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Holding it Together: An Explanatory Framework for Maintaining Subjective Well-Being (SWB) in Principals

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For the award of Doctor of Philosophy
2016

Abstract

Principals' health and well-being has been recognised as a concern at National and State levels in Australia (Riley, 2012) and internationally (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008). Whilst this concern is well documented within the literature there is little research into how principals are actually maintaining their Subjective Well-Being (SWB). This study sought to investigate and explore the strategies that experienced principals utilised in order to maintain their SWB. Diener's (2006, 2009) work on SWB formed the basis for the concept of SWB used in this study.

This study used an interpretive case study methodology. The focus of the case was principals' SWB and within the case there were multiple participants. The model used in the design of this study was 'An Interactive Model of Research Design' (Maxwell, 2009). Data were gathered from a purposive geographical sample of school principals in one Australian state ($N = 11$) using two semi-structured interviews each approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration. Four specific steps (referred to by Cohen et al., 2007) were used to analyse the data in order to: generate units of meaning; classify, categorise and order these units of meaning; structure narratives to describe the interview contents; and interpret the interview and survey data.

Data revealed that the participants in this study were constantly evaluating their own performance (action) against what they perceived a competent principal would do, given the circumstances. Each principal had a unique perspective as to what constituted competency. When the participants evaluated the moments alongside their perceived standard of what a competent principal should do and the evaluation was positive, it had a positive impact on their SWB. The impact was positive because the participants experienced positive affect, and/or experienced low level negative moods, and/or felt satisfied with life. Therefore principals saw themselves as doing a good job because of their actions (i.e., making a positive difference in the lives of students and others) and this contributed to their positive SWB.

Analysis of the data revealed that participants were utilising previous experience (i.e., tacit knowledge), and then surfacing this knowledge to inform particular ways of

working (i.e., tacit knowing) to maintain their SWB. Analysis of the data illuminated that this way of working involved three processes:

    1) Fuel It (FIT) Process;

    2) Awakening, Thinking, Enacting, Reflecting (ATER) Process; and

    3) MegaPositioning.

Processes were selected based upon the principal's evaluation of the moment, and their preferred way of working. The findings show that tacit knowing is strongly linked to the maintenance of SWB.

The study is significant as it highlights the process and strategy selection that experienced principals make in order to maintain their SWB and continue to effectively work in their role as principal. The process of maintaining SWB appears to be learnt and underpinned by experiential knowledge and the surfacing of this knowledge in the self (i.e., tacit knowing). The study makes three new contributions to the field; one is methodological (i.e., the use of methodology for investigating SWB) and the other two are theoretical (i.e., a process for maintaining SWB, captured in the explanatory framework; and tacit knowing informs evaluations linked to SWB).

Three recommendations are made as a result of this research: (a) principals need to engage in professional learning throughout their career around improving their own SWB: (b) principals should be provided with safe and supportive opportunities to improve their competency; and (c) principals need an appropriate reporting system for principals with low SWB and the signs of not coping.

The findings from this study allow the reader to explore how some Australian principals maintain their SWB. It is suggested that the research could be used in three ways: firstly to provide school principals with current research regarding ways of working that are being utilised in the field to maintain and enhance SWB; secondly to inform principals' supervisors regarding these ways of working; and thirdly to share these practices with policy makers.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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Signature of Candidate   Date

ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Principal Supervisor   Date

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Signature of Associate Supervisor   Date

Acknowledgements

Glossary

ACPPA	Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association
APPA	Australian Primary Principals Association
ARD	Assistant Regional Director – direct line manager to Queensland State School Principals
ASPA	Australian Secondary Principals' Association
ATER	Awakening, Thinking, Enacting and Reflecting
ATSIL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
BSM	Business Services Manger
C2C	Curriculum to Classroom
DET	Department of Education and Training
DP	Deputy Principal
ESP	Education Support Plan
EQ	Education Queensland
FIT	Fuel IT
HF	Homeostatic Failure
HILDA	Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MegaPositioning	Process used to maintain SWB
MNR	Multiple Networked Realities
P & C	Parents and Citizens
PE	Physical Education
PBC	Positive Cognitive Bias
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
OECD	Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QASSP	Queensland Association of State School Principals
SWB	SWB
SP4	Form reporting to relevant authorities issues regarding Child Safety
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
WHO	World Health Organisation

Table of Contents

Appendices

List of Figures

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Chapter Outline

Chapter One provides an overview of the thesis. It focuses on the purpose and structure of the study and begins by providing a description of the role of the principal and the educational context in which this study of principals' Subjective Well-Being (SWB) was situated. The research problem is then stated and the purpose of the study outlined. Following this a brief overview is given of the research design and methodology, description of assumptions, limitations, significance and expected outcomes. The chapter concludes with a brief description of how the thesis is organised.

1.2.   Background to the Study

This thesis details the emergence of an explanatory framework that seeks to explain the manner through which school principals maintain their SWB. It details the ways of working utilised by a cohort of principals as they reflected on the complex role of principalship. I was a school principal for fourteen years and this study was a result of my own interest in principals' SWB. Having known many principals who have left the profession, become embittered or "fallen over" and observing others still passionately alive, and feeling good about themselves and about their work, I chose to investigate how principals' maintain their SWB.

As I had adopted a constructivist approach, it was important to recognise the co-construction of knowledge and meaning by myself as I engaged with participants. Constructivism begins with the assumption that new knowledge, which emerges from prior knowledge must be constructed within the cognitive structure of every individual, so while the following was essentially personal, it was reliant on experiences in the learning environment and on social interactions.

1.3.   Identification of the Research Problem

The issue of school principals' health and well-being has been recognised at national and state levels in Australia for the last eight years (Lacey, 2007). It has been recognised as an issue of concern by the state, private and independent school sectors (Lacey, 2007). In response to the perceived concern, the Victorian Department of Education and Training conducted a study in 2003/4 titled *The Privilege and the Price: a study of principal class workload and its impact on health and wellbeing* (Lacey, 2007). This study revealed that members experienced "higher degrees of stress than those in comparable employment categories...Principals 79%, (other) white collar (groups) experience 43%" (Department of Education & Training, 2004, p. 11). According to Lacey, the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) surveyed school principals in a study entitled 'The Welfare of Primary School Leaders: National Survey 2004-2005' and the Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (ACPPA) commissioned a research project called 'Principals in Parishes'. Both studies supported previous findings regarding the increased stress levels for school principals. Similar results have been shown in the United Kingdom. Phillips and Sen (2011, as cited in Riley, 2012) reported that, "work related stress was higher in education than across all other industries...with work-related mental ill-health...almost double the rate for all industry" (pp. 177-8).

Pont, Nusche and Hopkins (2008) suggest that school leadership is an international educational policy agenda as research highlights its importance in improving school outcomes. They note that research findings depict that school leaders can improve school climate and environment. Improvement is also evidenced in the motivations and capacities of teachers and student performance as a result of school leadership.

Numerous researchers (e.g., Anderson et al., 2007; Lacey 2007, Mulford, 2003) have highlighted the significant shortage both current and predicted of skilled principals nationally and internationally (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008) due to a combination of three factors:

- reticence of principals to self-promote into seemingly more complex roles
- retention of principals
- early retirement

There was a trend where principals were choosing to retire five years earlier on average than would otherwise be expected (Mulford, 2003) and a lack of skilled principals wanting to promote (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008), exacerbating the current and predicted shortfall. Principals as a group have voiced their own concern with their well-being (Lacey, 2007; Riley, 2012).

In a report written by Anderson et al. (2007, p. 55) entitled "OECD Improving School Leadership Activity Australia: Country Background Report", it was noted that principals were experiencing high levels of ongoing stress. One of the most frequently reported influences of stress was attributed to regulations imposed by state bureaucracies.

The media have reported a number of issues regarding the role of the school principal as shown in Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1*:* Bullies, threats and violence: who would want to be a school principal?

Source: Riley, P. (2013). Bullies, threats and violence: who would want to be a school principal? The Conversation (22nd of July, 2013), Australia.

The article claims: "School principals are five times more likely to face threats of violence than the general population, and seven times more likely to face physical violence, according to a new report released today" (Riley, 2013, as cited in The Conversation, 2013, p. 1).

The first independent study into the occupational health, safety and wellbeing of Australia's school principals clearly highlighted the current difficult work conditions for Australia's school leadership (Riley & Langan-Fox, 2013). A survey of 2,049 principals found that along with threats and acts of violence, school principals are also more likely to be bullied and are dealing with ever-increasing volumes of work and health problems due to stress (Riley & Langan-Fox, 2013).

Media articles (e.g., Riley, as cited in The Conversation, 2013) have helped to raise awareness regarding some of the complexities of the role of a school principal within the current Australian and overseas contexts. The report that the media article (Figure 1) made reference to (Riley, 2013), suggested that every state and territory and every school sector reported that there were a significant number of threats and acts of violence directed towards principals.

A considerable body of research currently exists which highlighted the influence that a school principal has on outcomes, student and teacher wellbeing and school climate (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Levin, 2005). According to Devos, Bouckenooghe, Engels, Hotton, and Aelterman (2007), because principals hold such a crucial position, it is paramount that principals function effectively. Mulford (2003, p. 45) maintains that "school leaders are of crucial importance for a continually improving education provision". The problem was that if principals are unable to sustain their well-being, it potentially has negative impacts on themselves as well as others such as students, staff and guardians (Mulford, 2003). In some cases the implications can extend to the educational system with potentially increased human resource costings, such as stress leave where a principal may be on paid leave and the systems also then needs to pay for the replacement acting principal.

Studies by Macmillan (2000) and Fink, and Brayman (2006), highlighted the devastating effects of frequent principal changes (also termed within the literature as

succession), especially on initiatives proposed to improve student learning. Unfortunately, frequent succession of principals is too common, clearly leadership matters (Seashore et al., 2010). It therefore stood to reason that there was a need for research into ways that principals' SWB can be maintained so that noted issues with principals' stress levels, retention, and retirement were not exasperated. For this reason this study focused on what successful principals were doing to maintain their SWB, rather than on those principals who were not maintaining their SWB. This study was a response to a call by Hurrell (2010) who claimed researchers still have a great deal to learn about wellness and well-being in the workplace.

1.4. Statement of the Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of the issues identified in the research questions, perhaps thereby improving the SWB of today's increasingly burdened educational leaders (Perry & McWilliam, 2007). This study sought to develop a deeper understanding of the manner in which principals, maintained SWB. It utilised and expanded the current literature base, examined the major components of the principal's role within the context of a rapidly changing society and the increasingly complex challenges faced by schools, teachers, and principals.

Specific key aims that directed the study were:
- To reveal insights into how principals maintained SWB.
- To identify potential mechanisms or strategies for maintaining SWB.

This study involved research with selected principals where the participants were asked to share their stories of how they worked and maintained their SWB.

The main purpose of this study was to understand from the perspectives of principals, their experiences and how they maintained SWB. In so doing I:

1. through a scholarly review of the literature, developed a deep understanding of the construct of well-being, the factors which affected SWB, and approaches to the maintenance of SWB;

2. explored how performing the role of principal in contemporary Queensland State education impacts on principals' SWB;

3. developed an understanding of those factors, which influence SWB and the various approaches used by the participants to maintain SWB;

4. applied the findings of the study to help principals in the management of SWB.

1.5.   Statement of Research Questions

Given that principals report that they were experiencing issues with maintaining their SWB (Lacey, 2007), then the focus question arose:

How do principals maintain their SWB? In considering this question four conceptual questions surfaced:

1. How do principals conceptualise SWB?

2. What were the factors that impact upon SWB?

3. What strategies or processes were currently or could be utilised to maintain SWB?

4. What were the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work, and maintain their SWB?

This research enabled the exploration of the phenomenon of how school principals maintain their SWB, from the principals' perspectives.

1.6.   Research Approach

This study used the research method case study (Stake, 1981) within the parameters of the Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009), which consists of five components: goals; conceptual framework; research questions; methods and data; and validity. In exploring the conceptual framework component I discussed: researchers experiential knowledge; existing theory and research; the methodology of case study; purpose of case study; commencing case study; the strength of case study; theoretical frame–constructivism; theory development; and writing up the emerging theory.

In expanding upon the methods and data component of An Interactive Model of Design, I provided insight into: methods; participant selection and cluster sampling;

collection; Phase A data; Phase B data; Phase A and B data, data sources verification and triangulation; data analysis procedures; coding and comparing the data; and potential issues with using NVivo. I then moved on to discuss factors that influenced the research design in terms of ethical considerations. In so doing, I explored research benefits and interests, anonymity and confidentiality, situated ethics, and informed consent. The significance of the proposed research was then highlighted in terms of the anticipated uses to be made of the research, the relevance of the research to education, and the relevance of the study with theoretical contribution. A brief description was also provided for the perceived strengths of using An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009) to explore how school principals maintain their SWB.

1.7.   A Personal Note

I am an educator; I have been for twenty-two years, and a school administrator (principal/ deputy principal) for twelve of those twenty-two years. I have personally and vicariously experienced many traumatic and joyful events that I believe have impacted upon my SWB. It is through this experience that I came to realise the importance of the maintaining of SWB. Watching some colleagues struggle with the principalship and their SWB, challenged me to personally want to find out how seemingly successful principals managed their SWB and how others might learn from this, to better manage their SWB.

I chose to write my thesis in first person as I felt personally connected to the topic, having been a school principal myself and also because of my relationship with the participants involved, in that they were all known to me. I felt very much a part of the research as the literature revealed (Lacey, 2007) principals are generally reticent to disclose personal information; however because of my networks and relationships with my colleagues they chose to disclose information that perhaps they otherwise would not. It was their voice, their collective wisdom on how to maintain SWB, that I wanted you, the reader, to hear.

1.8. Definition of Special Terms

In this study there are a number of acronyms mentioned and these are detailed in the glossary. In my study particular terms arise from the literature and some unfolded from the data in the study. Some of the terms have been detailed here to help the reader make sense of what will be encountered in future chapters: SWB; impactor; negative impactor; positive impactor; motivator; primary core motivator; self-core motivator; and strategic agentism.

SWB: For the purposes of this study I understand SWB to be "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives, includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment, and life satisfaction" (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003, p. 403). In other words, people's views and definitions of SWB are personal and dependent upon how each individual evaluates their life.Participants in this study articulated numerous factors that impacted upon their SWB.

