial considerations in the workplace (Vischer 2008).

The importance of community to these participants in such an individualistic context is interesting and an alternative explanation may relate to the historical evolution of the School. To some degree, the integration of large numbers of staff from the healthcare setting and culture where teamwork is more usual may account for this. Additionally, the background of many of the academic staff is that of caring professions, nursing, psychology and psychotherapy and this may also have influenced the helping behaviours which were identified by participants as essential to their happiness at work and key to a sense of community. The importance of community to the study participants may also be reflective of the developmental stage of the School, which is a relatively new academic department. The School is working hard to try to build collaborative strengths and establish itself both within the

university itself but also more broadly amongst the other developing Schools of Nursing nationally and internationally. This was summarised in the following excerpt:

So, the university is only what 30 years old, the School 10 to 12 years old and it's developing so I think when you're in a place that's developing and you want to take the initiative to help it develop in certain ways then we are here at a perfect time to kind of mould it in a way that suits the people that are in the School you know in a particular time. And I don't mean that in a selfish way but rather in a way that capitalises on the strengths of people that are there and pushes both ourselves and the school as an entity to succeed you know? (P12: FG: 2)

7.6. Self Determination Theory: Relevance for Organisational Management

The academic workplace is continuing to face new challenges internationally and nationally (Teichler and Höhle 2013, Clarke, Kenny and Loxley 2015). Despite reasonably high levels of job satisfaction amongst Irish academics, considerable strain is being experienced (Byrne et al. 2012, Clarke, Kenny and Loxley 2015, Clarke et al. 2015). In one study it was noted that over 30% of academics had considered changing jobs and leaving academia and a further 21% considered changing to an academic position in another country (Clarke, Kenny and Loxley 2015). Deteriorating conditions, decreasing levels of involvement in decision making, increasing levels of oversight and control, poor communication with management, minimal input to teaching allocation and increasing emphasis on funded rather than teaching led research contributed to participants' perceptions of the changed academic workplace (ibid). This is a concern both in terms of retaining existing academic staff and recruiting new high calibre academic staff. Clarke et al. (2015) propose that efforts need to be made to create supportive working environments in order for the Irish higher education system to cope with future challenges.

In this study, the identification of School strengths in line with participants' understandings of happiness at work particularly at a time of much challenge and transition is positive as is the development of the action plan. During the Dream and Destiny phase of the study participants designed and articulated their own plan for how this could achieved. Such an endeavour is entirely consistent with Self-determination Theory particularly the emphasis within the theory on intrinsic

motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as the pursuit of an activity because of its inherent interest and enjoyability (Deci and Ryan 1985). With full management support participants in this study developed a plan for things which they believed would contribute to their happiness in the workplace into the future. This plan and associated activities particularly related to those factors which participants identified as being integral to their happiness at work i.e. self-determination, fulfilment, and community.

The findings of this study are resonant of psychological needs theories particularly that of Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 1985) and to some extent Human Needs Theory The universal needs of Self-determination, Competence and Relatedness are evident within the findings. Having these needs met successfully can lead to happiness of both a hedonic and a eudemonic nature, in keeping with both subjective and psychological wellbeing (Deci and Ryan 2008). The content of one's life and the process of living well are both constituents of eudaimonic happiness where as positive affect and pleasure are outcomes and are constituents of a more hedonic happiness (Ryan, Huta and Deci 2008). Pleasure and positive affect however are often, though not always, outcomes of living meaningful, virtuous and fulfilled lives.

While Deci and Ryan (2002) support a growth and developmental view of the organism and the need for an integrated self, they also believe in the effect of social environment on the achievement or otherwise of this outcome.

"Self-determination Theory sees people as active and growth oriented organisms that actively seek challenges in their environment, attempting to actualise their capacities, potentialities and sensibilities. This represents only one pole of a dialectical interface with the other being social environments which can facilitate the others synthetic tendencies or alternatively wither, block or overwhelm them" (Deci and Ryan 2002, p. 8).

As such, the promotion of supports and activities which facilitate the satisfaction of an individual's need for competence, autonomy and relationships appear central to ensuring happiness in the workplace. The articulation by participants in this study of the strengths of the school in this regard should be noted by those who influence decisions about such supports. Any future decisions should be mindful of ensuring the maintenance of these strengths for the wellbeing of both the workforce and the School at large. It is acknowledged that change will occur. There will continue to be a need for increased activity with a decreasing budget for these activities. Organisational support for the universal psychological needs for self-determination and intrinsic motivation in the workplace, it is argued, will promote persistent and maintained behaviour change, more creativity, problem solving capacity, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours, all of which have been associated with happiness in the workplace (Gagne and Deci 2005). Such support should be mindful of prioritising activities and ways of working which have an intrinsic value to school staff, rather than the use of contingent and external rewards more mindful of the behaviourist approach. Such an approach is an anathema to Deci and Ryan's view on how people are motivated (Deci and Ryan 1985). Therefore, maintaining perceived autonomy and choice in this workplace and keeping levels of control to a minimum are key to maintaining levels of intrinsic motivation. While some level of control is necessary in the workplace it is important that managers should be facilitators of maximum motivation by ensuring minimal control and a facilitation of autonomy where possible. Additionally, when feedback is constructive and focused on the affirmation of competence intrinsic motivation is maintained (Deci and Ryan 2002). The return to a more formal performance review system, as proposed by participants in this study, would offer an annual opportunity for employees and managers to review achievements, collaboratively set goals and to identify areas of work consistent with their own interests.

7.7. Critical evaluation of the contribution of AI to enabling and understanding workplace change

The final objective of this AI study was to critically evaluate AI as a method for researching workplace change. One approach to evaluating AI is to consider the changes which occurred as a result of implementation of the action plan in The Destiny phase. Bushe and Paranjpey (2014) note two important qualities of AI: 1) a focus on changing how people think not merely on what people do and 2) a focus on supporting self-organising change processes emanating from new ideas. These, they argue, discriminate AI from other forms of conventional organisational change management initiatives. Participants articulated two main changes relating to their happiness at work as a consequence of participating in this AI study. In line with those qualities articulated by Bushe and Paranjpey (2014) these related to how their thinking about happiness had changed since commencing the study and how this changed thinking had influenced their subsequent actions. Whilst acknowledging these, it should be noted that this study is a process in evolution and there is potential for on-going change, new questions and further change consistent with the AI Process (van der Haar and Hosking 2004). These authors further argue that AI is a relational constructionist process. As such they reject a product evaluation approach which relies on measurement of outcomes of an intervention. Rather, they focus on a reflexive exercise of the on-going process in line with the underlying philosophical social constructionist assumptions of AI (van der Haar and Hosking 2004).

Participants in this study identified more reflection on happiness in the workplace and identified personal and School action as a consequence of this thinking. This represents a noteworthy change which can be viewed as a positive outcome from the process of AI.

7.8. Rethinking happiness in the workplace

At the outset of this AI study thinking about happiness in the workplace was new to participants. The novelty of the topic is not unique to these study participants. It is noted by Fischer (2010) that the study of happiness in the workplace is relatively new. Despite an increasing emphasis on happiness as a wellbeing indicator at individual (Boehm and Lyubomirsky 2008), national and international levels (Doherty and Kelly 2013, Helliwell et al. 2013) and despite an increasing interest in happiness philosophically (Nussbaum 2008) and economically (Layard and Layard 2011), the concept of happiness itself at work has only recently started to receive attention (Fisher 2010). Concepts relating to happiness at work i.e. job satisfaction (Weiss 2002), work engagement (Macey and Schneider 2008, Bakker and Schaufeli 2008, Halbesleben 2010) and flow at work (Bakker 2005) are more likely to have received attention in the literature than happiness itself (Fisher 2010). Thinking about happiness at work, what contributes to happiness at work, and how one could contribute to the happy workplace of the future is all part of the change brought about by this study. This study has provided a new and novel way for participants to become conscious of and reflect upon something which is increasingly being recognised as important for human wellbeing i.e. happiness at work (Warr 2007). Both the topic of happiness in this study and the use of an AI process enabled this.

One of the main features of AI which differentiates it from other forms of action research is its positive focus (Reason and Bradbury 2007). Although participants found focusing on the positive novel and challenging they did acknowledge that being asked to focus on school strengths influenced how they thought about their work, the workplace and their work colleagues. Participants then commented that this changed thinking affected their behaviours and actions both overtly and subliminally. Raised awareness of those factors which were important to their happiness and wellbeing at work influenced both their contribution to the development of the School formally in terms of the Dream and Design phases of the study but, more importantly, about their thinking

more generally about workplace issues from a more positive frame of reference. Nussbaum (2008), in commenting on the importance of intellectual activity for happiness, notes the importance of reflection. She argues that self-reflection is an integral part of eudaimonic happiness and calls this *"the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom"* (Nussbaum 2008, p. 343). Participants noted that focusing on both happiness and strengths affected their thinking. They commented that they now thought more about happiness in the workplace and what contributes to this than they did prior to the study. They also noted that the use of positive questions in the study also influenced their thinking and they now tended to think more positively about the workplace. This change was a direct result of being involved in the study. Change in thinking is one of the key transformational strengths of AI and this changed thinking offers the potential to create new possibilities and change how things are done in organisations (Bushe and Kassam 2005).

The focus on School strengths and positive aspects of the workplace presented challenges for some of the participants. One of the criticisms of AI is the focus on positives and its perceived "warm and fuzzy" nature (Fitzgerald, Murrell and Newman 2001, p. 21). An interesting thing within this study is the identification of the local cultural tendency to focus on the negative and the subsequent highlighting of how this appreciative process created an opportunity to think and act differently in the School, i.e. in a more constructive way which was more consistent with their individual natural way of being. One participant (P: 3 E G: 2) described this as "legitimating" her natural way of being happy. Finegold et al (2002) note the contribution of AI to attitudinal change and a new way of talking about issues of importance. Gergen (1997) comments on the deficit discourse and argues that by constructing the world, and particularly individuals, in terms of problems, there is an objectification of deficit and a suppression of positive possibilities. AI offered an alternative to this in this study. The acknowledgement of School strengths enabled by this study offered an opportunity for participants to think and act differently and more constructively within the workplace. This facilitated the development of the vision for the school and subsequent action plan which built on those school strengths in the Dream and Design phases of the study. More importantly, it facilitated

participants' changed thinking about happiness in the workplace to influence their actions including challenging negative discourses in the Destiny phase.

7.9. Action on happiness in the workplace

During the course of the study an action plan was developed by participants to initiate change and improve the academic workplace of the future. This plan consisted of short, medium and long term actions. Some of the short term actions were already implemented. Many more were in hand and during the study it was acknowledged that some of the actions i.e. more long term goals, would take some time. The vision as articulated and the actions proposed were in keeping with participants shared understandings of happiness in the workplace and consistent with the fulfilment of those things which participants articulated as important to being happy in the workplace namely self-determination, fulfilment and community. Actions included extending already strong school relationships to new ways of being with and respecting students, negative staff, staff from smaller programmes and staff from other departments within the university. Achievement and recognition were also highlighted in terms of the promotion of happiness in the workplace. Whilst a number of the outcomes were led at management level, many were initiated by study participants themselves. The importance of collectively taking action and making change is a key feature of AI (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001, Bushe and Paranjpey 2014).

The general increased positivity amongst participants was highlighted by reference to the development of a roof garden in the School during the timeframe of this study. Across the board the development of the roof garden and social space was noted as positive. The beautiful environment which was utilised well in the summer months and the spirit of co-operation engendered during its development was noted by all. While participants in the focus groups were unable to directly identify this as an outcome of the Happiness in the Workplace study they believed that it was indirectly influenced by it. Additionally, appreciation of the endeavour may also have been influenced by the study whereby previously an initiative like this may have gone unnoticed or

alternatively regarded with some cynicism. The overwhelming acknowledgement of the garden by participants and what it has to offer may be a reflection of participants changed thinking in relation to their workplace and those things which contribute to their happiness, including the environment.

Participants were slower to identify specific incidents of changes in their own behaviours. Using an appreciative approach in the study appears to have enabled participants to reflect on the positive and they perceive that this had an inevitable knock on effect on their actions. Whilst participants struggled to identify specific actions, they did acknowledge that the process of thinking differently inevitably influenced how they behaved at work, the choices they now made and opportunities they took and how this was different than how they had behaved before. As with any AI process, it is anticipated that this changed thinking will potentially influence future actions as part of their on-going Destiny (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001)

Bushe (2010) proposes that, whilst the positive focus is important in AI, its real strengths lies in its generative potential. Within this study participants were involved in a process of co constructing a workplace for the future consistent with their understandings of happiness in this workplace. This involved the generation of ideas and a plan of action to be taken by them in the collective fulfilment of this. More significant than specific actions noted, however, was the changed thinking and ensuing changed way of behaving articulated by participants because of the AI process. While much of this change came from the explication of existing School strengths, some also emerged from discussing that which participants found to be weaknesses of the School. Using an appreciative discourse and a positive focus provided participants with a new way of thinking about and acting on these (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001). This related particularly to negativity amongst a small number of school staff. New ways of engaging with this negativity were proposed in the Dream and Design Phases of the study. These included structuring meetings in a more constructive way, challenging negative discourses and creating fora where staff could learn more about each other and their work.

It was hoped that these short term actions would contribute to the more long term goals of increased collaboration and more respectful ways of working.

The acknowledgement of the value of the AI process in refocusing participants on already existing strengths in their workplace is a key outcome. Cooperrider and Whitney (2001) and Bushe and Paranjpey (2014) note the simultaneity of inquiry and change. This new appreciation should contribute to future change in the School and the implementation of some of the more long term actions identified in the Design phase of the study. Both the nature and mode of the inquiry are perceived to have contributed to this change. Involving colleagues in a participative inquiry focused on the promotion of happiness in the workplace allowed for participants to contribute to the determination of their own future happiness in the workplace. The AI process itself additionally facilitates self-determination which, as key finding of the Discovery phase of the study, is integral to participants' happiness in this workplace.

7.10. Key recommendations

The dialogue regarding happiness in the workplace has begun and has now achieved some form of legitimation in this process within one workplace in a higher education institution. It is important that this process is continued into the future and that those participants in the study continue the dialogue. Therefore a number of recommendations in relation to School management practice, the use of AI as an effective change process, and future research are proposed.

7.10.1. Recommendations for School management:

- In order to meet the identified need for achievement, meaningful work and autonomy a formal system of performance review should be considered whereby staff could meet with management annually to look at individual goals, review achievements and receive feedback and acknowledgement.

- Consideration should be given to ensuring that work spaces and work processes facilitate collaborative and supportive working into the future. This will build upon already existing strengths of the school in relation to collegial working.
- Staff should be invited to be more involved in annual workload allocation in order to ensure that, where possible, interests in particular areas of teaching/research /administration are accommodated, meeting identified needs for meaningful and fulfilling work.
- A management development programme which includes Self Determination Theory should be developed to educate school management about its potential benefits in facilitating employee wellbeing and happiness.
- AI as a change management process should be explored and adopted by School management as a means of involving employees in constructive evaluations of School activities and new ventures.

7.10.2. Recommendations for practice

- Staff who participated in this study should progress the issue of developing social relationships in order to build upon new and existing collegial working relationships
- Participants in this study should take ownership of promoting school image and activities by taking up the opportunity for media training provided and then seek out further opportunities to promote the School externally.
- Staff who participated in this study should use their positive experience of AI to explore and address questions of both workplace interest and concern with other colleagues.

7.10.3. Recommendations for further research:

- A School wide survey of employee happiness should be conducted within one year to measure employee happiness. Survey results could be used to instigate interest in and further discourse on happiness in this particular workplace leading to a second AI cycle.

- A second AI cycle should be commenced following this survey and invitations extended to encourage more widespread participation. It is important to offer those who for whatever reason chose not to be involved in this study an opportunity to become engaged in the dialogue regarding those things which contribute to their happiness in the workplace.
- More broadly AI should be used to explore happiness in other similar higher education institutions.
- Making a choice to be happy in the academic workplace was one novel finding of this study. The issue of choosing to be happy in the workplace is one which requires further exploratory investigation.

7.11. Conclusion

A new and expanded understanding of happiness in the workplace has emerged as a result of this study and participants have acknowledged that they now think more positively about the workplace and engage with opportunities more positively than they would have previously. Additionally, participants feel more positively about challenging negativity and being more constructive themselves. This has led to the potential for a new way of dialoguing in this workplace about future endeavours relating to happiness. The findings of this study surface understandings of happiness in this workplace at a time of significant challenge and change. These findings provided a platform upon which to build the envisioned happy School of the future. Early outcomes of the study indicate changes both at a personal level and a school level consistent with these. The clarification of the concept of happiness in an academic workplace and the relevance of Self Determination Theory as a framework for management and organisational practice offers something new to the creation of the supportive working environments advocated by Clarke et al (2015). Oswick et al (2005) further proposes that the positive focus within AI and its continuous cycles are very appropriate for the highly turbulent and changing nature of modern organisations. It also provides one mechanism for involving staff in decision making effecting the work environment and context. Whilst involvement in

decision making is not always possible or appropriate, non-involvement in decision making has been identified as one contributor to deteriorating working condition (Clarke, Kenny & Loxley). AI offers one way to offset this. Arising from the findings of this study a number of key recommendations are proposed for School management and future research. Those relating to School management focus on the development by management of an understanding of Self-Determination theory as a guide for understanding and facilitating employee happiness in the workplace. Those pertaining to research include extending this small study to include other School staff and to other higher education institutions.