Impactor: An impactor is defined as what a participant reported as impacting upon their SWB. The participants talked about these factors in terms of both positive and negative impacts that affected their SWB, as a consequence of an evaluation of a moment.

Negative Impactor: For the purposes of this study a negative impactor is defined as that which detracts from a person's SWB as a consequence of a negative evaluation of a moment.

Positive Impactor: For the purposes of this study a positive impactor is defined as that which enhances a person's SWB as a consequence of a positive evaluation of a moment. A positive impactor was linked to a way of working intended to achieve the core motivator and enable the person to make a positive evaluation of their competency and therefore feel satisfied with life or feel positive affect. This may involve relatively minor action such as re-thinking through a situation or it may require substantial strategising and on-going action.

Ways of working: The term "ways of working" arose from the data and it describes an activity-based paradigm that encapsulates how actions are conceptualised, prioritised, and performed on the basis of personal, and socio-cultural contextual knowledge acquired through experiential learning. By working in specific ways participants acknowledged that there were positive impacts to their SWB.

Moment: The moment depends upon how the person perceives an event or happening and mentally captures it in a time frame. For example, a moment could be a brief reflection and take only five minutes or it could extend over several days involving a complex parental issue.

Motivators: Two types of motivators are referred to in this study: a primary core motivator and a self-core motivator.

Primary core motivator: The primary core motivator refers to the operationalising of the school in a way that produces what the person considers to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community (competency based motivator).

Self-core motivator: The self-core motivator refers to the drive to maintain the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (involves emotional regulation).

Agency: In this study is seen as being at an individual, peer and collaborative level where people were using their capacity to act by making their own free choices.

Agentism: Refers to the behaviour of taking action to **manage situations**, in a way that involves utilising knowledge of the self and knowledge of others.

Strategic agentism: Strategic agentism is defined as a drive to **influence or control outcomes** that are deemed to maintain SWB through deliberate and strategic forethought, and engineering to achieve the desired outcome.

Self-knowledge: self-knowledge is seen to be what the individual person knows about them self.

1.9.   Thesis Organisation

Chapter One introduces the study, provides a rationale for the utilisation of case study, details the aims, methodology, research problem, explains the scope of the study and finally concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter Two explores the current literature. Firstly exploring broadly the concept of well-being from various perspectives; Hedonistic and Eudemonic; Clinical; Sociological; and then Psychological and then more specifically the emergence and definition of SWB. The chapter then goes on to detail what constitutes work, provides an overview of the role of a school principal within the current educational context and of trends in previous research relevant to this study. The chapter finally concludes with a summary of the literature review.

Chapter Three explores research design and methodology. The chapter begins by outlining the research method which is case study and then details the overall research design, An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009). The five components of the research paradigm are: outlined: goals; conceptual framework; research questions; methods and data; and validity.

Chapter Four presents an exploration of the data findings in relation to the first three research questions: How do principals conceptualise SWB?; In a work context what are the factors that impact upon SWB?; and What processes and strategies are principals currently utilising to maintain SWB?

Chapter Five presents an exploration of the data findings in relation to the fourth research question: What are the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB?

Chapter Six consists of five major sections and focusing on theorising and the provision of an explanatory framework for how school principals maintain their SWB. Section one outlines the definition of SWB and recaps on the impactors and enablers to SWB. Section two outlines emerging themes from the data and this included: definition of SWB; information emerging from the data, influential attributes; Dialogical Self, agentism FIT Process; ATER Process; Mega Positioning; Multiple Networked Realities (MNR); Mega Positioning and SWB; and participants not utilising Mega Positioning. Section three outlines an exploratory framework for how principals maintain their SWB. Section four presents the contributions to knowledge. Section five provided a summary for the chapter.

Chapter Seven outlines the importance of the study and then explores current well-being supports that are reported to be ineffectual. Nine key recommendations and some complexities involved in implementing the recommendations are then discussed. Possible directions for future research are then presented, before concluding with a summary of the chapter.

1.10. Summary

Chapter One provides a statement of the research problem and background context of the problem. The research questions, aims and objectives were then explicitly stated. The chapter went on to outline a personal note along with definitions of special terms relevant to this study. The organisation of the thesis is then detailed. Chapter Two presents a review of literature relevant to the stated research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.   Introduction

Chapter Two comprises of five sections, which establish the specific context and theoretical basis for the study. The research problem focuses on how principals maintain their SWB and the relationship of SWB with the work role they perform. The literature review of SWB has been bounded by the nature of the actual problem being investigated. Although it acknowledged that personality traits have been shown to have connection with SWB (Davidson, 2005; Diener & Lucas, 1999; Lucas & Fujita, 2000) such factors are not specifically explored within this thesis.

The first section broadly establishes the conceptual framework of well-being including a brief history of the emergence of the concept. Two schools of thought around well-being are explored: the clinical psychological perspective; and the positive psychological perspective. The concept of SWB arises from the well-being literature, and this is explored in more detail. The third section explores the current work context of principals, while the fourth section reviews the specific role of the school principal. The fifth section briefly looks at the contemporary interest in SWB and then a summary of the chapter is provided.

2.2.   Historical Overview of Well-being

Finding a concise definition for well-being is a complex pursuit as it has different meanings in the literature. It is therefore appropriate to conceptually clarify the definition of well-being utilised in this research.

Looking back through history, well-being has been defined with a colourful pattern and landscape of definitions, and contextual interpretations; the most predominant being hedonistic or eudemonic well-being. The Greek philosopher Aristippus (435–366 BCE), looked at well-being from a hedonic perspective, focusing on happiness as the totality of pleasurable moments (Sharan, 2012). Philosophers such as Hobbes, DeSade and Bentham also embraced this view of hedonic well-being (Sharan, 2012).

Hobbes viewed well-being as a pursuit of human appetites, DeSade held that it was the pursuit of sensations and pleasure, and Bentham claimed that through maximising pleasure and self-interest that the good society is built (Husain, 2008).

Hedonism was denounced by early Christian philosophers as inconsistent with avoiding sin (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). Renaissance philosophers such as Thomas Moore (1478–1535) held a somewhat different view arguing that God intended people to be happy, on the provision that they did not become consumed with ''artificial'' ways of attaining pleasure (Peterson et al., 2005).

Aristotle (384–322 BCE) held a somewhat different view, believing that people find happiness in the expression of their virtues, doing what they believe is worth doing. This notion of eudemonia, being true to one's inner self, can be equated with a eudemonic perspective of well-being (Helliwell, 2003).

Building upon the eudemonic view of well-being is Maslow's (1970) concept of self-actualisation and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory. In contemporary times, Ryan and Deci (2001) also outline two schools of thought regarding well-being: hedonism and eudaimonism. The Hedonic dimension refers to the positive feelings or positive effect, pleasure attainment, pain avoidance, life satisfaction and happiness (Keyes, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001) and it has a bounded focus on personal pleasures and self-interest. Hedonism reflects the view that well-being consists of happiness or pleasure (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999) whereas eudaimonism suggests that well-being consists of more than just happiness. The Eudemonic dimension focuses on self-realisation, positive functioning and is inclusive of engagement, social well-being, a sense of meaning and fulfilment (Keyes 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001, Waterman, 1993). The term 'flourishing' is sometimes coined when both the Hedonic and Eudemonic dimensions of well-being combine (Keyes, 2002).

The two traditions of hedonism and eudaimonism, are based on distinct views of human nature and of what comprises a good society. Both traditions ask different questions concerning how developmental and social processes relate to well-being, and they implicitly or explicitly advise different approaches to living (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Waterman (1993) asserts that whereas happiness is hedonically defined, the eudemonic conception of well-being requires people to live in accordance with their true self. He proposes that a sense of eudemonic well-being is established when people's life activities align with their values. If a person attains this they would feel authentic and intensely alive, existing as their true self in a state that Waterman (1993) terms as personal expressiveness (PE). Hedonism is still embraced today in the field of hedonic psychology (Kahneman et al., 1999). Different psychological traditions have addressed hedonic and eudemonic principles of achieving satisfaction. These traditions often appear to be incongruent with confusion rampant as each claims *happiness* as a label for their subject matter, a subject matter that is somewhat different to the perspective taken by the other tradition. Research implies that both viewpoints of hedonic and eudemonic *happiness* can be substantiated by data from the different psychological traditions (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to Friedli (2009) positive mental health or well-being is generally seen to be inclusive of emotion, cognition, social functioning and coherence and all of these attributes can be measured through a variety of well-being scales. Such scales include the European Social Survey (ESS Questionnaire) which has been conducted biennially, involving thirty countries across Europe since 2002 (European Social Survey, 2009) and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) which was developed and validated in 2007 (Tennant et al., 2007). The European Social Survey includes hedonic measures of well-being (feeling and evaluation) as well as eudemonic measures of capabilities and functioning, since these are associated with sustainable rather than transient well-being (Friedli, 2009). WEMWBS measures distinguish between mental illness and mental health and it is now formally recognised and utilised in Scotland and the United Kingdom (Parkinson, 2006).

In summary, the literature reveals that well-being has also been defined in many differing ways over time with the most predominant being hedonistic or eudemonic well-being. Well-being has been described as being more or less positive with positive well-being generally deemed to include: cognition, emotion, social functioning and coherence and it is believed that all of these attributes can be measured (Friedli, 2009). Some literature presents well-being not in terms of hedonism and eudaimonism

perspective but from a clinical psychological perspective where the term well-being is linked to mental wellness. A brief overview of this perspective follows.

2.2.1. Well-being – Clinical Psychological Perspective

In defining well-being from a clinical psychological perspective I sought a medical definition. According to Mosby's Medical Dictionary (2009) the etymology of well-being as, *wyllan + beon,* meaning well-being is an achievement of a good and satisfactory existence as defined by the individual. The preamble of the Constitution of the World Health Organisation asserts that health is a "state of complete physical, psychological and social well-being and not merely the absence of a disease or infirmity" (World Health Organisation [WHO], 1948, p. 1). This definition is still widely utilised today but does not clearly provide a definition for the construct of well-being but rather associates well-being within the definition of health. According to WHO (2001, as cited in Austin & Boyd, 2010, p. 20), mental health is "a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". This literature presents mental health as being synonymous with well-being.

Fredli (2009, p. iii) infers that the World Health Organisation have adopted a definition linking the presence of positive mental health to the term well-being, stating that "positive mental health is sometimes referred to as well-being". Friedli (2009) refers to well-being as not necessarily just the absence of mental illness but also as the presence of positive mental health (e.g., autonomy, positive affect, and self-efficacy).

For this to occur Friedli (2009) argues, it needs to be recognised that happiness, trust and positive thinking are not always adaptive responses (i.e. a new job where more money earning does not necessarily increase the happiness of the more cashed up worker). McAllister (2005) shares a similar view of well-being posing that it is more than the absence of illness or pathology (clinical psychological definition) but also inclusive of subjective (self-assessed) and objective or ascribed dimensions.

Literature appears to be fairly conclusive that the absence or presence of well-being also influences outcomes across a wide range of spheres (Ryan & Deci, 2001), including improved physical health, greater productivity, higher educational attainment, better relationships, greater social cohesion, and overall an improved quality of life (Barry & Jenkins, 2007; Friedli, 2009).

Whilst the definition of mental well-being adopted by the WHO appears to be a clinical psychological perspective, the WHO in many studies investigates well-being and associated constructs such as poverty and community, and it appears to be seeking to understand well-being "…less in terms of individual pathology and more as a response to relative deprivation and social injustice, which erode the emotional, spiritual and intellectual resources essential to psychological well-being" (Friedli, 2009, p. 5).

2.2.2. Well-being – Positive Psychological Perspective

Positive psychology features prolifically in the health and well-being literature as being a different school of thought to clinical well-being (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). Looking at the literature that has been linked to positive psychological well-being (Seliman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002) shows a significant variation in terminology, components and elements, and on if and how well-being can be maintained or grown.

Holmes (2005) acknowledges four subcategories of well-being: physical; emotional; mental and intellectual; and spiritual. Her subcategories are markedly similar to Pollard and Davidson's (2001) five dimensions of well-being which are: cognitive, emotional, physical, social and spiritual. Pollard and Davidson assert that the dimensions overlap and interconnect whereas Holmes (2005) asserts that well-being requires harmony between body and mind.

Fraillon (2005) asserts that positive psychology definitions of well-being generally include six characteristics: a) the active pursuit of well-being; b) a balance of attributes; c) life satisfaction or positive affect; d) prosocial behaviour; e) multiple dimensions; and f) personal optimism. Of the differing number of viewpoints on well-

being Holmes (2005) makes the comment "well-being is a vague expression, bordering on the indefinable, yet claiming an increasingly dominant place in our psyche" (p. 6).

Variance in the concept of positive psychological well-being is also depicted by Husain (2008) and Ryan and Deci (2001). Husain purports that positive psychological well-being refers to optimal psychological function and experience whereas Ryan and Deci (2001) perceive it as influencing our practices of teaching, parenting, government and preaching in the aim to change humans for the better.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) introduces the term *flow*, descriptive of the psychological state that accompanies highly engaging activities where time seems to pass quickly because of the engagement the participant has with the activity, leaving the participant with an experience that could be termed as invigorating. Waterman (1993) initially equated the flow state with eudemonia, later revising his view and conceding that *flow* is more an amalgam of hedonic and eudemonic features. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) characterises *flow* as different to sensual pleasure and therefore different to hedonic well-being. At least at any given point in time, flow and pleasure may even be incompatible as not all meaningful activities create the total absorption of flow (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005).

Numerous psychological, spiritual, and philosophical traditions focus on the importance of consciousness for the maintenance and growth of well-being (Wilber, 2000). Friedli (2009) advocates that a small improvement in well-being levels would reduce the prevalence of mental illness and also result in positive benefits associated with mental health (such as positive self-esteem, active engagement in the workforce and engagement with the community). Priorities for action outlined by Friedli are:

1. economic, social and cultural conditions that support family and community life; education that equips children to flourish emotionally and economically;
2. employment opportunities and conditions that promote and protect mental health;
3. partnerships between organisations such as health, that address economic and social problems that have been linked to the onset of psychological distress;
4. and reducing environmental barriers to social contact. (2009, p. iv)

Other researchers see well-being differently with Rath and Harter (2010, p. 3) asserting that there are five elements of well-being: career well-being: utilisation of one's daily time and how much one likes what one does; social well-being: the relationships and love in one's life; financial well-being: management of one's economic life to increase security and reduce stress; physical well-being: good health; and community well-being: the sense of engagement and involvement with the area in which one lives.