This study is consistent with one cycle of an action research process. Cooperrider et al (2008) argue that organisations move in the direction of questions asked. Happiness as a topic and appreciative questions are new to this particular workplace. This study has attempted to focus colleagues on both and findings from this evaluation indicate movement and change consistent with their view of a happy workplace in the future. As with all forms of action research the process of change is not complete and will require from participants, including myself, an on-going commitment to engaging in positive dialogue about things which participants have identified as important to their happiness in this workplace.

Chapter 8 Critical Reflections and Conclusions

8.1. Introduction

This study focused on developing an understanding of happiness in an academic department in a higher education institution in Ireland. It was an action-oriented inquiry adopting an AI Methodology to engage staff in both a process of discovery and action. Findings of the study support Self-Determination Theory as an explanation for how happiness is understood in this setting and AI provides a methodology whereby happiness can be facilitated within the workplace in the future. Findings of the study indicate some changed thinking and new behaviours which are consistent with participants espoused understanding of their happiness in this workplace.

8.2. Reflection on the process and limitations of the study

At the outset of the study my role in the School was that of Head of School. After the Discovery phase of the study prior to convening the Consensus Meetings held for the Dream and Design phase of the study my role reverted from that of Head of School back to lecturer.

Aside from my own personal and professional development, one rationale for choosing to undertake the Professional Doctorate in Educational Leadership was that I could extend my knowledge of change management as a process but also that any research project undertaken during the programme would have some benefits for my own area of work both practically and theoretically. The choice of topic, research methodology and methods employed were carefully considered in order that they were congruent with my own values and beliefs about collaborative working and the importance of practical benefits of any research. Whilst I cannot overlook the potential impact of my role at the time on the willingness of colleagues to become involved and to contribute openly in the process, my own reflection of the process was that it was an enthusiastic, engaged and constructive process.

The nature of action research is that it takes place over time particularly in the realisation of long terms goals. It is acknowledged that in this study the timeframe was short as the evaluation took place six months after the Dream and Design phases of the study. Many of the long term actions were still outstanding but some of the short term actions were realised as were the changes noted by participants in how they thought and behaved.

8.3. Authenticity of the participatory process

Core to an AI process is participation. Within this AI process colleagues across school teams and professional boundaries were invited to and chose to participate in the study knowing in advance that they were becoming engaged in a process which would involve their contribution over time potentially leading to a happier workplace in the future. The invitation to participate was open to all school staff and those who indicated interest and willingness to participate all became co-participants in the research. A broad range of academic and non-academic staff from across the school chose to participate and I see this as one of the strengths of the study. The only group of staff who were not represented were the administrative staff. Despite numerous invitations to participate no one from the administration team chose to participate and this did raise concerns for me as a manager at the time.

Those who volunteered to be involved in the study appeared happy to participate in the interviews, focus groups and consensus groups and were happy to receive transcripts, validate their authenticity or make minor amendments such as typographical errors or to clarify unclear statements. Additionally participants were willing to comment on the first attempt at developing categories from the discovery phase in the consensus meetings. It is difficult to know whether participants volunteered to be part of the study because of their genuine interest in the study itself and the potential for change inherent in the process or whether they volunteered out of a collegial effort to help me advance my studies. Whatever the motivation, my observation was that participants engaged wholeheartedly with the process and either motivators were entirely in keeping with the

themes identified by participants as those which contribute to their happiness at work, namely Self-determination, Fulfilment and Community.

8.4. Size of the group of participants relative to the School staff group

The School has a large staff group of over eighty people. Over a third of them volunteered to participate. This is a sizable number of staff , a critical mass, and it is hoped that change in the thinking and actions of participants will have a knock-on effect in terms of how the school advances towards being a happier workplace. One particular reflection, however, is the fact that, despite the positive nature of both the topic and the process, over two thirds of staff chose not to or were unable to participate. There are numerous reasons why this may have been the case including demanding workloads, competing commitments, possible lack of interest or concerns about my role in the process. Naively I assumed that people would jump at the chance to be involved in the study because of its positive focus and the collaborative approach to improving workplace happiness. I believed that the approach would appeal to staff who, to date, may have felt excluded from decision making and who might take this opportunity to contribute to the development of a happier workplace for all, including themselves. AI has been touted as a new and progressive approach to the management of change in organisations (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, Sekerka, Zolin and Smith 2009). The literature is replete with espousing the positive values upon which the approach is based and it has been recommended as a new and innovative philosophy and method for leaders when leading change initiatives within their own organisations (Cooperrider and Whitney 2001, Reed et al. 2002, Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2003, Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, Reed 2006, Bushe 2010). Within the approach arguments for taking an appreciative and positive stance are based on the belief that organisations move in the direction of their inquiries and the more positive the inquiry the more long lasting the impact (Cooperrider *et al.* 2008). While reading the literature on AI one might be forgiven for believing that the approach is problem free in relation to participation and that the approach is welcomed wholeheartedly within organisations. Despite the

emphasis on the positive and the lack of focus on the problems within an organisation one cannot assume, as I did, that employees will engage willingly in an AI process, notwithstanding the potential for a positive impact for them. Such an assumption seems foolhardy and fails to acknowledge the complexity of organisational dynamics. This seems particularly relevant within an Irish academic context. Bushe (1998a) suggests that AI is best not used where there are deeply held grievances in an organisation. The emphasis in the approach on the positive may lead to repression of beliefs and feelings around these with "nasty side effects" as a consequence (Bushe 1998a, p. 2). Whilst the research community within the School in question would have been familiar and comfortable with qualitative and action research approaches to inquiry, AI was relatively new to many. Those who chose to be involved found the process useful but also acknowledged the cultural difficulties with appreciation. While acknowledging how much they liked the positive and appreciative focus of the study they did acknowledge that it was a different experience for them. Many who chose not to become involved may have viewed the process with scepticism because of the perceived warm and fuzzy nature of AI (Dick 2004) or may have been concerned about my role in it as previously mentioned.

8.5. Staff and managers as colleagues and co-participants

It is interesting that the roles of some of the co-participants changed during the time of the study. Participants would have been aware of the impending change to my role as Head of School back to that of lecturer in advance of commencing the study as this change was part of the normal and widely known process for changeover of Head of School. What could not have been anticipated was the changing role of some of the participants who during the course of the study took on management roles within the School i.e. Head of School and Deputy Head of School. These changes took place after the Discovery phase of the study.

Reflections from both the Discovery, Dream and Design phases of the process indicated enthusiasm and engagement from participants. Participants were eager to contribute with minimal pauses in the

groups interactions. Whilst the thrust of discussions were positive, participants in the Dream and Design phases across all groups articulated some negatives which impacted on their happiness in the workplace. My reflection of the two groups held in the Destiny phase indicated reticent responses with a greater number of pauses and more direct probing from me the moderator. This may have been because participants required time to reflect themselves on personal changes which had occurred during the course of the study. Alternatively it may have been an unanticipated consequence of the changing roles of participants, possibly resulting in reticence of some participants to be open or negative about the process or perceived outcomes of the study.

8.6. Transferability of the findings

The purpose of this study was to explore with colleagues understandings of happiness in one workplace and to initiate a process of change consistent with those understandings leading to a happy workplace in the future. Inherent in that venture was the understanding that this inquiry was undertaken within a specific cultural and contextual environment and as such findings from this study would not nor could not be generalisable. Notwithstanding the cultural and contextual factors it is hoped that some of the findings relating to the process of change and understandings of happiness in an academic workplace may be transferable to other contexts.

8.7. Change

Whilst the nature of the inquiry was one of discovery and change, it is important to note that no baseline measurement was taken at the outset to measure levels of happiness among the staff group nor indeed to measure quantitatively strengths of the school in relation to employee happiness. As a result therefore it is impossible to determine the level or extent of any actual change in participants' levels of happiness nor was this a requirement of the process. The perception of the participants is that there has been a change in their way of thinking about happiness and how they themselves act, consistent with their new awareness. This change has provided a new and more

positive discourse within the workplace which hopefully may continue to influence more positive and constructive behaviours of both study participants and other staff leading to a happy workplace in the future. A number of positive outcomes, outlined in chapter 5, have been identified as a result of the study and it is hoped that the study has commenced a dialogue amongst staff and a new way of engaging in the school at all levels which will continue into the future. AI as with other forms of action research is a continual process of discovery and action (Cooperrider *et al.* 2008).

While acknowledging that much has been done in the organisational development world in relation to exploring and developing concepts consistent with happiness at work, job satisfaction, work engagement and organisational commitment there is a paucity of interventional research on the development of happiness at work. The more recent work of Seligman is one exception to this and he describes a number of interventional studies conducted by himself to develop happiness, an example of which took place with the US army (Seligman 2011). This research describes an intensive educational programme for marines on emotional, family, social and spiritual fitness, post traumatic growth and resilience development. Some evidence is emerging that these interventions are having a positive impact on soldier wellbeing (Seligman 2011). Other interventional techniques utilised by Seligman and which met with some degree of success in relation to individual well-being include keeping a daily gratitude journal, "what went well exercises" and signature strengths exercises. Indeed, one participant of this AI study noted Seligman and his work in one of the evaluation focus groups as an approach which might have had more visible outcomes than those achieved by this study. The purpose of this study was not, however, to make people happier. Rather it was to engage people in a dialogue about happiness at work which would lead to a clearer understanding of how, in this workplace, we construct happiness, how the school contributes to this and how we can do more of those things which will contribute to a happy workplace in the future.

"Appreciative Inquiry operates on the premise that asking positive questions draws out the human spirit in organisations. In a self-organising way the organisation begins to construct a more desirable

future. This is the key objective of the technique. It is accomplished by bringing forth the positive change core of the organisation, making it explicit and allowing it to be owned by all" (Cooperrider & Skerka 2003, p. 201)

It is hoped that this new dialogue and way of thinking will move us towards more activity consistent with happiness. It is a beginning.

8.8. Positionality

The arguments for and against insider research have been made in Chapter 3 page 68. Being an insider gave me an understanding of the context and I felt it was an advantage to be an insider in this process. On reflection however I note that at times I was conscious that things that were being said and particularly actions espoused by one or two of the participants were not consistent with my experience of them on the ground. This is, of course, a concern of all research in that what people say they do is not necessarily what they actually do. Although they were small things which did not necessarily effect the outcome of the research nor impact on anyone else I was uncomfortable with them. Had I been an outsider I would not have been aware of this issue but I have learnt that it is something for me to consider in any future research where I may be researching from outside of the environment.

8.9. Conclusion

The main focus of this research was to engage staff in a collaborative venture to build a happy workplace for the future. The concept of happiness in the workplace has been gaining increasing attention and has been explored from hedonic, subjective wellbeing perspectives and increasingly a perspective more consistent with Aristotelian eudaimonia. In this thesis I have argued that happiness in the workplace resonates with individuals needs for Self-determination, Competence and Relatedness consistent with Self-Determination. Whilst acknowledging that pleasure and satisfaction are both important to participants' happiness in the workplace these are entirely linked

to their need for autonomous and meaningful work in an environment of mutual support and community. The action arising from this study is consistent with participants' constructions of happiness in the workplace and the current strengths of the school. Aligning these has led to some changes in thinking and behaviour of participants and some reported outcomes of actions as a result of this.

The journey has begun with more questions to be asked and more answers to be found. This study has demonstrated that working collaboratively in the pursuit of these answers using an appreciative framework allows for new ways of thinking and being in the workplace.

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Appendix One: Model, Borderline and Contrary Cases

Model case

John is a forty five year old man who lives in a four bedroom house in the suburbs of Dublin. He is married for thirteen years and has three children, two boys and a girl. He has regular contact with his parents who live 50 miles away and he tries to visit once every one to two months. Along with his wife he contributes to the upkeep and maintenance of his home and to transporting his children to their various sporting activities. They have an active social life going out at least once a week together and occasionally on weekends with friends.

John works as a teacher in a secondary school three miles from his home. Overall he loves his job although occasionally it can be a little stressful. He cycles to and from work daily, which he really enjoys. One night a week he volunteers in an adult literacy programme and has been doing this for the past 10 years. One evening a week he plays a pick-up game of soccer with his friends.

Borderline case

Tim is a forty year old man who lives in a quiet rural town. He is married with three children and with his wife is involved in all aspects of childrearing and household upkeep. He loves and is loved by his wife and they make time to spend time together in their busy schedule and to go out occasionally with their friends. His mother died some years ago and he regularly sees his father who lives close by.

He works in a local telephone company in telephone support. While he is paid a good salary he would like to work at something more in line with his interest in history. Because of his busy schedule he doesn't have time for extracurricular activities or interests. This is something he would like to change.

Contrary Case

Jim is forty seven years old. He lives in a three bedroom house in a relatively new housing estate on the outskirts of the city with his wife and two children. He has a very high mortgage having bought his home during the Celtic Tiger. The house is no longer worth what he paid for it. He experiences quite a lot of stress as a result of worry about the large debt and this has not been helped by the fact that he lost his job in the construction industry three years ago.

Jim spends much of his time watching the TV. He finds it hard to motivate himself to help his wife with the children or house. They rarely go out socially and there is considerable strain on their relationship. He spends much of his time in a bad mood and frequently drinks to excess at home.

Appendix Two: Ethical Approval

Dublin City University
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath

DCU

Ms. Catherine McGonagle
School of Nursing

2nd March 2011

REC Reference: DCUREC/2011/011

Proposal Title: **Happiness in the workplace; an Appreciative Inquiry study**

Applicants: Ms. Catherine McGonagle, Dr. Naomi Elliott

Dear Catherine,

Further to expedited review, this research proposal is approved. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

pp Fiona Brennan

Dr. Donal O'Mathuna
Chair
DCU Research Ethics Committee

DCU
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www.dcu.ie

Appendix Three: Email invitation

Dear ,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. This is a participatory study being conducted in the School of Nursing entitled Happiness in the Workplace: An Appreciative Inquiry. I, Catherine McGonagle, am the principal investigator and this study is being conducted as part of a Professional Doctorate in Education in the School of Education Studies in DCU. It will be supervised by Dr. Naomi Elliott from Trinity College. Please take some time to read the attached information leaflet as it will explain what is required of you if you consent to participate in the study.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the study please indicate this to me by return email or by Friday 20th of May.

Regards
Catherine

Appendix Four: Information Leaflet

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study. This is a participatory study being conducted in the School of Nursing entitled Happiness in the workplace; An Appreciative Inquiry. I, Catherine McGonagle, am the principal investigator and this study is being conducted as part of a Professional Doctorate in Education in the School of Education Studies in DCU. It will be supervised by Dr. Naomi Elliott from Trinity College. Please take some time to read this information leaflet as it will explain what is required of you if you consent to participate in the study.

The purpose of the study is to involve staff in a process of exploration and collaboration focusing on promoting happiness in the School of Nursing as a workplace. This process will take place over a period of 6 – 10 months and will involve meeting with me either in individual interviews or in a focus group on at least 3 separate occasions. During these meetings we will explore our understanding of happiness at work, we will explore times at work when things went particularly well and we will examine factors which contributed to that. When we have identified existing strengths within the School relating to happiness we will look at how we can expand and do more of these by developing a plan and putting it into action. Finally we will examine how well this worked for us and how we found the process.

It is hoped that you will find the prospect of being involved in something which should have a direct benefit for you, attractive. I am looking for volunteers to participate in the study

from all areas of the school staff. The study will require four staff members willing to participate in the individual interviews and between 18 and 20 to be involved in two separate focus groups. Despite the fact that I as researcher will not name any individual staff members in any reports, thesis or publications, use of the focus groups makes it impossible to guarantee complete anonymity. I will also not name the School in any publications but some of the contextual data may discriminate it from other Schools of Nursing and therefore identify the site.

All data gathered during the process will be kept locked in the researchers office and only I as researcher and my supervisor will have access to it. You will be fully entitled to withdraw from participating in the study at any point with no adverse consequences.

I am very happy to provide any further information upon request and you can contact me at **catherine.mcgonagle@dcu.ie** or 70008537 at any time during the study.

Should you be willing to participate in the above study you will be asked to sign a consent form. Should there be more than the required number of volunteers names will be pulled from a hat by an independent person outside of the school.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information leaflet and for considering participating in the study.

If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000

Appendix Five: Consent Form

Happiness in the workplace; an Appreciative Inquiry

Informed Consent form

Research being conducted by: Ms Catherine McGonagle

Contact information catherine.mcgonagle@dcu.ie or 7008537

I have read the information leaflet and I am happy that I understand the purpose of the study Yes No

☐ ☐

The researcher has been available to answer any questions that I have had about the study

Yes No

☐ ☐

I understand that I will meet with the researcher in either individual interviews or focus group interviews on at least three occasions over a six to ten month period

Yes

No ☐ ☐

I agree to the interviews being audio tape recorded. Yes

No ☐

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any

point without any adverse consequences Yes No

☐ ☐

I understand that the researcher will not name me in the study but complete anonymity

may be difficult because of the use of focus groups. Yes No

☐ ☐

I agree to participate in the proposed study.

Signed (Participant) _____

Date_____

Witness: _____ Date:

_____

Signed (Researcher) _____ Date

_____

Appendix Six: Interview guide

Happiness at work; an Appreciative Inquiry
Interview Guide: Individual and focus group
1st meeting

I am interested in exploring happiness at work. Can I ask you to think for a few minutes about what it is like to work in the School and think about some particular good experience or experiences you have had working here.

1. Can you tell as if you were telling a story about that experience or experiences?

   - What is it about that experience that makes it so memorable?
   - What organisational factors contributed positively to the experience

2. What do you see as the key strengths of the school?
3. Are there any existing processes, policies, activities and practices in the School which you see as important to happiness at work
4. If you could imagine the school in the future what would it look like?