2.3.   Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

SWB is acknowledged to be a wide-ranging concept (Larsen & Eid, 2008) viewed by some as a subsidiary of positive psychological well-being. Seligman's (2002) focus on positive psychology and happiness contributed to the development of SWB as a field of study. Positive psychology is a broad term encompassing research and what makes life worth living (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the study of well-being can be seen to fit this broad category (Seligman, 2002). Positive psychology focuses on the study of human virtue and strength with the aim of understanding and facilitating positive developmental outcomes (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). "The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about positive subjective experience: well-being and satisfaction, happiness, joy, and sensual pleasures and the constructive cognitions of the future embracing optimism, faith and hope" (Seligman, 2002, p. 3). It is from this positive psychology field that SWB emerges (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Positive psychology is a broad term encompassing research on well-being with a specific group of researchers (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003) defining SWB even more specifically. William James (1902, as cited in Sirgy, 2002) suggested that "how to keep, how to gain, how to recover happiness is . . . for most men at all times the secret motive for all they do" (p. 76). Diener (2009, p.76) argues that "the only thing that James got wrong in this statement is the suggestion that this motive is secret. Most people agree that being happy is the ultimate goal toward which they strive". Diener (2000) takes the view that well-being refers to the evaluation of how people feel about their lives (affective conclusions) and what they think (cognitive conclusions) giving rise to what he terms as SWB.

Veenhoven (2008, p. 1) asserts that "sociologists tend to think of SWB as a mere idea that depends on social comparison with variable standards and that is therefore a whimsical state of mind, not worth pursuing and hence not worth studying". Recently however SWB has begun to be included in comparative sociology with relation to research into social indicators. "Sociology is about collectivities, whereas SWB is an individual-level concept" (Veenhoven, 2008, p. 1).

The construct of SWB includes variables such as: Satisfaction with Life as a Whole or in Specific Domains, and Positive Affect and Negative Affect (Arthaud-Day, Rode, Mooney, & Near, 2005; Diener & Ryan, 2009; Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2008, 2011). Galinha and Pais-Ribeiro (2011) note that there has been some consensus by researchers concluding that 'Satisfaction with Life': involves a cognitive process and an affective process (Veenhoven, 1996); that it is a function of the comparison between the personal standards of the individual and life achievements (Schwarz & Strack, 1999); and that individuals promote it as a way to prevent depression (Sirgy, 2002).

Diener, Oishi, and Lucas (2003) describe SWB from a psychological perspective as "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives, includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment, and life satisfaction" (p. 403). Due to the broad and complex nature of SWB they "define SWB as a general area of scientific interest rather than a single specific construct" (Diener et al., 2003, p. 277).

Diener is recognised as one of the lead researchers in the field of SWB (Larsen & Eid, 2008). Due to his considerable insights and comprehensive understanding of the field, Diener's definition of SWB was used as the theoretical basis for this study.

Diener's (2009) definition of SWB consists of three components, all of which involve *cognitive appraisal*. The three components are:
1) life satisfaction, where one has cognitively appraised that one's life was good;
2) high levels of pleasant emotions; and
3) relatively low levels of negative moods.

Life satisfaction is considered a cognitive domain because it is based on evaluative beliefs and attitudes about one's life. In contrast, positive affect and negative affect

comprise the affective domain of SWB. Each of these components will now be explored in more detail.

2.3.1. Life Satisfaction

Diener's (2009) definition of SWB can arguably be simplified to judging life positively (life satisfaction) and feeling good.

> Thus a person is said to have high SWB if she or he experiences life satisfaction and frequent joy, and only infrequently experiences unpleasant emotions such as sadness or anger. Contrariwise, a person is said to have low joy and affection and frequently feels negative emotions such as anger or anxiety. (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997, p. 25)

Life satisfaction is the cognitive aspect of SWB. Various studies have explored life satisfaction and there is a noticeable correlation between high life satisfaction and the absence of social problems such as depression (Lewinsohn, Redner, & Seedley, 1991). Life satisfaction can be measured according to Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) with the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) which consists of five items which measure the individual's evaluation of satisfaction with life in general (e.g., ''I am satisfied with my life'').

Some studies refer to strengths of character as linked to life satisfaction. "Character strengths can be defined as positive traits reflected in thoughts, feelings and behaviours" (Peterson et al., 2005, p. 603). In a study on character strengths, Park, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) found that hope, zest, gratitude, love, and curiosity were all substantially related to life satisfaction. They found that modesty, judgment, love of learning, and creativity were only weakly associated with life satisfaction. Interestingly they found no evidence that too much of a character strength was 'bad for you' (i.e., associated with low life satisfaction).

In a study of 845 adults who were respondents to an internet survey, Peterson, Park and Seligman (2005) measured life satisfaction, advocating three different ways to be happy: through pleasure, through engagement, and through meaning. Their definition

of happiness links to both hedonic and eudemonic well-being. Peterson et al. state that people who performed low on all three orientations of happiness espoused low life satisfaction and that each of these three orientations do individually predict overall life satisfaction. Also individuals who are satisfied with life demonstrate better work performance, are more resistance to stress or better at coping with stress, are better problem solvers and experience better physical health (Frisch, 2000; Veenhoven, 1989).

Several studies have observed the possibility that life satisfaction correlations are linked to personality traits (Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993; Heller, Judge, & Watson, 2002; Heller, Watson, Hies, 2004; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002). These studies typically show that personality traits correlate with life satisfaction. An exploration of personality traits is beyond the scope of this literature review as the explicit focus is on the concept of SWB. There is considerable literature regarding satisfaction with life and there is general consensus that the component of life satisfaction also correlates substantially with positive affect (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999).

2.3.2. Positive Affect

Some literature presents moods and emotions as distinct components but the construct of SWB as suggested by Diener (2006) groups moods and emotions together as *affect*, representing people's evaluations of events that occur in their lives. Positive affect very broadly describes the positive emotions that one experiences and positive affect is the second component of SWB (Diener, 2009; Diener et al., 2009). Positive affect is in direct contrast to negative emotions. Research also links happiness as a component of positive affect, for example Lacey (2007) asserts that happiness is derived from two factors: challenge; and control. When both are desirably obtained the result is positive affect (Lacey). Challenge is the ability to see change as opening up new and fulfilling pathways and control as being the ability to continually endeavour to try to positively influence outcomes. Lacey determines that satisfaction is derived from the ability to meet and balance personal, professional and

organisational goals and that high self-esteem comes from successfully taking up challenges and wellness in four spheres: mental; emotional; physical; and spiritual.

Research links to positive affect to improved health. In a study, Brummett, Boyle, Kuhn, Siegler, and Williams (2009) found that positive feelings were associated with lower levels of blood pressure reactivity for participants during sadness recall. Diener and Chan (2011) reviewed a considerable body of research and found that high SWB (life satisfaction, lack of negative emotions, optimism, and positive emotions) results in improved health and longevity. They also found that positive affect is associated with behavioural factors such as greater social connectedness.

Williams and Schneiderman (2002) argue that there is now strong evidence that high SWB is predictive of less cardiovascular disease in healthy populations. They also assert that high SWB is predictive of lower cancer incidence and better survival rates from cancer, although evidence is limited. Diener and Chan (2011) in their review of research did not find evidence to support the link between high levels of SWB and lower levels of cancer. Pressman and Cohen (2005) reviewed evidence suggesting that positive affect is associated with physical health and longevity in normal populations, but concluded that the evidence is mixed for positive affect predicting survival in those with existing disease. Thus, a number of literature reviews, studies (Danner, Snowdon, & Friesen, 2001; Takano, Nakamura, & Watanabe, 2002) and meta-analyses (Diener, & Chan, 2011; Pressman, & Cohen, 2005) all conclude that SWB predicts health and longevity in healthy populations but there is also considerable debate as to the circumstances and the extent (Diener, & Chan, 2011; Folkman, & Moskowitz, 2000; Keyes, 2007).

2.3.3. Low Levels of Negative Emotions and Mood

The third component of SWB that Diener (2009) put forward is low level negative emotions or moods. "When people feel a sad mood or a joyful emotion it is because they evaluate something in their lives as going well or badly" (Diener & Chan, 2011, p. 3). These feelings or moods can range from anger to happiness and include a diverse range of phenomena. The presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative

mood, are together often summarised as happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In terms of low levels of negative emotions/mood the range is still varied encompassing phenomena from low anger, optimism, through to work satisfaction. Significant research depicts the effects of moods and emotions on individual people's health. Diener and Chan note that a positive attitude, i.e. low level of negative emotion, can enrich a person's quality of life when they are suffering from a fatal disease but no amount of SWB will cure the disease.

2.3.4. Relationship of the Components

Research suggests that the typical force with which people experience their affective states has seemingly no effect on overall SWB (Larsen & Diener, 1987). It appears that the best predictor of overall SWB is the frequency of positive states compared to negative states in an individual's life over time (Larsen, Diener, & Emmons, 1985).

Research depicts that it is possible for judgments of life satisfaction to be inconsistent with the hedonic component (Larsen & Eid, 2008), for example a financially poor nun who experiences a great deal of negative affect and little positive affect, may nevertheless judge her life to be worthwhile and satisfying. Normally the life satisfaction component and the hedonic component of SWB are moderately to highly correlated (Diener, Napa-Scollon, Oishi, Dzokoto, & Suh, 2000).

In summary, the definition of SWB is based upon the work of Diener (2006, 2009) where SWB is seen to consist of the cognitive appraisal of: life satisfaction – where one has cognitively appraised that one's life was good; high levels of pleasant emotions and relatively low levels of negative moods.

2.3.5. Positive and Negative Poles

Not all researchers aver that well-being has a positive and negative pole; however some researchers raise this argument and link SWB to the positive pole. Warr (1987) commented on well-being determining that there were three forms of affective well-being: stress and burnout; job satisfaction; and job enthusiasm. Stress and burn out are

considered to be at the negative pole and job satisfaction and job enthusiasm are positioned at the positive pole. Stone and Mackie (2014) articulate that there are increases and decreases in well-being (which are evidenced in the scales used to measure well-being) and the utilisation of the terms *positive* and *negative* are often used in the literature to describe these changes. Considerable research has been focused on stress which can be viewed as part of the negative pole of well-being or also described in terms of a concept that is linked to a decrease in SWB; or in some areas of the literature would be described as the negative affect dimension of SWB (Kercher, 1992).

Wolverton and Wolverton (2002) define work related stress as "any characteristic of the work environment that poses a threat to individuals" (p. 102). Feelings of stress, and overload among employees have been the focus of much research (Boekaerts, 2002; Borg, 1990; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Phillips, & McNamee, 2007) with suggestions that work stress could produce higher levels of turnover and also make it more difficult to attract new employees in certain roles (Bolino & Turnley, 2005) such as that of teacher and principal (Darmody, & Smyth, 2011; Friedman, 2002). There may be many reasons for the level of stress growing in the workplace and these could include: inability to perform expected tasks competently; interpersonal relationships with colleagues and staff; multicultural work dimensions; work overload; meeting the productivity expectations; and perceived task demands.

Boekaerts (2002) is of the opinion that there is a general consensus among researchers of stress, that individuals use two basic approaches of dealing with stress: problem-focused coping (also coined approach) and emotion-focused coping (also coined avoidance). Problem-focused strategies have been grouped together by researchers as the strategies that relate to how an individual approaches stress in order to remodel the situation or context, seeking to change or lessen the stress. Emotion- focused coping describes strategies that are utilised by individuals in order to avoid the stress, a direct contrast with problem-focused strategies. This avoidance is inclusive of both mental and physical evasion strategies (Boekaerts, 2002).

There are several implications of experiencing high levels of stress, inclusive of but not limited to, failure to competently function in various environments such work

context, family context, and generally in society. Consequently it is beneficial to the individual and to society that individuals learn to deal and cope with stress. According to McGuigan (1999) and Boekaerts (2002), emotional and social support gives the appearance of buffering the stressful effects of life events and adequate emotional support may strengthen resistance to stress. If we acknowledge that social influences and supports are important in coping with stress then establishing social connectivity both within the work environment and beyond it, would seem of paramount importance.

Burnout, which was linked to the negative pole of well-being (Warr, 1987) is defined by Pines and Aronson (1988, p. 9) as "a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding" or stressful (Maslach, 1993). The emotional demands often occur as a resulting combination of very high, perhaps unreasonable expectations, and chronic situational stress.

According to Perron and Hiltz (2006) burnout is a condition that develops over time emerging via chronic interpersonal stressors. It is often found in the workplace of human service providers (Perron & Hiltz), such as teachers and school principals. Maslach (1993) asserts burnout has three dimensions: emotional exhaustion; depersonalisation; and a diminished level of personal accomplishment and commitment to the profession and it can be associated with absenteeism, anxiety, cynicism, and depression. Some contemporary researchers are posing that depression may be conceptualised as a lack of SWB (Cummins & Lau, 2004). This seems plausible given that life satisfaction is a core component of SWB (Diener, 2006) and that a lack of life satisfaction is a plank of depression (Lewinsohn, Redner, & Seeley, 1991).

Given that this study is focusing on principals, and that principals were first teachers, it seems reasonable to include some of literature detailing teacher well-being, especially stress, and burnout which can be linked to the negative affect dimension of SWB. Research shows that some occupations such as that of teachers and principals, self report high levels of stress (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Riley, 2012). Stress in the workplace, is difficult to define as it changes and evolves depending upon the thinking

and feeling of the person, the role of the nature of the work, the context in which work is performed, and others who may be involved in the work context (Blaug, Kenyon, & Lekhi, 2007).

The profession of teaching has been categorised as one of the top in stress-related outcomes drawn from a database of 26 different occupations, and the emotional relationship of teachers with their students is considered the primary rationalisation for such findings (Johnson, Cooper, Cartwright, Donald, Taylor, & Millet, 2005). Teachers describe experiencing a large variety of stressors stretching from behaviour management issues, to poor working conditions, to a lack of emotional support (Mitchell & Arnold, 2004). All of which have been related to teacher burnout and, in numerous cases, a lack of teacher retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Mitchell & Arnold, 2004).