Appendix Seven: Email Invitation to Consensus Meetings

Dear

Many thanks for continuing to participate in the study. In our first meeting we began exploring happiness in the workplace, i.e. the School. I would like to invite you to the second meeting of our study. I enclose the following link to a doodle poll with some proposed dates for one of the groups

http://www.doodle.com/cz6wz3pm4b2a24br

Please identify which dates suit you. The meeting will be held on the date that suits most people and will take two hours. If none of the dates suit please advise and I will try to accommodate you in the other group.

At this meeting we will review strengths of the school identified from the first meeting. One of the things which I would like us to do then is to think about the school in the future as a happy place to work in and to imagine what that would look like. Following this we will identify what it is we will need to do to make that happen. I wanted to advise you of this so you have some time to think about it in advance of the meeting.

Regards
Catherine

Appendix Eight Topic Guide for Consensus Meetings

Imagine the School of the Future. Imagine it as a happy place to work. Describe what looks like. Be as creative and provocative as you like.

Describe the types of actions and changes we need to make in order us to create this happy workplace.

Appendix Nine: Email invitation to Evaluation Groups

Colleagues,

I would like to invite you to the last of our three meetings about the Happiness in the Workplace. I am proposing that we meet on Monday the 18th of June at 2pm. I will forward the location nearer the time but am anxious to book early as I know June is busy. I have chosen this time because the Qualitative Summer School will be over and most of the PBERCs and PABs. I am aware that there will still be some Boards outstanding until the 21st but am hopeful that in between will be quiet. If this time or date do not suit you please advise and I will try to accommodate you in the other group. Either way I would be grateful if you could confirm your intention to attend. The meeting should last about an hour.
Once again many thanks for your contribution as we enter the final stage of the project.

Regards
Catherine

Appendix Ten: Interview guide: Evaluation Groups

I am interested in your experience of being involved in this study.

Can you tell me how the School has changed, if it has, since we started working on this project?

Can you tell me what it has meant for you to be involved in the study?

How has your involvement affected your own experience of happiness at work?

Appendix Eleven: Interview questions Director of Quality/Head of School

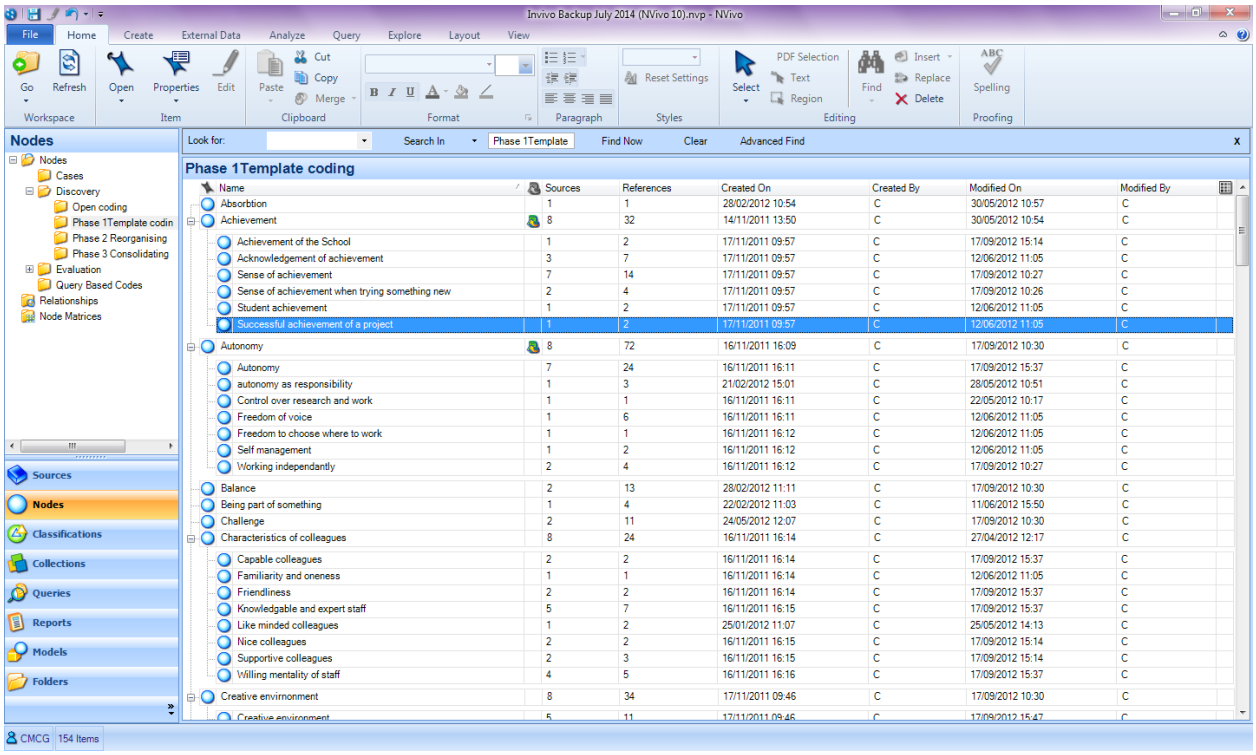
In your role as Director of Quality/Head of School have you noticed any changes in the School which you attribute to the Happiness in the Workplace study?

Can you identify any progress on the strategic vision or the action plan arising from the study?

- Has there been any special training for staff organised or planned, particularly in relation to chairing meetings, academic structures and processes and technology. If so has there been any uptake?
- Has there been any activity to promote the School either with partner services or in the media i.e on radio or TV since this was raised as an issue?
- Has there been any progress on staff creativity or research events?
- Have there been any particular School celebrations?
- Has there been any progress on the implementation of PMDS or formal review/feedback system for staff
- Is there any progress in organising any interdisciplinary conferences?
- Has there been any progress on displaying school activity on either the poster ior digital displays?
- Any progress on Public Relations issues e.g., identifying particular expertise amongst the staff group to speak to the media on academic issues.
- Has there been any on investigating of models of academic excellence e.g. exploratory trips to other academic environments or invitations issued to speakers from other academic centres of excellence.

Have you any other observations arising from the happiness in the workplace study?

Appendix Twelve: Meanings of happiness: Coding, category and theme formation



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Sense of achievement when trying something new	2	4	17/11/2011 09:57	C	17/09/2012 10:26	C
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autonomy as responsibility	1	3	21/02/2012 15:01	C	28/05/2012 10:51	C
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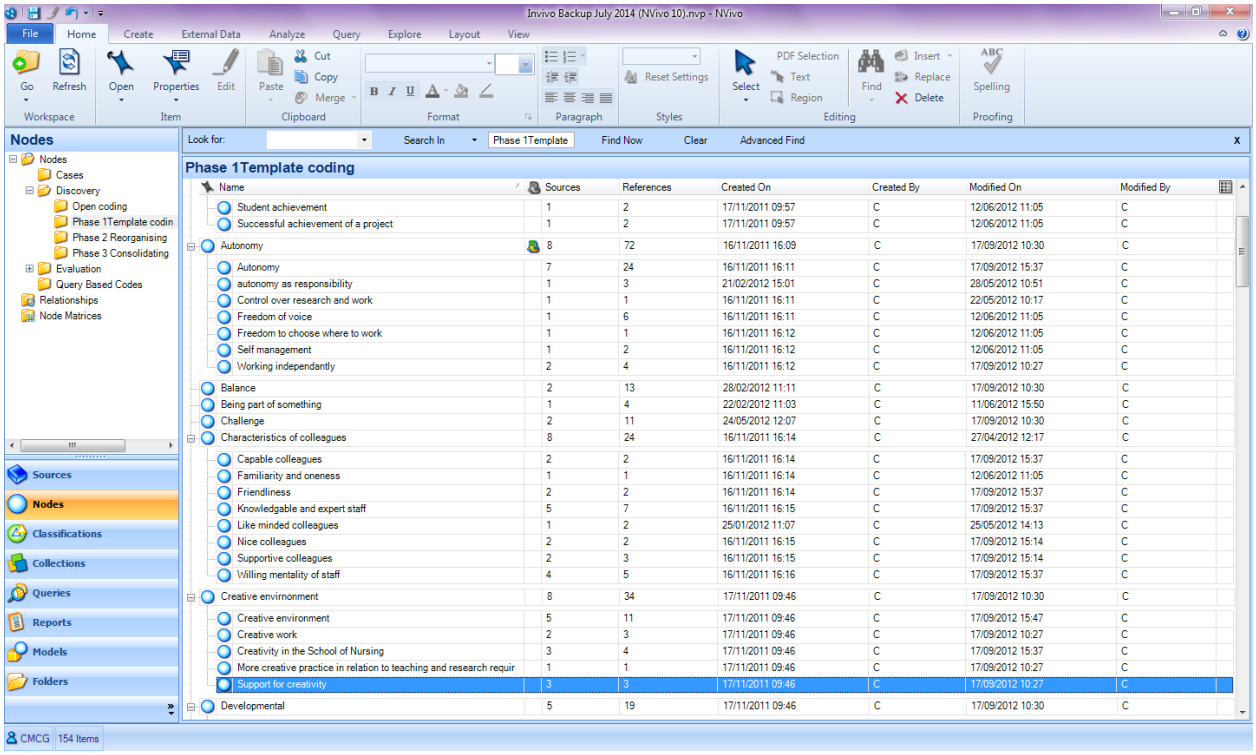
Freedom to choose where to work	1	1	16/11/2011 16:12	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Self management	1	2	16/11/2011 16:12	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Working independantly	2	4	16/11/2011 16:12	C	17/09/2012 10:27	C
Balance	2	13	28/02/2012 11:11	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Being part of something	1	4	22/02/2012 11:03	C	11/06/2012 15:50	C
Challenge	2	11	24/05/2012 12:07	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Characteristics of colleagues	8	24	16/11/2011 16:14	C	27/04/2012 12:17	C
Capable colleagues	2	2	16/11/2011 16:14	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Familiarity and oneness	1	1	16/11/2011 16:14	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Friendliness	2	2	16/11/2011 16:14	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Knowledgable and expert staff	5	7	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Like minded colleagues	1	2	25/01/2012 11:07	C	25/05/2012 14:13	C
Nice colleagues	2	2	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:14	C
Supportive colleagues	2	3	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:14	C
Willing mentality of staff	4	5	16/11/2011 16:16	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Creative envirnonment	8	34	17/11/2011 09:46	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C



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autonomy as responsibility	1	3	21/02/2012 15:01	C	28/05/2012 10:51	C
Control over research and work	1	1	16/11/2011 16:11	C	22/05/2012 10:17	C
Freedom of voice	1	6	16/11/2011 16:11	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Freedom to choose where to work	1	1	16/11/2011 16:12	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
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Working independantly	2	4	16/11/2011 16:12	C	17/09/2012 10:27	C
Balance	2	13	28/02/2012 11:11	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Being part of something	1	4	22/02/2012 11:03	C	11/06/2012 15:50	C
Challenge	2	11	24/05/2012 12:07	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Characteristics of colleagues	8	24	16/11/2011 16:14	C	27/04/2012 12:17	C
Capable colleagues	2	2	16/11/2011 16:14	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Familiarity and oneness	1	1	16/11/2011 16:14	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Friendliness	2	2	16/11/2011 16:14	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Knowledgable and expert staff	5	7	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Like minded colleagues	1	2	25/01/2012 11:07	C	25/05/2012 14:13	C
Nice colleagues	2	2	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:14	C
Supportive colleagues	2	3	16/11/2011 16:15	C	17/09/2012 15:14	C
Willing mentality of staff	4	5	16/11/2011 16:16	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Creative envirnonment	8	34	17/11/2011 09:46	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
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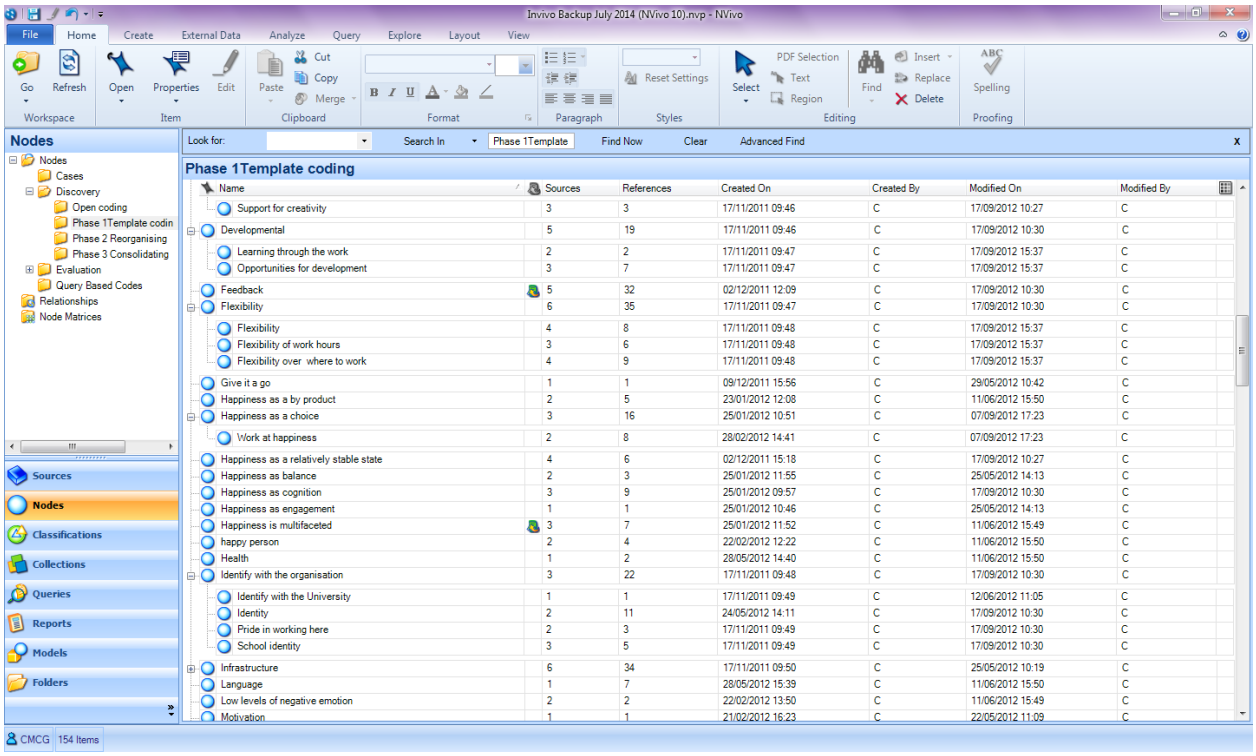
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Happiness as balance 2 3 25/01/2012 11:55 C 25/05/2012 14:13 C
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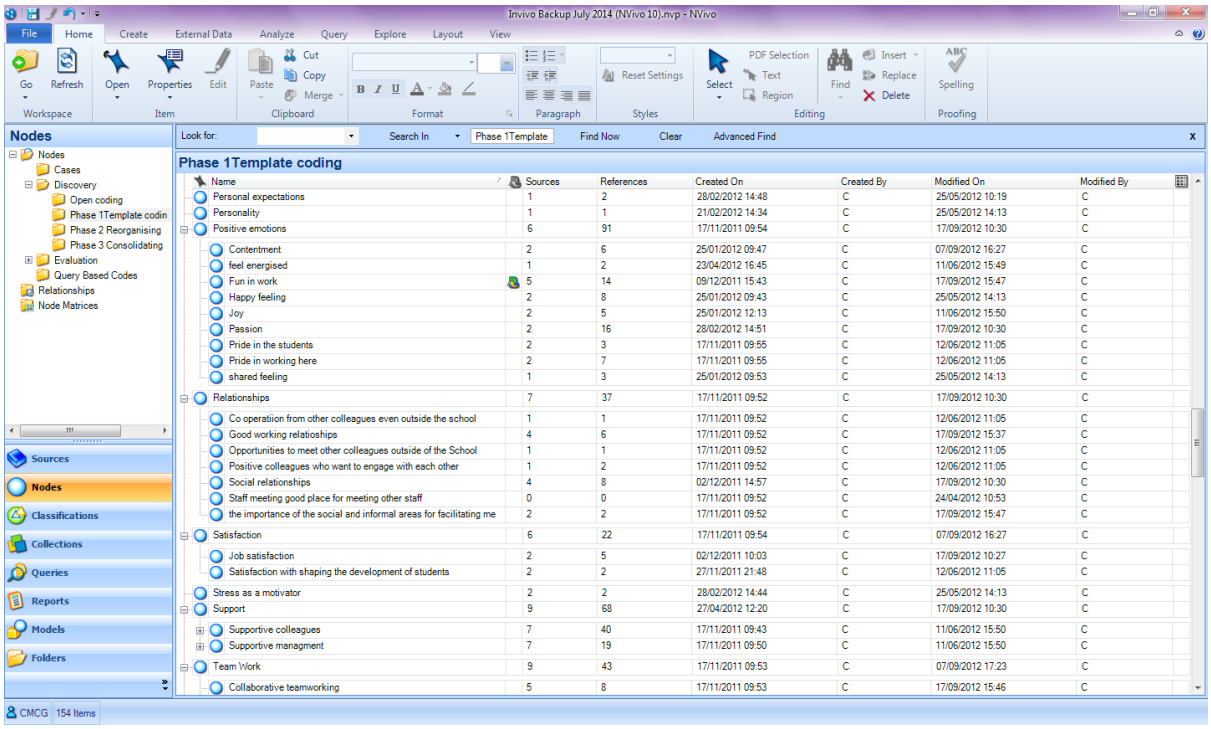
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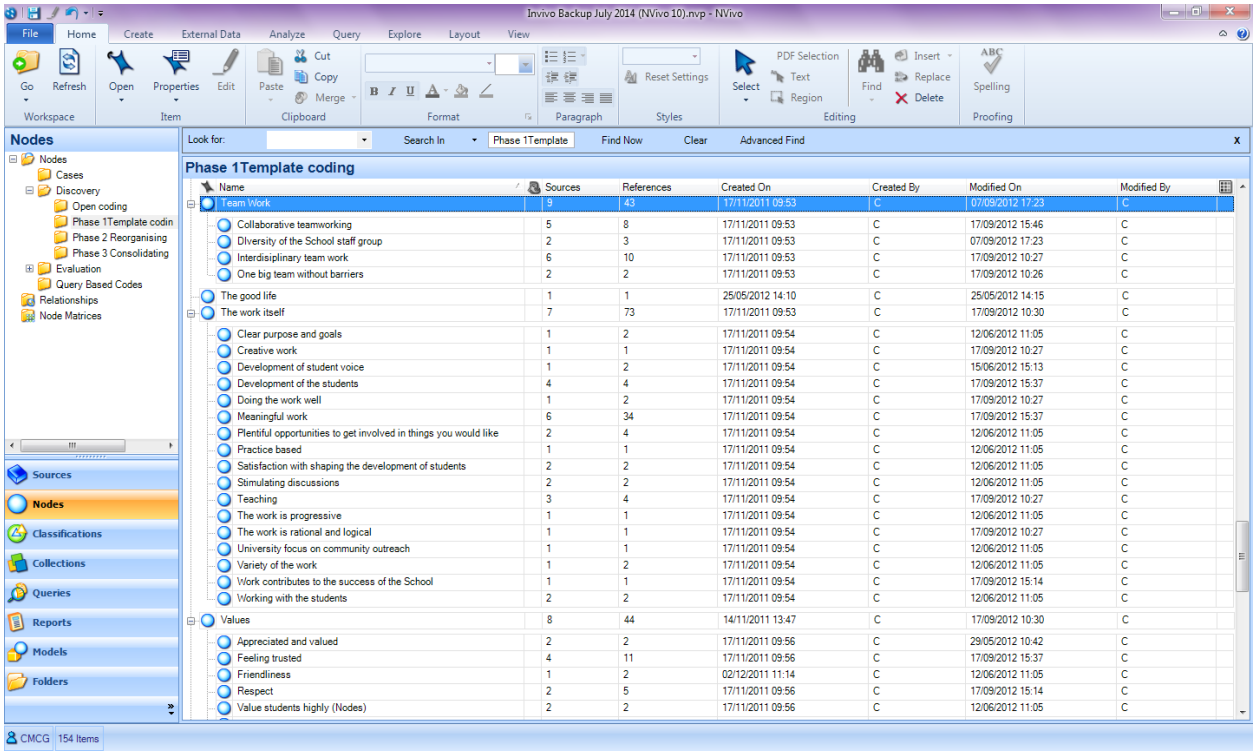
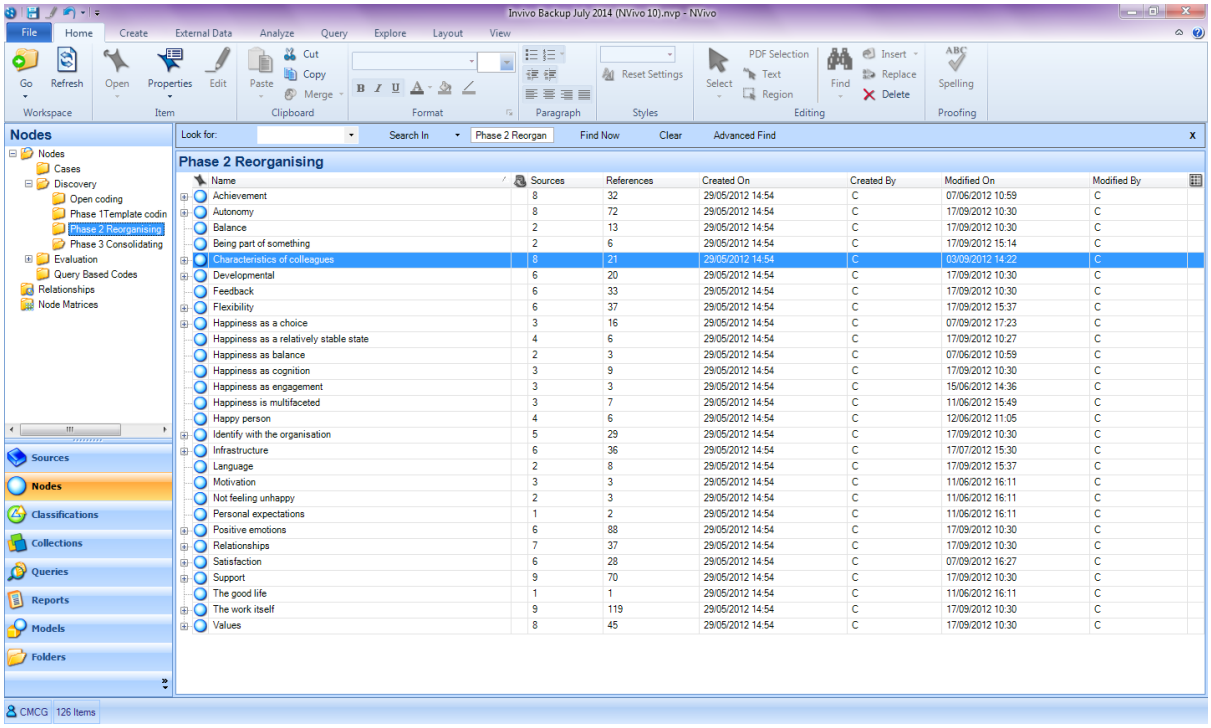
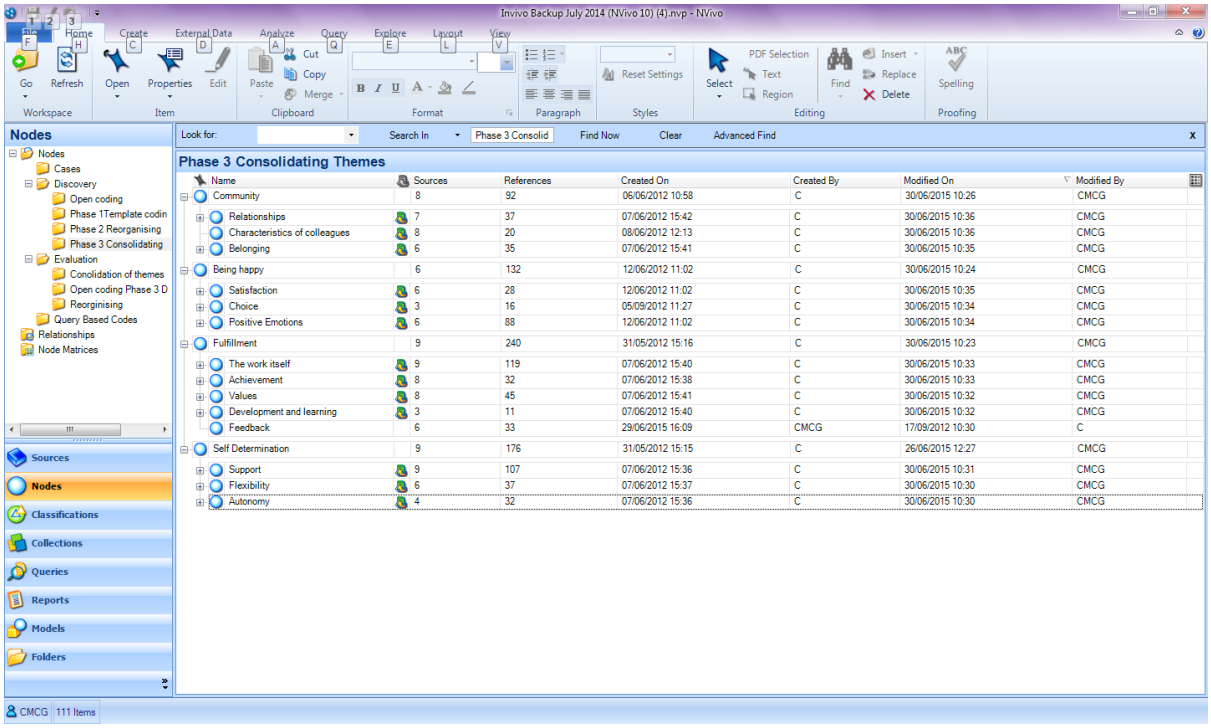
Personal expectations 1 2 28/02/2012 14:48 C 25/05/2012 10:19 C
Personality 1 1 21/02/2012 14:34 C 25/05/2012 14:13 C
Positive emotions 6 91 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Contentment 2 6 25/01/2012 09:47 C 07/09/2012 16:27 C
feel energised 1 2 23/04/2012 16:45 C 11/06/2012 15:49 C
Fun in work 5 14 09/12/2011 15:43 C 17/09/2012 15:47 C
Happy feeling 2 8 25/01/2012 09:43 C 25/05/2012 14:13 C
Joy 2 5 25/01/2012 12:13 C 11/06/2012 15:50 C
Passion 2 16 28/02/2012 14:51 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Pride in the students 2 3 17/11/2011 09:55 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Pride in working here 2 7 17/11/2011 09:55 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
shared feeling 1 3 25/01/2012 09:53 C 25/05/2012 14:13 C
Relationships 7 37 17/11/2011 09:52 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Co operatiion from other colleagues even outside the school 1 1 17/11/2011 09:52 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Good working relatioships 4 6 17/11/2011 09:52 C 17/09/2012 15:37 C
Opportunities to meet other colleagues outside of the School 1 1 17/11/2011 09:52 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Positive colleagues who want to engage with each other 1 2 17/11/2011 09:52 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Social relationships 4 8 02/12/2011 14:57 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Staff meeting good place for meeting other staff 0 0 17/11/2011 09:52 C 24/04/2012 10:53 C
the importance of the social and informal areas for facilitating me 2 2 17/11/2011 09:52 C 17/09/2012 15:47 C
Satisfaction 6 22 17/11/2011 09:54 C 07/09/2012 16:27 C
Job satisfaction 2 5 02/12/2011 10:03 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
Satisfaction with shaping the development of students 2 2 27/11/2011 21:48 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Stress as a motivator 2 2 28/02/2012 14:44 C 25/05/2012 14:13 C
Support 9 68 27/04/2012 12:20 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Supportive colleagues 7 40 17/11/2011 09:43 C 11/06/2012 15:50 C
Supportive managment 7 19 17/11/2011 09:50 C 11/06/2012 15:50 C
Team Work 9 43 17/11/2011 09:53 C 07/09/2012 17:23 C
Collaborative teamworking 5 8 17/11/2011 09:53 C 17/09/2012 15:46 C
Sources
Nodes
Classifications
Collections
Queries
Reports
Models
Folders
CMCG
154 Items