The effects of teacher burnout are extensive and associated with regular absences, increased health care costs, mental health claims, and poor job performance (Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996; Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi, & Leithwood, 1999). Teachers who experience burnout, often feel ineffectual and struggle to fully engage in teaching practices, thereby reducing their competency at which they implement programs (Han & Weiss, 2005). Adding to this, teachers who experience burnout are more intolerant of classroom behaviour problems and are prone to experiencing more negative relationships with their students (Kokkinos, Panayiotou, & Davazoglou, 2004; Yoon, 2002), and this can then further exacerbate their experiences of stress (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

Teachers' capability to motivate engagement in learning (Deci & Ryan, 2000), imbue productive values about schoolwork (Wentzel, 1999), listen to, respect (Goodenow, 1993), and encourage persistence and lessen anxiety with challenging tasks (La Guardia & Ryan, 2002), and to genuinely understand their students (Connell & Wellborn, 1991); all depend on the effectiveness of teacher-student relationships (Bandura, 1997). Split, Kooman and Thijs (2011) pose that teachers are significant adults in student's school lives, and there is some evidence that teacher wellbeing has significant effects on student's academic performance and socioemotional adjustment

(Malmberg & Hagger, 2009; Moolenaar, 2010; Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon & Kaplan, 2007).

The positive poles identified by Warr (1987) have been extrapolated by numerous researchers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997a, 1997b; 1999; Diener, 2000, 2006, 2009; Diener et al., 2003) including SWB researchers. Resilience and positive relationships have also been linked to the positive poles of well-being. There has been increasing research supporting the importance of warm, trusting, and supportive interpersonal relationships for SWB (Diener, 2009). So important is relatedness that some theorists have defined relatedness as a basic human need that is essential for well-being (Baumeister, 1998; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000), and others have suggested that having stable, satisfying relationships is a general resilience factor across the lifespan (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998).

Evidence supporting the link of relatedness to SWB is diverse (Nibset, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2011). Studies suggest that, of all factors that influence happiness, relatedness is at or very near the top of the list (Argyle, 1987; Myers, 2000). Furthermore, as DeNeve (1999) noted, affiliation and relationship-enhancing traits are among the most strongly related with SWB.

Research on principals' well-being has to date almost exclusively focused on the negative pole (Devos et al., 2007; Green, Malcolm, Greenwood, Small, & Murphy, 2001) with limited emphasis on the positive pole. According to Devos et al. (2007) the change is reflective of the emerging interest in positive psychology which is often associated with Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). Devos et al. (2007) conducted a study investigating factors that contribute to better understanding the well-being of Flemish primary school principals. The researchers concluded that "our analysis shows that the principal himself has an important impact on well-being" (Devos et al., 2007, p. 53). They also found no evidence to suggest that the positive culture of the school positively influenced the well-being of the principal.

According to Diener and Emmons (1985) trait measures of positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) are essentially uncorrelated, denoting that how much of one affect a person managed to experience had no actual influence on how much of the other she

or he experienced. This insight contributed to theorising the independent contributions of both PA and NA to the hedonic element of overall SWB (Larsen & Eid, 2008). This is viewed by many contemporary researchers as the ratio of PA to NA, over time, in a person's life (Larsen & Prizmic, 2008). The relationship of PA and NA is an important component in the overall structure of SWB (Larsen & Eid, 2008).

Research into well-being and SWB is gaining momentum with a paradigm shift towards person centredness, which is also embedded in particular socio-cultural contexts (McGregor, 2007). As a result of this paradigm shift there have been a number of recent studies regarding the apparent levels of well-being in developing countries (Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), 2006; Jongudomkarn & Camfield, 2005; McGregor, 2007).

2.3.6. SWB Balance

How one assesses their own level of SWB (i.e., in balance or out of balance) is still open to contention with the viewpoint by many that SWB is a measurable concept. Diener (2006) suggests that one of the simplest ways to judge SWB is to ask individuals "How satisfied are you with your life?" There are two main trains of thought regarding how individuals will answer this question, with a life overall focus or a core affect focus. Diener, Lucas, Oishi, and Suh (2002) hold that in answering this simple question people will focus on the most salient domains of their life overall thinking about the level of their SWB.

The opposing view is that people will focus on their core affect (i.e., raw feeling evident in moods and emotions; Russell, 2003). There appears to be support for both viewpoints with various studies supporting the different trains of thought (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). Further research in the area may clarify this more definitively.

There are different theories of how SWB is assessed and whether these theories adequately reflect reality or not, is debateable (Veenhoven, 2006). The concept of SWB balance (i.e., low levels of SWB, balanced SWB, to high levels of SWB), can be conceptualised in different ways and here it is explored through two of the more

prominent theories: Set Point Theory (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2003) and Homeostasis Theory (Cummins, 1995).

2.3.7. Set Point Theory

One theory used to explain the balance of SWB is set point theory. Set point theorists have claimed that the set point is 50% (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996) to 100% (Lykken, 1999, 2000) predetermined by genetic factors. Theorists point out that when major life events impact SWB transitory deviation to set-point occur but after a period people return to their set-point (Headey, 2007). This theory implies that there is very little an adult can do to improve their own happiness (Headey, 2007).

Initially in the literature there appears strong empirical support for the set-point theory; happiness tending to remain stable over time (Veenhoven, 2006). According to this theory it appears that set points are determined from our dispositions. An individual's level of SWB is thought by some researchers to be held at a 'set point' (Lucas et al., 2003) whereby an individual who reports a high level of SWB at time one is likely to report a similar level of well-being at time two, irrespective of the passage of time between the two intervals (Diener & Emmons, 1995). The constructs thought to determine the set points are personality and positive and negative affect. The trait found to be most related to SWB was positive affect (i.e., happiness; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

According to Suh, Diener, and Fujita (1996) life events and personality differ in the duration of their effects on SWB. Life events produce a short-term effect (approximately three to six months) and personality produces a longer-term effect (of at least two years) in the variability of SWB.

At closer look at set-point theory reveals that there empirical results indicate that set-point is not as set as Lykken and Tellegen (1996) and Lykken (1999, 2000) assert. Recent studies suggest that some life events such as the death of a partner, produce permanent changes that have a longer-term impact on the SWB of individuals (Heady, 2007). Some researchers have suggested that set point theory may have to be revised

(Headey, 2008). Part of the reasoning for this is the apparent limitations of set point theory. Set-point has more recently come under strong criticism as studies are showing that SWB set-points can change in the long-term. Positive life events such as cosmetic surgery (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999; Wengle, 1986) and long term marriage (Lucas et al., 2003) have shown that set-point can rise over time. Wagner, Frick, and Schrupp (2007) have shown that approximately 20% of a national representative population sample have recorded significant and what appears to be permanent change in their life satisfaction over the last 20 years

Research has shown that some populations have higher levels of SWB set points than other populations (Headey, 2007). Evidence provided by Easterlin (2005) depicts that people who become acutely disabled or suffer from chronic pain have permanently lower levels of SWB in comparison with other similar people who do not have a disability (Mehnert, Kraus, Nadler, & Boyd, 1990). Clark, Georgellis, Lucas, and Diener (2004) also show evidence that people with repeated spells of unemployment experience a scarring effect and their SWB levels do not fully recover (Headey, 2007).

Set point theory accords that a significant income or added or decreased wealth should not affect the set point; however research shows that wealth does curb the incidence of negative events thereby increasing SWB (Headey, 2007). This is notable especially if comparison of measures is done between Western Nations and third world nations. Happiness averages in nations appears not to be fixed with average happiness rising gradually in most nations over the last 30 years (Veenhoven & Hagerty, 2006). It stands to reason that if individuals are greatly disadvantaged, they have an increased likelihood of experiencing acute negative life events, such as suffering from a disease that is curable in a Western nation when money is accessible to pay for treatment (Diener & Oshi, 2000).

Over time research developments have revised or extended upon set-point theory with significant literature on: Adaption Level (AL) theory, and homeostatic theory. Adaption Level theory was initiated by Brickman and Campbell (1971) as they noted that the majority of individuals return to a base line which later was termed equilibrium level or set point even after they have experienced what could be termed as life

changing. Due to a larger body of health literature linking to homeostatic theory, this adaptation to set-point theory will be explored in more detail.

2.3.8. Homeostatic Theory

Numerous researchers have also referred to homeostasis in relation to theorising about SWB balance (Headey, 2008). Homeostasis can broadly be termed as the tendency of the body to maintain internal stability even when faced with external changes, with one example being the regulation of body temperature (Schulkin, 2003). It can be defined as "a property that maintains the state of the system rather than its functions" (Kitano, 2007, p. 247).

In the literature SWB homeostatic theory is associated with constructs such as personality (extraversion and neuroticism) and affect (positive and negative affect) and cognitive buffers (optimism, control and self-esteem). This theory focuses on over-all levels of happiness and on maintenance to a comfortable level of happiness irrespective of difficult conditions (Veenhoven, 2006).

Cummins (1995) put forward the theory of homeostasis in relation to SWB and this theory looks to explain why some populations have significantly higher or lower levels of SWB and describe mechanisms which keep it in place (Headey, 2007). Cummins investigated data from sixteen life satisfaction studies using samples taken from Western populations. Each of the studies utilised the Likert scale to rate life satisfaction. Cummins utilised this data and applied it with a standardised scale and found that regardless of the country of residence, populations on average were three quarters satisfied with their life. The theory of SWB homeostasis asserts that SWB operates under homeostasis control, with little variation in average well-being scores across populations (Cummins, 1995).

Homeostasis theory posits that SWB is not only maintained by the settled forces of personality and positive and negative affect, but also through underlying psychological processes that act to defend individual set points (Cummins, 1998). Research by Cummins (2009a) using Australian data (Australian Unity Well-being), suggests that

SWB is very stable and it tends to hold within a narrow range of values. Over a period of nine years, on a scale of 0 to 10, the SWB score had a mean of 7.49 and a standard deviation of 1.24. This shows that 95% of people in Australia have a value between 5.02 and 9.96 and therefore that SWB is very stable within the population.

Cummins (2009b) research depicts SWB as homeostatic, having a threshold value which, as this value is approached (in Western nations it is often around 7 out of 10), the person tries to retain control, or stabilise the balance of their well-being. If this threshold is breached, the person will, over time, regain control and SWB will return to its normal value (set point or equilibrium balance) for that person. Therefore homeostasis is operating as a protective factor for well-being, nurturing the person back to their "normal" level of well-being (Tanton, Mohanty, & Hogan, 2012). Tanton, Mohanty, and Hogan (2012), using the Australian Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) longitudinal data, investigated at what point homeostatic defeat occurred and identified what contributes to this homeostatic failure. Tanton, Mahanty, and Hogan included a set of major life event variables, and also included changes in other socio demographic and health characteristics that may serve as potential predictors of homeostatic failure in SWB.

According to research conducted by Tanton et al. (2012) homeostatic failure (HF) in SWB generally occurs when there are a number of life events that simultaneously occur and impact the individual. The two major life events that are notably associated with HF are the birth of a child (less likely to experience HF) and being separated from a spouse (much more likely to experience HF). This was different to previous findings as the death of a child did not come up as the most significant event associated with HF as earlier research by Wortman and Silver, (1987) had shown that it was a life event from which many victims never recovered. Statistically it may be established that more people experience separation from a spouse. Whilst it should be noted that each life event impacts individuals uniquely Tanton, Mahanty and Hogan's (2012) research depicted significant life events associated with HF were worsening health, having less available leisure time, and having more people in the household.

Berry, Rodgers, and Dear (2007) as well as Berry and Welsh (2010) demonstrates that the physical health status of the person and physical functioning are very highly

correlated with mental health, and for that reason are expected to be a potential determinant of well-being.

The theories of Set Point and Homeostasis explain that people do endeavour to maintain their SWB but these theories do not provide insight into how this is done. Homeostasis theory posits that people try and balance their SWB and when their point of balance is breached, the person over time, endeavours to return their SWB to its normal value (set point) according to the individual. Further research needs to provide insight into how SWB is maintained and that is the purpose of this study.

2.3.8.1.   Constructs of the Homeostasis Process

Page (2005) in her thesis suggests a variety of constructs are involved in this homeostasis process: self-esteem (i.e., a feeling of self-worth and competence; Cummins & Nistico, 2002); perceived control (i.e., feeling that one can achieve desired outcomes through their own actions; Thompson et al., 1998) and optimism (i.e., positive expectations about the future; Peterson, 2000). It is posed that these constructs become cognitive buffers (Kernis, 2006).

2.3.8.2.   Cognitive Buffers

Cummins and Nistico (2002) make reference to the cognitive buffers, putting forward the suggestion that individuals utilise a number of positive cognitive bias (PCB's) associated with the cognitive buffers as a means of cushioning SWB from life demands. They theorise that these PCB's are a product of core affect, and maintain an individual's cognitive buffers at a generally positive level which in turn stabilises SWB levels (2002). Core affect was defined by Russell (2003, p. 87), as a "neurophysiological state that is experienced as a feeling or mood". Core affect is significantly different to emotions, as emotions are connected to specific events, people and objects. By contrast core affect is more abstract and is never linked to any specific object or event in a manner of emotional response. Cummins (2009a) value adds to this going further with his definition proposing that core affect provides the

motivational energy for behaviour, asserting that it is a basic steady state, hard wired for each individual.

Homeostasis regulation is designed to defend a single, constant value or set-point (Cummins, 2009a). The cognitive buffers, however, are not impregnable. Long-term and or severe stressors such as the death of a family member may lead to long term homeostasis defeat. As a consequence the individual may suffer a period of extended and deep depression as SWB levels drop dramatically below set point. The dropping of SWB below set point is termed as *homeostatic defeat* (Cummins, 2009a). Homeostatic defeat occurs when homeostasis stops operating as a protective factor in SWB, and occurs after challenges to SWB become too much for the homeostatic system to deal with (Tanton, Mahanty, & Hogan, 2012). These include major life events like the death of a partner; however Berry (2009) also asserts that it could be the result of other factors that have been shown to have an effect on SWB, like health.

According to Davern, Cummins, and Stokes (2007), the homeostatic system regulates core affect serving an adaptive function by affording individuals the psychological resources they need in order to cope with everyday stressors. Research has shown that well-being over an extensive period of time can be compromised by prolonged unemployment (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004), an enduring disability, and the collapse of marriages (Lucas, 2007). Interestingly, positive events, such as a significant wage increase, do not seem to provide the same long term sustainable improvements in well-being (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996).

In summary, homeostatic processes are responsible for the normal stability of SWB around a 'set-point' for each person. Homeostatic theory describes a process whereby the body maintains internal stability even when faced with external changes and this maintenance appears to include cognitive buffers as a way of maintaining SWB.

2.3.9. Measures of Well-being

There are different instruments and techniques that are used to measure SWB and those particularly prevalent in the literature will be explored here.

Life satisfaction and affect balance are generally measured using a self-report method including single item surveys (overall life satisfaction) or multiple item (multiple factor) questions on well-being (Kittiprapas, Sawangfa, Fisher, Powdthavee, & Nitnitiphrut, 2009). Responsive scales are also commonly used where participants' self-satisfaction is rated from 0 to 10 (Cummins, 2009b). This rating is the subject of debate as to whether it should be changed from bipolar scale to unipolar scale of reporting levels of individual happiness–ranging from not happy at all to completely happy (Cummins, 2009b).

As part of the 2011 *Better Life Initiative* the OECD has produced guidelines with the objective to measure society's progress across eleven domains of well-being, ranging from jobs, health and housing, through to civic engagement and the environment which provide advice on the collection and use of measures of SWB. Given that this study is not aimed at measuring SWB, only a brief overview of some prominent well-being measures will be explored, namely: The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS); The Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) (Diener, Lucas, Schimmack & Helliwell, 2009); The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988); The Flourishing Scale, also known as the Psychological Well-being scale (Diener et al., 2009); The Quality of Life Index (QOLI) (Ferrans & Powers, 1985); and the Australian Unity Quality of Life Survey (AQOL) (Cummins, Woerner, Tomyn, Gibson, Knapp, 2006).

2.3.9.1.   Satisfaction with Life Scale

Ed Diener together with some colleagues developed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. The scale is a short 5-item instrument. Figure 2.1 provides a sample:

| 1 = Strongly Disagree |
| 2 = Disagree |
| 3 = Slightly Disagree |
| 4 = Neither Agree or Disagree |
| 5 = Slightly Agree |
| 6 = Agree |
| 7 = Strongly Agree |

_____1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
_____2. The conditions of my life are excellent.
_____3. I am satisfied with life.
_____4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
_____5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

Figure 2.1: Sample SWLS

Source: Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. Journal of Personality Assessment, 49, 71-75.

2.3.9.2. Scale of Positive and Negative Experience

The Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) is a 12-item questionnaire which includes twelve items to assess feelings. Six items access positive feelings and six items assess negative feelings. Figure 2.2 is a sample:

Please think about what you have been doing and experiencing during the past four weeks. Then report how much you experienced each of the following feelings, using the scale below. For each item, select a number from 1 to 5, and indicate that number on your response sheet.
1. Very Rarely or Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very Often or Always

__ Positive
__ Negative
__ Good
__ Bad
__ Pleasant
__ Happy
__ Sad
__ Afraid
__ Joyful
__ Angry
__ Contented

Figure 2.2: Sample from SPANE

Source: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., Tov, W., Kim-Prieto, C., Choi. D., Oishi, S., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2009). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. Social Indicators Research, 39, 247-266.

2.3.9.3. Positive and Negative Affect Scale

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) which is one of the most widely used affect scales (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) and the Quality of Life Index

(Ferrans & Powers, 1985). As with the utilisation of many research tools there is conjecture about which is the best tool for the purpose. The PANAS questions how the participant feels, in the present, regarding ten positive and ten negative specific emotions utilising a 5-point scale, from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Figure 2.3 is a sample:

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) PANAS Questionnaire
This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then list the number from the scale below next to each word. **Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment *OR* indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week (circle the instructions you followed when taking this measure).**

| 1 Very Slightly or Not at All | 2 A Little | 3 Moderately |
| 4 Quite a Bit | 5 Extremely | |

_____ 1. Interested	_____ 11. Irritable
_____ 2. Distressed	_____ 12. Alert
_____ 3. Excited	_____ 13. Ashamed
_____ 4. Upset	_____ 14. Inspired
_____ 5. Strong	_____ 15. Nervous
_____ 6. Guilty	_____ 16. Determined
_____ 7. Scared	_____ 17. Attentive
_____ 8. Hostile	_____ 18. Jittery
_____ 9. Enthusiastic	_____ 19. Active
_____ 10. Proud	_____ 20. Afraid

Figure 2.3: Sample from PANAS.

Source: Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegan, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54(6), 1063–1070.

2.3.9.4.   The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale, originally known as Psychological Well-being scale, consists of eight items outlining the important aspects of human functioning (Diener et al., 2009). This scale focuses on human function ranging from positive relationships, to having meaning and purpose in life (Diener et al., 2009). Figure 2.4 provides a sample:

I lead a purposeful and meaningful life

○ 7 - Strongly agree

○ 6 – Agree

○ 5 - Slightly agree

○ 4 - Neither agree nor disagree

○ 3 - Slightly disagree

○ 2 - Disagree

○ 1 - Strongly disagree

Figure 2.4: Sample from Flourishing Scale.

Source: Diener, E., D. Wirtz, et al. (2010). New well-being measures: short scales to assess flourishing and positive and negative feelings. Social Indicators Research 97(2): 143-156.

2.3.9.5.   The Quality of Life Index

The Quality of Life Index (Ferrans & Powers, 1985) is a precise multi-item cognitive measure of SWB. It measures the satisfaction and importance of 31 life domains such as family, work, and health conditions and it utilises a 6-point scale from 1 (*very dissatisfied/ unimportant*) to 6 (*very satisfied/ important*). Figure 2.5 provides a sample:

SATISFACTION LEVEL	Very dissatisfied	Moderately dissatisfied	A little dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	A little satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way you spend your time?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you when you are alone?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your housing?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your neighborhood as a place to live in?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the food you eat?	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

Figure 2.5: Quality of Life Index

Source: Ferrans, C. & Powers, M. (1985). Quality of Life Index: Development and psychometric properties. Advances in Nursing Science, 8, 15-24.

2.3.9.6. Household Income and Labour Dynamics Survey of Australia

Measures of well-being now go well beyond the use of basic indicators like economics, and include domains like governance, community vitality, psychological well-being, health, and education (Tanton, Mahanty, & Hogan, 2012). Psychological research now includes measures of SWB, so a question is asked of an individual and they answer based on a scale. The question asked in the Household Income and Labour Dynamics Survey of Australia (HILDA), an annual longitudinal study run by the Melbourne Institute, is: *"All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life?"* (Tanton, Mahanty, & Hogan, 2012, p. 1).

2.3.9.7. Australian Unity Quality of Life Survey

Another survey currently utilised in Australia to measure SWB is the Australian Unity Quality of Life Survey (AQOL), run by Bob Cummins of Deakin University. In both HILDA and AQOL, questions included ask about the respondents satisfaction with a number of areas of life, and these include; home, employment opportunities, financial situation, safety, health, neighbourhood, and personal relationships and free time (Tanton, Mahanty, & Hogan, 2012). The measurement of well-being is complex as different authors have proposed that different measures of SWB have different predictors, and therefore several measures of SWB should be used in order to fully understand the phenomenon (Diener, 2000, 2006; Sirgy, 2002). Figure 2.6 provides a sample.

What is your wellbeing?

How satisfied are you with your standard of living?

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

Figure 2.6: Sample of AQOL

2.3.9.8. Using SWB Measures

SWB measures can also be susceptible to specific aspects of the survey content (OECD, 2013) evidenced when Deaton (2010) noted that asking questions regarding the progress of the country directly before an evaluative SWB measure applied a notable downward effect on the data. The considerable amount of survey data is highly informative on SWB but it lacks inclusion of what people, in this case principals, are actually doing to maintain their SWB. "Because SWB refers to affective experiences and cognitive judgments, self-report measures of SWB are indispensable" (Larsen & Eid, 2008, p. 4).

Specific to my study subjective personal evaluations were utilised as a method of determining SWB as the focus is not on measuring SWB but rather exploring how it is maintained by a particular group of people i.e. school principals.

2.4. Work and SWB

Because my study focuses on how principals maintain their SWB it is important to understand the work of principals. "Work is an influential and pervasive part of the

individual and the community's well-being. It impacts the quality of an individual's life and his or her mental health, and thereby can affect productivity of entire communities" (Harter, Schmidt, & Keys, 2002, p. 207).

There is considerable research on the relationship between work (what tasks a person actually performs), role (expected behaviour of an individual) and SWB. Harter, Schmidt, and Keys (2002) presented results of a meta-analysis of relationships between employee workplace perceptions (including positive affect, satisfaction with life which are constructs of SWB) and business unit outcomes. The meta-analysis depicted positive relationships between job satisfaction and individual performance, in particular aspects like satisfaction with one's supervisor and satisfaction with one's work. Their data demonstrated that positive workplace perceptions and feelings are associated with higher business-unit customer loyalty, higher productivity, higher profitability, and lower rates of staff turnover.

On average, an adult spends a substantial amount of her or his life involved in work. Harter et al. (2002) aver that it could be as much as a third of the adult's waking life. Campbell, Coverse, and Rodgers (1976) present the view that approximately a fifth to a quarter of the variation in adult life satisfaction can be accounted for by satisfaction with work. Isen (1987) and Warr (1999) argue that the manifestation of positive emotional states and positive appraisals of the worker and his or her relationships within the workplace heighten quality of life and worker performance. Measures of job satisfaction appear to correlate in the range of .50 to .60 with measures of life satisfaction (Judge & Watanabe, 1993; Spector, 1997). Kohn and Schooler (1982) asserted that the nature of work with all its complexity has been casually linked to an individual's sense of control and depression.

Individuals that are in environments where tasks are interesting, meaningful, and challenging are likely to have what Brim (1992) has called manageable difficulties and Csikszentmihalyi (1997a) has termed as optimal states. This means that when demands match or marginally exceed resources, individuals are subjected to positive emotional states (e.g., excitement, delight) and they perceive themselves as becoming more engaged and thereby more productive (Waterman, 1993). Harter, Schmidt, and Keys (2002) assert that "from the well-being perspective, a healthy workforce means the

presence of positive feelings in the worker that should result in happier and more productive workers" (p. 205).

2.4.1. The Nature/ Function and Task

Relating Diener, Sandvik, and Pavot's (1991) definition of SWB to the workplace, it would appear that an employee experiences high work-related SWB if he or she is (a) satisfied with his/her job and (b) experiences frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010). This brings forward the question: what is the essence of work? Work occurs in a variety of different contexts and has looked different across time as the influence of technology has played at times, a dramatic role in shaping the work people perform. Our work can be deemed to be driven by the economies that impact the market and as such an emerging ability for the worker, is a need to learn fast, at a faster pace than the competitors (Idemobi & Akam, 2012). Work can also be defined as a person's role in the community and be viewed very differently dependent upon the cultural interpretation of the worker and the organisation in which they work (Idemobi & Akam). Of recent times a growing number of people are employed in offices, manipulating the flow of information (Taylor & Bain, 2005). The line between work life and home life appears to have become blurred as people now have an increased ability to work anywhere and anytime with mobile technologies (Idemobi & Akam, 2012).

Work can be defined in a number of different ways depending upon the perspective from which it is viewed. Herr and Cramer (1996) assert that people experience and define work differently, with different levels of abstraction. Shertzer (1981) talks about work in terms of humans exercising control over their own lives, as a means of shaping and changing our own environment. González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker, and Lloret, (2006) suggest the concept of work engagement. Whilst some people work others are fully engaged in work. Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by motivation, dedication, enthusiasm and absorption.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996) a psychological perspective positions definitions, perceptions and motivations of work within the actions of the individual. From this position work encompasses more than just the paid formal job structure equated with occupation, to also being inclusive of non-paid work.

Herr and Cramer (1996) assert:

> Work is also a psychological process by which individual needs for affiliation, competency, identification, structure, purpose, and community can be met. Lastly, work is a sociological process that tends to occur within a network of other roles, relationships, role demands and expectations: worker-co-worker, server-customer, supervisee-supervisor, manager-subordinate. (p. 68)

2.4.2. Work Life Balance

Work definitions have changed over time and perhaps it is reasonable to assume that they will continue to change over time, reflecting the changes that occur within society. Super (1984) recognises changed perspectives on work over time, articulating that:

> The approach of recent years has shifted from a focus on work alone as *the* central life concern to an interest in the quality of life, life in which work is *one* central concern in a constellation of roles such as homemaking, citizenship and leisure that interact to make life satisfaction (p. 29).

Hence the emergence and public embracement of the term 'work life balance' which has been bantered around so much by media and organisations (Prabhakar, Harikrishnan, & Moickam, 2012) that it has arguably become a catch phrase.

Gotari, Schwinger, Thomas, and Peoples (2006) assert that the dynamic interplay between work and family is important. "From the spill over of work stress into family life to the balancing of family and work responsibilities, the linkage between work and family are immutably significant" (Gotari et al., 2006, p. 1).

Rath and Harter (2010) advise that stress levels and workforce well-being has a direct impact on an organisation's bottom line. They raise the point that well-being can be measured in terms of the costings of health. Poor mental and physical health impacts

upon employee performance as each person's well-being is critical to achieving an organisation's goals. If an employee does not show up to work or give their best performance than productivity is eroded and a lack of productivity means a lessening in potential profit.

Herr and Cramer (1996) observe that the majority of work that people are engaged in involves confrontation of the individual and the organisation. Cacioppe (2000) asserts "that workers are expected to work longer hours and produce greater results in less time yet are becoming more concerned about quality of their family and personal lives" (p. 48). Gotari et al. (2006) assert that the relationship between work and family has far reaching implications which can be viewed in terms of intra and intergenerational impacts as demands of work impact parent and child relationships, adult to adult relationships, grandchild to grandparent relation and so on.

A prevalent problem noted in the literature in the class of executive manager, especially the human services executive manager, (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) and in particular school principals, is that of poor work life balance, high levels of stress and concerns regarding the maintenance of well-being (Riley, 2012; 2014).