Invivo Backup July 2014 (NVivo 10).nvp - NVivo
File
Home
Create
External Data
Analyze
Query
Explore
Layout
View
Go
Refresh
Workspace
Open
Properties
Edit
Item
Paste
Cut
Copy
Merge
Clipboard
Format
Paragraph
Reset Settings
Styles
Select
PDF Selection
Text
Region
Find
Insert
Replace
Delete
Editing
Spelling
Proofing
Nodes
Nodes
Cases
Discovery
Open coding
Phase 1Template codin
Phase 2 Reorganising
Phase 3 Consolidating
Evaluation
Query Based Codes
Relationships
Node Matrices
Sources
Nodes
Classifications
Collections
Queries
Reports
Models
Folders
Look for:
Search In
Phase 1Template
Find Now
Clear
Advanced Find
Phase 1Template coding
Name
Sources
References
Created On
Created By
Modified On
Modified By
Team Work 9 43 17/11/2011 09:53 C 07/09/2012 17:23 C
Collaborative teamworking 5 8 17/11/2011 09:53 C 17/09/2012 15:46 C
DIversity of the School staff group 2 3 17/11/2011 09:53 C 07/09/2012 17:23 C
Interdisiplinary team work 6 10 17/11/2011 09:53 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
One big team without barriers 2 2 17/11/2011 09:53 C 17/09/2012 10:26 C
The good life 1 1 25/05/2012 14:10 C 25/05/2012 14:15 C
The work itself 7 73 17/11/2011 09:53 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Clear purpose and goals 1 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Creative work 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
Development of student voice 1 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 15/06/2012 15:13 C
Development of the students 4 4 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 15:37 C
Doing the work well 1 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
Meaningful work 6 34 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 15:37 C
Plentiful opportunities to get involved in things you would like 2 4 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Practice based 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Satisfaction with shaping the development of students 2 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Stimulating discussions 2 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Teaching 3 4 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
The work is progressive 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
The work is rational and logical 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 10:27 C
University focus on community outreach 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Variety of the work 1 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Work contributes to the success of the School 1 1 17/11/2011 09:54 C 17/09/2012 15:14 C
Working with the students 2 2 17/11/2011 09:54 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Values 8 44 14/11/2011 13:47 C 17/09/2012 10:30 C
Appreciated and valued 2 2 17/11/2011 09:56 C 29/05/2012 10:42 C
Feeling trusted 4 11 17/11/2011 09:56 C 17/09/2012 15:37 C
Friendliness 1 2 02/12/2011 11:14 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
Respect 2 5 17/11/2011 09:56 C 17/09/2012 15:14 C
Value students highly (Nodes) 2 2 17/11/2011 09:56 C 12/06/2012 11:05 C
CMCG
154 Items



Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Achievement	8	32	29/05/2012 14:54	C	07/06/2012 10:59	C
Autonomy	8	72	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Balance	2	13	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Being part of something	2	6	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 15:14	C
Characteristics of colleagues	8	21	29/05/2012 14:54	C	03/09/2012 14:22	C
Developmental	6	20	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Feedback	6	33	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Flexibility	6	37	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Happiness as a choice	3	16	29/05/2012 14:54	C	07/09/2012 17:23	C
Happiness as a relatively stable state	4	6	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:27	C
Happiness as balance	2	3	29/05/2012 14:54	C	07/06/2012 10:59	C
Happiness as cognition	3	9	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Happiness as engagement	3	3	29/05/2012 14:54	C	15/06/2012 14:36	C
Happiness is multifaceted	3	7	29/05/2012 14:54	C	11/06/2012 15:49	C
Happy person	4	6	29/05/2012 14:54	C	12/06/2012 11:05	C
Identify with the organisation	5	29	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Infrastructure	6	36	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/07/2012 15:30	C
Language	2	8	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 15:37	C
Motivation	3	3	29/05/2012 14:54	C	11/06/2012 16:11	C
Not feeling unhappy	2	3	29/05/2012 14:54	C	11/06/2012 16:11	C
Personal expectations	1	2	29/05/2012 14:54	C	11/06/2012 16:11	C
Positive emotions	6	88	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Relationships	7	37	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Satisfaction	6	28	29/05/2012 14:54	C	07/09/2012 16:27	C
Support	9	70	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
The good life	1	1	29/05/2012 14:54	C	11/06/2012 16:11	C
The work itself	9	119	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C
Values	8	45	29/05/2012 14:54	C	17/09/2012 10:30	C


Invivo Backup July 2014 (NVivo 10) (4).nvp - NVivo
Nodes
Nodes
Cases
Discovery
Open coding
Phase 1Template codin
Phase 2 Reorganising
Phase 3 Consolidating
Evaluation
Conolidation of themes
Open coding Phase 3 D
Reorginising
Query Based Codes
Relationships
Node Matrices
Sources
Nodes
Classifications
Collections
Queries
Reports
Models
Folders
Look for:
Search In
Phase 3 Consolid
Find Now
Clear
Advanced Find
Phase 3 Consolidating Themes
Name | Sources | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By
Community | 8 | 92 | 06/06/2012 10:58 | C | 30/06/2015 10:26 | CMCG
Relationships | 7 | 37 | 07/06/2012 15:42 | C | 30/06/2015 10:36 | CMCG
Characteristics of colleagues | 8 | 20 | 08/06/2012 12:13 | C | 30/06/2015 10:36 | CMCG
Belonging | 6 | 35 | 07/06/2012 15:41 | C | 30/06/2015 10:35 | CMCG
Being happy | 6 | 132 | 12/06/2012 11:02 | C | 30/06/2015 10:24 | CMCG
Satisfaction | 6 | 28 | 12/06/2012 11:02 | C | 30/06/2015 10:35 | CMCG
Choice | 3 | 16 | 05/09/2012 11:27 | C | 30/06/2015 10:34 | CMCG
Positive Emotions | 6 | 88 | 12/06/2012 11:02 | C | 30/06/2015 10:34 | CMCG
Fulfillment | 9 | 240 | 31/05/2012 15:16 | C | 30/06/2015 10:23 | CMCG
The work itself | 9 | 119 | 07/06/2012 15:40 | C | 30/06/2015 10:33 | CMCG
Achievement | 8 | 32 | 07/06/2012 15:38 | C | 30/06/2015 10:33 | CMCG
Values | 8 | 45 | 07/06/2012 15:41 | C | 30/06/2015 10:32 | CMCG
Development and learning | 3 | 11 | 07/06/2012 15:40 | C | 30/06/2015 10:32 | CMCG
Feedback | 6 | 33 | 29/06/2015 16:09 | CMCG | 17/09/2012 10:30 | C
Self Determination | 9 | 176 | 31/05/2012 15:15 | C | 26/06/2015 12:27 | CMCG
Support | 9 | 107 | 07/06/2012 15:36 | C | 30/06/2015 10:31 | CMCG
Flexibility | 6 | 37 | 07/06/2012 15:37 | C | 30/06/2015 10:30 | CMCG
Autonomy | 4 | 32 | 07/06/2012 15:36 | C | 30/06/2015 10:30 | CMCG
CMCG
111 Items