In a recent Australian survey involving 2005 participants, Riley (2012) reported that 46% of principals who participated in the survey, volunteered their time outside of their paid work, and 80% of participants work above 46 hours a week during term, with more than one quarter working more than 61 hours per week. It was reported by Phillips and Sen (2011) that "work related stress was higher in education than across all other industries…with work-related mental ill-health…almost double the rate for all industry" (pp. 177-8).

For the school principal work is a complex ever increasing array of tasks involving communication, management and leadership of and with students, staff, parents and at times members of the broader community (Riley, 2014; Perry & McWilliam, 2007). For the purpose of this study work is being defined from a principals' perspective where work can be viewed and interpreted from individual perceptions and actions as well as through social interactions and the role through which individual work

behaviour occurs. Work is conceptualised within the context of people, position and purpose (Braude, 1975).

Fullan (2002) suggests that many principals want to make a positive difference in the lives of students, operating according to a moral purpose. Sergiovanni (1992) describes it similarly in terms of moral and ethical leadership. Principals make decisions, some of which are informed by research, for what they take on board and the mental models they construct amid their expanding list of priorities referred to by Lacey (2007).

2.5.   The Australian Educational Context

The Australian education context is currently characterised by increasing public scrutiny of school performance and an expectation that all schools should, within contextual boundaries, produce high level student academic and non-academic outcomes (Drysdale & Gurr, n.d.).

According to Drysdale and Gurr (n.d.) Australia is now in the grasp of a burgeoning era of school performance accountability. They articulate that in all states and territories, and at the federal government level, there is considerable interest in developing successful schools in all contexts, for all students. Drivers for this emphasis include increased accountability, both locally and internationally through the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country comparisons, competition between the public, independent and Catholic sectors, tensions between the state/territory and federal governments, increased knowledge as to what works in schools, and, above all, a desire to ensure successful schools (Drysdale & Gurr, n.d.). What this environment is doing is concentrating attention on school leadership, particularly that of principals.

Our State educational community is not only characterised by public scrutiny of school performance but also public scrutiny of the principal's performance. As such the selection and development of principals has also been under the spotlight with very

recent changes to the selection and recruitment process in Queensland (Drysdale & Gurr).

Kuper and Marmot (2003) report that under conditions currently being evidenced in the Australian educational context younger people taking on the role of principal appear to be at greater risk of coronary heart disease than their older colleagues. This finding is a real cause for concern because of the impending retirement of up to 70 % of Australia's primary and secondary principals within the next few years, who could be replaced by less experienced individuals, potentially more at risk of poor health outcomes (Riley, 2012). This research also has implications regarding the readiness of our less experienced principals.

Currently in Australia there is much debate regarding our leadership development of both primary and secondary principals through an apprenticeship model in which aspiring school leaders gain the necessary skill and experience on-the-job as they moved up the ranks to the principal class (Moos, Johansson, & Day, 2011; Su, Gamage & Miniberg, 2003). Across Australia, credentialing and mandatory programs for aspirants acquiring the skills and knowledge to undertake the role of principal or move onto being a principal in a larger school are still not regulated or legislated by governments or educational systems. However, what has changed is a recognition that unless systems prepare and foster a new generation of principals, that will be capable of performing the role, the education systems will be in crisis (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Pont et al., 2008).

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (ATSIL) in relation to perceived concerns has developed a National Professional Standard for Principals and part of its purpose is to "assist in attracting, developing and supporting aspiring and practising principals" (MCEECDYA, p.1.). Currently still very little work has been done regarding the support of principals' well-being whilst they are 'on the job', under scrutiny striving to produce high level student academic and non-academic outcomes by which their performance is partially measured. Fink (2009) observes that today's leaders need to cope with outmoded structures and simultaneously lead schools to become innovative learning communities. Given the literature explored it appears to be somewhat of a challenge to be a leader in the current educational context where

workload, and accountability has increased (Anderson, Kleinhenz, Mulford, & Gurr, 2008; Pont et al., 2008).

In recent years a complex shift has occurred in how Australian school communities must position and understand themselves in relation to a wide variety of both school, local and global stakeholders. The quality of relationships that a school principal has with the employees and other key stakeholders (such as the teachers, students, parents, Parents and Citizens Committee, local council, Department of Education and Training officials, and community members) is crucial to the school communities' success, as it responds to competitive conditions where student market share is an issue between schools (Drysdale & Gurr, u.d.).

Unpacking what this in practice is somewhat more complex than this list appears. Principals must make an array of decisions, often amid competing priorities and tight time constraints but in a manner that not only stands up to public scrutiny but is also ethical and moral. The world has been changing and so to have schools as school leaders seek to experiment with new approaches to running schools in ways suited to the 21st century (Fink, 2009). Mulford (2003) makes the assertion that school leaders can be a major influence on "school-level factors as well as help buffer against the excesses of the mounting and sometimes contradictory external pressures" (p. 17).

Following a review on literature concerning successful school leadership Gurr et al. (2005) noted that principals demonstrated an ability to "not be confined by the contexts in which they work. Instead principals actively moderate and mediate within a set of core values and practices which transcend narrowly conceived improvement agendas" (Day, 2005, p. 578).

According to Pampuch (2007, p. 114) "to achieve success the principal needs to be developed and supported so that their individual capacity as a leader may be maximised". It may be inferred that in supporting a principal, the principal's well-being should be included. There is significant evidence (Anderson et al., 2008; Day, 2005; Drysdale & Gurr, n.d.; Gurr et al., 2005; Mulford, 2003; Pampuch, 2006) regarding the complexity of the role of a school principal in the contemporary environment with a focus on what successful leaders need to do in an environment of

increased accountability. Of note is the apparent causal link between perceived role complexity and the state of a person's well-being and the work that they perform (Seaward, 2012).

The Australian Primary Principal's Association (APPA) is one of the Nation's authoritative education bodies representing more than 7,000 principals in the government and non-government primary schools sector. More than 2,600 primary principals were surveyed around Australia regarding their concerns with their current work role. A major concern raised by principals, was well-being (Lacey, 2007; Riley, 2012). As a result of the survey responses APPA commissioned Dr Kathy Lacey of Melbourne-based Right Angles Consulting Pty Ltd to research the concerns. The result was the report entitled "Maintaining, Sustaining and Refueling Leaders", known as the Lacey Report (2007). The Lacey Report utilised focus groups to survey a representative group of school principals from independent, catholic and government primary schools. Lacey's (2007) findings indicated that many principals face serious work-related problems that affect their well-being. Lacey reported that in the areas where counselling does exist the vast majority of principals do not use it because it is not trusted as being independent and either their staff or their supervisor will see them engaging in it, therefore the rumour mill may commence. The assumption made by principals is that undertaking counselling will be perceived by others as a sign of weakness, and therefore many struggle through work related crisis without seeking support (Lacey, 2007).

The Lacey Report (2007) highlights that principals are endeavouring to deal with many aspects of their work role that greatly impact upon well-being without seeking help. My research explored what strategies principals are already utilising to maintain their SWB and this knowledge can be input into the educational field, providing literature for principals on what is currently working for their colleagues, a sharing of lived experience.

There were four unresolved issues noted in the Lacey report, three of which highlight the need for further study in the area of principals' wellbeing:

1. Principals are unlikely to confide in a colleague who might be on their next job panel. This significantly impacts on collegiate support.

2. There is a culture of silence regarding access to, and use of wellbeing services.

3. Much collegiate support is gained from attendance at local network meetings. (Lacey, p. 29)

In looking into issues that impact school principal well-being it seems pertinent to have an understanding of the role they perform.

2.5.1. Role of the Principal

A person's role can be conceptualised as consisting of a set of social norms which act as signalling mechanisms (Posner, 2000) or expectations held both by the individual and by other people (Mantere, 2008). This conception of role is then influenced by many factors such as: a person's beliefs, assumptions, vicarious experiences and lived experiences. The majority of people hold pre-conceived notions of the role expectations, and for a principal for example, this could include: implementing school plans and system policies, managing the budget, writing an article for the newsletter, disciplining students, and utilising professional communication. Hallinger (2005) suggests that the school principal is expected to perform a large number of complex roles such as: school operations leader, counsellor, instructional leader, disciplinary, visionary, and each role has specific work tasks associated with it, such as: the implementation and achievement of accountability measures.

The role of a school principal arguably is underpinned by changing demands and a belief that the school principal needs to ensure high levels of academic and non-academic educational outcomes are attained by all students. In relation to a school principal's role, Leithwood, Seashore, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) assert "leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school" (p. 7). What high achievement of outcomes looks like and the role the principal plays in leading or engineering this is widely disputed depending upon whose perspective is taken into account, such as the perspectives of: principals; the system; the politicians; the parents; and the students (Leithwood et al, 2004). Consider for a moment just a few of the complexities a principal may experience in dealing with social, cultural and political perspectives

from the situatedness of: students, staff, parents, the community, the principal's supervisor, the educational and political systems that the school is linked to, and the broader community.

Fullan (2000) explored the role of the school principal and noted that research identified that the role of the school principal was central to promoting or inhibiting change. A decade ago he noted that there was no question that the demands on the principalship have become even more intensified in almost all Western countries. Fullan revealed that many principals are retiring early and teachers seeing the role of principal as a complex job are simply choosing to not seek promotion and enter the principalship. Fullan goes on to present a concise literature review of incidents where the stress and complexity of the role are reported. He makes reference to an interview response from Duke (1988) where the discouragement felt by principals in attempting to cover all the bases is captured by a principal who was quitting: "The conflict for me comes from going home every night acutely aware of what didn't get done and feeling after six years that I ought to have a better batting average than I have" (p. 3). The question that needs to be asked is 'What has changed in the following decade in relation to the principals' role?' It would make sense that a review of the literature would paint a similar picture with reports of increasing complexity, predominately with the rise of accountability and principals' still experiencing stress.

The literature on school sustainability also evidences the quality of school leadership as a key to continuing school and organisational improvement and learning (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). This brings into question what quality school leadership is, the context in which it occurs in, and the principals' role in the way it is enacted. Leithwood, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) in a meta-analysis researched twenty-seven studies examining the relative impact of different types of leadership on students' outcomes and inductively derived five universal leadership dimensions that should be in evidence when a principal is performing their role: establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participation in teacher learner development and; ensuring an orderly and supportive environment.

The five dimensions will be briefly explained in order to shed light on the numerous roles a school principal should perform. The first dimension; goal and expectation setting, has indirect and seemingly positive effects on students as it focuses and coordinates the work of teachers and at times, parents (Robinson et al., 2008). Research in social psychology explains that goals provide a sense of priority and purpose in an environment where a multitude of tasks are competing for focus and can seem overwhelming (Latham & Locke, 2006).

The second dimension; leadership and strategic resourcing, is a leadership activity that is much more than acquiring resources, it also encompasses the alignment of resources with priorities and instructional purposes. Robinson et al. (2008) report "seven studies provided evidence for how principals can influence student achievement through their decisions about staffing and teaching resources" (p. 661).

Planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum comprise the third leadership dimension and it consists of a variety of leadership activities and behaviours. Planning and coordinating included such activities as developing progressions of teaching objectives for reading (Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991) and evaluating teaching and the curriculum involves activities like principal led school wide examination of data (Heck, 2000) and regular classroom observations that help teachers to improve their teaching (Bamberg & Andrews, 1991; Andrews, 2009). Leithwood and Jantzi (2006, p. 23) assert that "…the potency of leadership for increasing student learning hinges on the specific classroom practices that leaders stimulate, encourage and promote".

The fourth leadership dimension; both promotes and involves participation in teacher learner development. Robinson et al. (2008, p. 663) wrote: "This leadership dimension is described as both promoting and participating because more is involved than just supporting or sponsoring other staff in their learning. The leader participates in the learning as leader, learner or both". This occurs in a duality of contexts; formal contexts (curriculum meetings, staff meetings, professional development, year level meetings, data meetings, etc.), in professional conversations and staffing decisions where teachers are empowered to also lead, and informal contexts such as over lunch or incidental hallway conversation (Chew & Andrews, 2010).

Ensuring an orderly and supportive environment is the fifth leadership dimension (Robinson et al, 2008). This dimension encompasses the principal's ability to quickly and effectively address conflict that may arise with or between students, teachers, staff, parents and members of the community and the creation of an environment that supports students, staff to achieve academic and non-academic goals (Robinson et al.).

The five leadership dimensions suggested by Robinson et al. (2008) provide a broad snapshot of a principal's role. Hesselbein et al. (as cited in Handy, 1996, p.8) also refers to the inner principal emphasising three essential leadership attributes: "a belief in oneself… a passion for the job … and a love of people". Macaulay (2008, p. 27) builds on this asserting that leaders need great strength of character and a need for almost opposing attributes as principals also need "to create a capacity for aloneness".

2.5.2. Five Functions of Educational Leadership

At a similar time to the research being conducted by Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) into principal leadership, another significant group of renowned researchers in the field of educational leadership (Seashore et al., 2010) were also working together on a six-year study (funded by The Wallace Foundation) that focused on leadership at the school, district, and state levels in American public schools. From this research (The Wallace Foundation) there emerged the belief that contemporary school principals in their role perform five key functions: shaping a vision of academic success for all students; creating a climate hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction and; managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. If you look at each of these functions individually perhaps you could conceptualise how each could be a fulltime position, yet a principal must perform them all.

2.5.2.1. Shaping a Vision of Academic Success for all Students

The first key function of leadership according to Seashore et al. (2010) is shaping a vision. The important role of vision has long been evident in the literature (Blumberg

& Greenfield, 1980; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1984; Manasse, 1986; Mazzarella & Grundy, 1989; Seashore et al., 2010) and it is considered to be fundamental for the role of professional success (Scott & Webber, 2012). Visionary educational leaders have a clear picture of what they want to accomplish (Leithwood et al., 2004). Researchers who have scrutinized educational leadership assert that effective principals are responsible for establishing a schoolwide vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students (Seashore et al., 2010). This involves communicating with a community, harnessing school community energy toward a shared vision, ensuring that the energy and efforts are channelled toward the vision and having the measures in place to know, feel and understand when it has been achieved (Crowther, 2011). This sharing of common purpose also influences the establishment of the school climate.

2.5.2.2.   Creating a Climate Hospitable to Education

The second function of leadership according to Seashore et al. (2010) is the establishment of a positive or hospitable school climate. The work of an effective principal was deemed to ensure that their schools allowed both adults and children to put learning as the focus of their daily activities (Seashore et al., 2010). The fostering of positive relationships is vital, where students and staff feel safe, and school community members feel that staff and the principal are responsive to their needs (Goldring Porter, Murphy, Elliot, Cravens, 2007). Kohn (1996) asserts, "Children are more likely to be respectful when important adults in their lives respect them. They are more likely to care about others if they know they are cared about" (p. 111).

In creating an environment that meets the personal and learning needs of the students and the professional needs and responsibilities of the staff and teachers, effective principals must be focused on the needs and abilities of the whole community, the enhancement of the vision and the development of distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

2.5.2.3. Cultivating Leadership in Others

The third function of leadership according to Seashore et al. (2010) is cultivating leadership in others. This cultivation of leadership has been termed as has been referred to as distributed leadership, shared leadership, team leadership, and democratic leadership (Spillane, 2005). There is a general consensus in leadership theory that embraces that leaders in all walks of life and organisations, need to depend on others to accomplish the group's vision and need to encourage the development of leadership across the organisation (Kouzes & Posner, 2008).

Lambert (1998) espouses that if leadership is limited to one person we are limiting the achievement of a broad-based participation by a community or a society therefore principals need to give in-depth consideration to encouraging leadership opportunities. School leadership needs to be a broad concept that is embedded in the school community as a whole, separated from person, role, and a discrete set of individual behaviours (Lambert, 1998). Such a broadening of the concept of leadership suggests shared responsibility for a shared purpose by a whole school community with the principal inspiring others to take on leadership roles (Fullan, 2000). To create an environment where people feel they can undertake leadership, takes engineering, the seeking of the right person and knowing whose talent is ready to be grown (Leithwood et al., 2004). According to Fullan (2001) shared leadership produces a wide range of positive outcomes. The skillset that underpins the ability to create an environment where distributed leadership is fostered and instruction is improved are tools of the effective principal (Lambert, 1998).

2.5.2.4. Improving Instruction

The fourth function of leadership according to Seashore et al. (2010) is improving instruction. Current research shows that principals play a key instructional role where they can influence student achievement through raising teachers' expectations for student learning (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davies, 1996). Effective principals understand that improvement on state and national testing regimes is important but they know that quality instruction is vital for improving every student's achievement (Lunenburg, 2010).

Effective educational leaders make a difference in improving learning when the principal sets clear direction; develops people by providing the necessary professional development and support to succeed; and by supports teaching and learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). Leithwood et al. suggest that "of all the factors that contribute to what students learn at school, present evidence suggests that leadership is second in strength only to classroom instruction" (p. 70). Therefore while principals may not actually be teaching the students they are having an indirect effect in improving student learning. To be effective leaders school principals need to be involved in: changing the focus of instruction from teaching to learning; forming collaborative structures and processes for school teaching teams to work together to improve instruction; and ensuring that professional development is ongoing and aligned with school goals (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006).

Seashore et al. (2010) in the report from their six year study observe that effective principals believed that every teacher, whether a first-year teacher or a veteran, can learn and grow and manage people in a manner that brings out the best in them.

2.5.2.5. Managing People, Data and Processes

The fifth function of leadership according to Seashore et al. (2010) is managing, people, data and processes is a complex job. Managing resources, especially human resources, needs both good organisational skills and good communicative skills where members of the organisation feel valued and have a desire to collaboratively participate in the decision making and work of the organisation (DeVito, 2011). According to Scott and Webber (2012, p. 117) contemporary principals require "the technical skills associated with change management, such as conflict resolution, relationship building, time management, and the capacity to triage needs and set priorities". As a leader of people, principals need to be inspirational, energising people, harnessing the synergy of the organisation and aligning this with the organisational vision and strategic intent (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008). In order to do this a principal needs to have developed trust and collaboration among staff (Spillane, 2005). Hargreaves and Fink (2006) suggest that an effective way to do this is through distributed leadership as it offers enhanced sustainable improvements in organisations where distributed

leadership operates as a network of strong units or groups scaffolded through budding development and cohesive diversity. With this form of leadership the effective principal encourages, develops and nurtures developing leaders within the school.

Effective principal leaders studied by University of Washington researchers utilised their communication skills to nurture and support their staff members, while facing the reality that sometimes teachers don't work out. They hired carefully, but – adhering to union and district personnel policies – they also engaged in forcefully weeding out individuals who did not demonstrate the capability to grow (Portin et al., 2009, as cited in The Wallace Foundation, 2012). Effective principals have a commitment to their vision and expectations that teachers will demonstrate a high level of professional competencies, working collaboratively with the school community to actively achieve the vision.

When it comes to conceptualising and utilising data, effective principals try to draw the most from the data set they are using, having learned to ask thoughtful and provoking questions of the information, to display it in ways that tell persuasive stories and to use it to promote collaborative inquiry among their educators (Portin et al., 2002). Effective principals view data as a means not only to pinpoint problems but to understand the nature and causes of the problems or challenges and to identify solutions (Seashore et al., 2010).

I do not propose that all principals do give equal weighting to the leadership dimensions in practice but rather I share these dimensions as a way of exposing the reader to the varied work role of principals, and the inherent expectations from members of the school community who may expect principals to demonstrate competency in all of the leadership dimensions. In their meta-analysis of school leadership Robinson et al. (2008) wrote "the closer educational leaders get to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to have a positive impact on student outcomes" (p. 664).

In exploring the role of a school principal Fullan's (2000) work was reflected upon as he outlined the increasing complexity of the role. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe's (2008) meta-analysis was utilised to identify five universal leadership dimensions and the

work of Seashore et al. (2010) illuminated five key functions for school principals. The increasing demands of the principal role will now be explored.

2.5.3. The Increasing Demands of the Role

The world has been changing and so to have schools as school leaders seek to experiment with new approaches to running schools in ways suited to the 21st century. Mulford (2003, p. 17) makes the assertion that school leaders can be a major influence on "school-level factors as well as help buffer against the excesses of the mounting and sometimes contradictory external pressures". Mulford asserts that the expectations for school leaders have steadily expanded over recent years. Perry and McWilliam (2007) claim that:

> School leaders have a broad and some would say, ever-burgeoning, array of responsibilities. From marketing to musicals, from staffing to salaries, the busy-ness of schooling requires that its leaders pay attention to an array of activities that is historically unprecedented. (p. 32)

Hines, Edmonson, and Moore (2008) conducted a study involving school principals and they found that every principal they interviewed emphasised more intensification with the increased demands of their job due to the incredible amount of information that is now shared via electronic communication and the increased time pressure resulting from spending time 'at the computer' sifting through and responding to electronic communication. The researchers asserted that school principals are overloaded with information that is frequently irrelevant to their actual job performance. Currently school leaders "... must manage educational change at a time when the character and missions of schools is being redefined…" (OECD, 2001, p. 17). Seaward (2012) states that managing change can be stressful and impact greatly upon, maintaining positive well-being.

Fullan (2003) asserts that "effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform" (p. 15). Whilst it is recognised by researchers (Fullan, 2003; Mulford, 2003) that co-leadership or parallel leadership involves not just the principal, the principal has a leading role. Mulford (2003, p. 5) determined that "school leaders

are not only being pulled in many different directions simultaneously but that they may be being asked to do too much".

In school communities students, staff, and parents and community members hold expectations of the principal and how they should perform their role. One such expectation is highlighted by Shoho (2002) where he asserts school leaders must recognise the need to periodically assess the burnout levels of their teachers and then determine the degree to which their leadership style and organisational factors contribute to heightened teacher stress levels.

It is well documented in recent literature (Cranston, 2002; Flockton 2001; Mulford 2003; Riley, 2014) that the multiple roles and increased workloads of school principals have moved way beyond the core workings of teaching and learning. Very recent literature reveals a wealth of studies, reports, articles and books asserting the role of the principal is to ensure the well-being of students and staff, to name but a few recent studies: *The Psychological and Emotional Well-being Needs of Children and Young People: Models of Effective Practice in Educational Settings* prepared for the Department of Education and Communities (2011); a report for the Australian Government by Lovet, Toomey, Dally, and Clement (2009) entitled *Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience* and a study by McCallum and Price (2010) entitled *Well teachers, Well students*. In all of these studies it is made clear that the current role of the principal encompasses ensuring that the well-being of students and staff is maintained.

McCallum and Price (2010) argue that the retention of teachers is dependent on having a well-being strategy in place that clearly identifies inhibiting and enabling strategies and I propose that such a strategy is also a necessity for school principals.

2.6.   Summary

In summary, Chapter Two provided a brief history of the emergence of well-being in relation to hedonistic and eudemonic well-being. A conceptual definition of well-being was then presented from multiple perspectives: clinical; sociological; and

psychological perspective with a deepening focus on the emergence of SWB from the literature. SWB was explored in terms of the three components (Diener, 2009): life satisfaction; positive effect; and low levels of negative emotions.

The next section of the literature review explored SWB in relation to: positive and negative poles; balance including Set Point theory; Homeostatic theory; and measures of well-being. The literature review then explored the concept of work. Following this the role of the principal within the educational context was discussed in relation to: establishing a positive school environment; creating a climate hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; managing people, data and processes; the increasing demands of the role; the Australian educational context; and work role and SWB. Finally a summary of the chapter was provided.

A review of the literature demonstrates the complexity of the role and work of a school principal and also depicts that principals' well-being is an issue at the global, national, state and local level. There is however only a few studies that provide insight into the issue and the manner of doing so, seems to be measuring the well-being of school principals (Devos et al., 2007; Riley, 2012). The literature would seem incomplete as there appears to be little information on how school principals actually maintain their SWB whilst performing their complex role? This gap within the literature is what this study was interested in investigating further.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the design used for this study, An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009). The chapter also explores the research paradigms and the philosophical orientation of the study and five components of An Interactive Research Design.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLGY

3.1.   Introduction

In outlining Chapter Three I have endeavoured to structure it according to the thinking process that I engaged in when structuring the methodology. Whilst I selected the case study method as being the best fit for answering the research question, I needed to understand the linkage of all of the interconnecting pieces for research method and how I designed the research. To use an analogy, I needed a road map in order to navigate to my destination. That road map was in the form of An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009) which provided me with the basis for understanding all of connections that shaped my case study. Therefore in writing up the methodology chapter I have chosen to describe it using the structure of the research design.

In this chapter I have firstly explained the design framework and then I detailed the research paradigm. The five components of An Interactive Research Design are discussed: method (i.e. case study); goals; conceptual framework; research questions; and validity. In exploring the conceptual framework component I discussed: theory development; and writing up the emerging theory.

I then moved on to discuss the ethical considerations that influenced the research design. In so doing I explored research benefits and interests, anonymity and confidentiality, situated ethics, and informed consent. I then engaged in theory reflection. The significance of the proposed research was then highlighted in terms of the anticipated uses to be made of the research, the relevance of the research to education and the relevance of the study with theoretical contribution. The limitations of the study were then explored. The chapter concludes with a summary that synthesises the research design, including its perceived strengths for framing the study of how school principals maintain their SWB.

3.2.   Research Design—Framework

Jacob (as cited in Soltis, 1990) notes a variety in qualitative approaches and identifies them in association with the six social science research traditions: human ethology, ecological psychology, holistic ethnography, cognitive anthropology, ethnography of communication and symbolic interactionism. Fetterman (1988) offers different categories, suggesting ethnography, naturalistic inquiry, generic pragmatic qualitative inquiry, connoisseurship/criticism and phenomenology (Soltis, 1990).

Endeavouring to make sense in a quagmire of contradictions of what part of the research design the novice researcher begins with was difficult until I discovered the work of Maxwell (2009). Maxwell asserts the model is intended to help the researcher understand the actual structure of the study as well as to plan it, carry it out and reflect in an on-going manner about decisions made in research design. The model adopted here in this study, was Maxwell's (2009) 'An Interactive Model of Design'. "An essential feature of this model is that it treats research design as a real entity" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 217). The model consists of five components, each of which address a different set of issues that impact upon the coherence of the study: methods; goals; conceptual framework; research questions; and validity. There exists between the components an interactive relationship rather than a linear relationship.
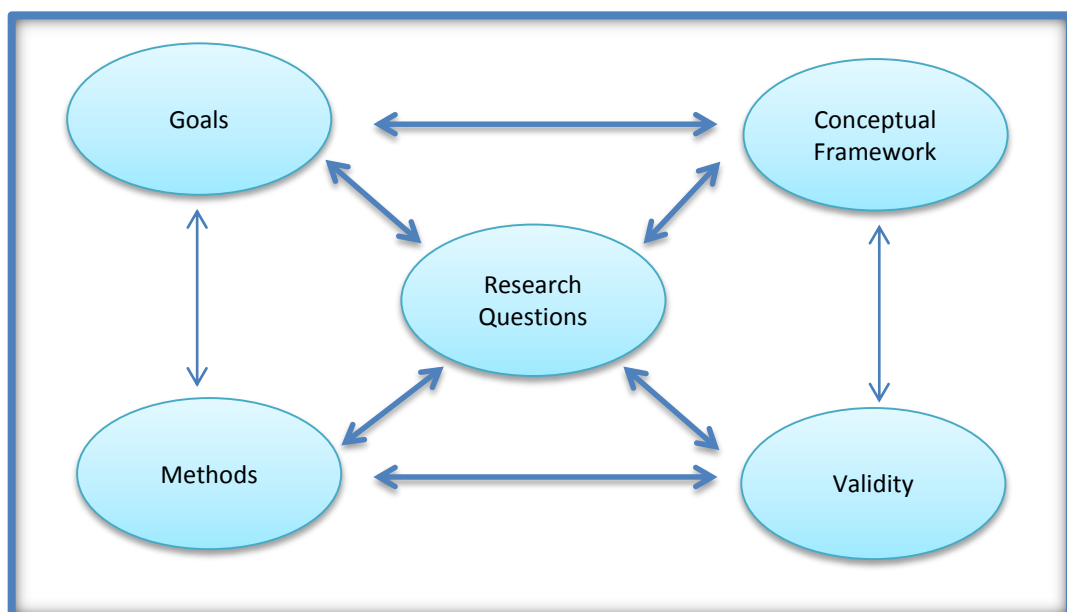
Figure 3.1: An Interactive Model of Research Design.

Source: Maxwell, J. A. (2012). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Los Angles; CA. Sage.

The components detailed in Figure 3.1 are not labelled by Maxwell as component one, two, three, four or five as that suggests a linear relationship. They are simply referred to as overlapping components and the overlap allows for further exploration of concepts that may have been mentioned in relation to other components. The research questions are central to the model, interconnecting with all of the other components of the model. This connection reflects how all components inform and are sensitive to the other components (Maxwell, 2009). The upper triangle of the model should be closely related; goals, research questions and conceptual framework, as should the lower triangle; methods, research questions and validity. In the model this relationship is depicted through the use of bolded arrows mirroring the fluid flow of decision making and action. Maxwell asserts that the research question should have a clear connection to the goals of the study and be informed by what is already known, by current knowledge and theory. Similarly the connection was mirrored with what decisions I made about what knowledge and theory were relevant in relationship to the goals of the study. "The methods you use must enable you to answer your research questions, and also to deal with plausible validity threats to these answers" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 217).

I found this model valuable as the basis for my study because it was reflective of how my study took shape with questions and decisions impacting upon and relating to other components of the study. Maxwell (2009) claims that "it provides a model for the structure of a proposal for a qualitative study, one that clearly communicates and justifies the major design decisions and the connections among these" (p. 218). Like Maxwell's model I also saw the research paradigm and ethical considerations as major influences on the study, with the research paradigm bounding my study.

3.2.1. Research Paradigm

Careful consideration was given to developing an understanding of the research paradigm chosen for this study. Consideration that underwent on-going reflection utilising An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009) ensuring the paradigm was suited to the research being undertaken and my world–view of how best to investigate the research problem. Considerable research in the field drew on

quantitative studies and my view of how best to investigate the research problem led me in the direction of a qualitative study (Cohen et al., 2007). Firstly I began with developing conceptual clarity around what constitutes a paradigm. Paradigm refers to a set of general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand the world (epistemology) (Coomes, Danaher, & Danaher, 2004). These assumptions tend to be broadly shared by researchers in a specific field such as positivism, constructivism, realism and pragmatism (Maxwell, 2009). Choosing a paradigm involves assessing and making decisions about which paradigm best fits with the researcher's own assumptions and methodological preferences (Maxwell, 2009).

A paradigm, defined by Sarantakas (1998) is:

> A set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientists in general what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable. (p. 31)

Sarantakas (1998) categorises the paradigms, shown below in Table 3.1, using three types of paradigms; "Positivistic, Interpretive and Critical" (p. 33) whereas Cohen et al. (2007) outlines the paradigms as: the scientific paradigm which rests upon theoretical frameworks that can be tested through experimentation the interpretative paradigm which seeks to understand and interpret the world and the political and ideological paradigm which can be deemed to be critical educational research.

Table 3.1: Dominant Paradigms and Domains in the Social Science

Positivistic	Interpretive	Critical
Positivism	Symbolic Interactionism	Critical Theory
Neopositivism	Phenomenology	Conflict School of Thought
Methodological	Hermeneutics	Marxism
Positivism	Psychoanalysis	Feminism
Logical Positivism	Ethnology	
	Sociolinguistics	
	Constructivism	

Source: Adapted from Dominant Paradigms and Domains in the Social Sciences taken from Sarantakas (1998, p.33)

Essentially paradigms are all underpinned by four key elements: epistemology; ontology; nature of being human; and the nature of society (Gray, 2004); however elements are conceived differently depending upon conceptual understandings. Bogdan and Biklen (2001) succinctly define a paradigm as "a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research." (p. 2)

Denzin and Lincoln (1998, p. 185) assert "a paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Paradigms deal with first principles or ultimates. They are human constructions". Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state:

> Qualitative studies are not impressionistic essays made after a quick visit to a setting or after some conversations with a few subjects. The researcher spends considerable time in the empirical world laboriously collecting and reviewing piles of data. The data must bear the weight of any interpretation, so the researcher must constantly confront his or her own opinions and prejudices with the data. (p. 42)

This definition made sense to me so I continued to read about the qualitative researcher, adopting an interpretivist paradigm (Cohen et al., 2007; Sarantakas, 1998).

The role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to, "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19). In qualitative research "what one does do is observe, intuit, sense what is occurring in a natural setting – hence the term *naturalistic* inquiry" (Merriam, 1988, p. 17). Qualitative research in an interpretivist paradigm was the best fit for investigating my research question that focused on finding out how principals actually maintain their SWB. I therefore continued to deepen my understanding of what being a qualitative researcher, adopting an interpretivist paradigm conceptually meant.

Interpretivism focuses on "meaningful social action and an in-depth understanding of how meaning is created in everyday life and the real-world" (Travis, 1999, p. 1042). According to VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007):

> The interpretivist paradigm also assumes that there are many points of entry into any given reality. The focus of the case study within this paradigm is on a particular reality that is of relevance to the phenomenon under study.

> In relation to case study, this paradigm emphasizes an often story-like rendering of a problem and an iterative process of constructing the case study. A goal of the research is a description that goes deep enough to provide analysis. (p. 89)

This study was positioned within qualitative social science research, more specifically within the interpretivist paradigm (Cohen et al., 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), as that frame was best situated to provide answers to the abstract and complex problems arising from the focus questions.

3.2.1.1. Philosophical Orientation of the Study

The theoretical paradigm or the philosophical assumptions regarding the nature of reality are vital for understanding the overall perspective of the study design and implementation where the paradigm chosen depends on the positioning in regards to epistemological and ontological assumptions (Krauss, 2005) and axiological assumptions (Morrow, 2005). A theoretical paradigm is the identification of the underlying foundation that is applied to construct a scientific investigation (Krauss, 2005).

In general, qualitative researchers function utilising different epistemological assumptions from quantitative researchers (Krauss, 2005). For example, many qualitative researchers deem that the most appropriate way to understand any phenomenon is to look at it in its context, viewing all quantification as seeing only one portion of a reality that cannot be separated without losing the importance of the whole phenomenon (Krauss, 2005). In general, qualitative researchers believe the best way to understand a phenomenon is to become immersed in it, moving into the culture or organisation being studied (Trochim, 2000).

3.2.1.1.1. Epistemology

Epistemology can be viewed as what people mean when they say they know something. Crotty's (1998) definition of epistemology was embraced in this research

and he defines epistemology as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology" (p. 3). Knowledge is obtained from particular situations and events and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation.

Yazan (2015) raises the point that researchers' perspectives regarding the make-up and production of knowledge (i.e., their epistemological knowledge), underlie the inquiry project they design and implement. It infuses the entire investigation, from choice of the phenomenon of significance that is subjected to scrutiny to the way the ultimate report that comes to fruition. As Merriam points out, "Research is, after all, producing knowledge about the world, in our case, the world of educational practice" (Merriam, 1998, p. 3).

3.2.1.1.2. *Ontology*

Qualitative researchers also work using different ontological assumptions about the world to those used by quantitative researchers (Krauss, 2005). Qualitative research in general is centred on a constructivist ontology that suggests that there is no objective reality but multiple realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). People impose structure on the world perceived in an effort to construct meaning; meaning lies in cognition not in external elements; information is screened by cognitive systems, interpreted, transformed, at times rejected by the pre-existing knowledge that already exists in that system; the resulting knowledge is purposefully constructed (Lythcott & Duschl, 1990).

According to Dobson (2002) "the researcher's theoretical lens is also suggested as playing an important role in the choice of methods because the underlying belief system of the researcher (ontological assumptions) largely defines the choice of method (methodology)" (p.43).

As a researcher I was interested in how principals maintain their SWB whilst performing their complex work role. The paramount objective of qualitative research is to understand the meaning of an experience, and how all of the parts work together to form a whole (Merriam, 1988). "Qualitative research assumes that there are multiple

realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception" (Merriam, 1988, p. 17).

For the purposes of this research I employed the definition of ontology outlined by Blaikie (as cited in Grix, 2004, p. 59) as the study of "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other". Ontology is therefore the study of what people mean when they say something exists. Reality is based on individual interpretation and is subjective, where the social world is created or constructed, not just discovered (Prawat, 1996). People interpret and make their own meaning of events depending on factors such as but not limited to: experience, culture, education, beliefs, values, morals, and context (Prawat, 1996). There are therefore multiple perspectives on any one incident and social reality is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols and co-construction of meaning (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

3.2.1.1.3.   Axiology

Axiology has a direct bearing on the ethical context of research, providing an important basis for making explicit the values that the researcher takes into the research context (Bahm, 1993). For research where meaning is co-constructed, as is the case in my study, Morrow (2005) recommends that a *criteria for trustworthiness* be applied. Lincoln (1995) suggests that this is an *intrinsic criteria* and Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest the term *authenticity criteria*. These criteria seem to include: "fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity" (Morrow 2005, p. 252).

> *Fairness* demands that different constructions be solicited and honoured. In *ontological authenticity,* participants' individual constructions are improved, matured, expanded, and elaborated. *Educative authenticity* requires that participants' understandings of and appreciation for the constructions of others be enhanced. *Catalytic authenticity* speaks to the extent to which action is stimulated. (Morrow 2005, pp. 252-253).

Morrow (2005) also proposes the addition of two additional criteria for interpretivist/constructivist researcher to be mindful of: "(a) the extent to which participant meanings are understood deeply (*verstehen*; Ponterotto, 2005; Schwandt, 2000) and (b) the extent to which there is a mutual construction of meaning (and that construction is explicated) between and among researcher and participants" (2005, p. 253).

In reading the work of Morrow, I deeply self-reflected upon my values and the trustworthiness of the research. For me as the researcher I had shared the work context of being a principal with all of the participants so I was not a cultural outsider. I had worked together with the participants attending many of the same meetings and working on achieving similar systemic shared goals in the schools in which I had been principal. Morrow (2005) suggests that "qualitative methods are particularly suited to examining individuals within their cultural frameworks however, this attention to culture does not happen automatically and must be clearly defined as a primary lens through which the researcher conducts her or his investigation" (p. 253).

In summary, this section explored the philosophical orientation of the study in relation to: understanding of what constitutes a paradigm; the constructive and interpretivist paradigm which was selected for this study and the reasons underpinning this selection; and the epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions made by the researcher.

3.3. The Five Components

The five components of An Interactive Research Design are now discussed and include: method; goals; conceptual framework; research questions; and validity.

3.3.1. Method Component—Case Study

In deciding that I would embrace the integrative theoretical model of SWB for the purposes of this study, I next decided how I would do that. After further research and considerable dialogue with my supervisors I investigated case study.

This study used the case study method in social inquiry as developed by Stake (1978). Stake explains that case study is very useful in adding to humanistic understandings and that it has been used as a method of preliminary theory development. According to Stake, a case need not be a single person, but it could include a program, a collection, a responsibility or even a population. Stake (1995) views a case as "a bounded system" and he posits that researchers should inquire into it "as an object rather than a process" (p. 2). He goes on to outline that cases are: "a specific, a complex, functioning thing," more specifically "an integrated system" which "has a boundary and working parts" (p. 2). Stake suggests a flexible design which enables researchers to formulate changes even after they progress from design to research.

3.3.1.1. Purpose and Definition of Case Study

In choosing how best to answer the research question "How do principals maintain their SWB?" I considered the type of question being asked and selected a case study design as the best way to answer the question. Baxter and Jack (2008) asserts "How" and "Why" questions are suited to case study research. Educational case study design approaches a problem practice from a holistic perspective, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning involved (Merriam, 1998). Bromley (1986) writes that case studies;

> get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, desires), whereas experiments and surveys often use convenient derivative data e.g. test results, official records. (p 23)

I also selected case study as it aligns with an interpretivist paradigm where it is supposed that reality is a social construct that emerges from the way in which groups and individuals interact and experience the world (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

This selection allowed me to focus on the phenomena of how school principals maintain their SWB as they performed their work role interacting with groups and individuals that form part of their school community.

I selected the case study method as "it provides a unique example of people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by representing them with abstract theories or principles" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 181). According to Creswell (2009) case study research is a form of qualitative research, focusing on interpreting a particular specified phenomenon. Flyvberg (2006) describes that case study as a necessary method for specific research tasks in the social sciences. He also champions the method articulating that it "holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology" (p. 26). Merriam (1988, p. 9) asserts, "a case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon, such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group". "Case study, as a methodology seeks to understand the complex interrelationships among all that exist" (Stake, 1995, p. 37), and particular nuances about a case (Stake, 2006). There are numerous forms of case studies namely: ethnographic, historical and psychological (Lichtman, 2011), interpretive (Merriam, 1988, 1998) and educational (Stenhouse, 1985, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000).

In this study the single educational case being researched was how a group of school principals maintain their SWB. The case was looking at how SWB was maintained and it was explored through multiple participants who appeared to be successful and coping well in their role as a school principal (i.e., maintaining their SWB).

3.3.1.2. Methodology of Case Study

The research methods aimed at finding solutions to research problems whilst research methodology aimed at the employment of the appropriate procedures to find the solutions. In order to ensure validity, it was important that there was an alignment of research methods, methodology, tools, and techniques with the actual research problem and research question. I took the term method to mean that range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which were to be used as a basis

for inference and interpretation (Cohen et al., 2000). For this study the methods focussed on those associated with the interpretive paradigm of social inquiry case study.

Stake (1995; 2006) advises that firstly the researcher must clearly determine what is the case and what is not the case, for the study. For this study the case was clearly how a purposive sample of school principals maintained their SWB. A complexity that the researcher acknowledges is what Connelly and Clandinin (1999) describe as storied identity. For this study the principal's identity was understood as a storied identity, with attention given not only to how principals told their stories of their work but also to when, where and to whom the stories were retold. Mabry (2008) articulates that case study research in social science focuses on instances of greater complexity contributing to deeper understanding social phenomena. According to Connelly and Clandinin (1999) researchers should consider the *landscape* as relevant for case study methodology. Landscape is representative of time, place, and relationships among various agents and of interactions that play out over time and these elements help bound the case study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). This means that the professional landscape of principals is shaped by stories that are passed down over time within the culture of the schools. This includes: the principal's networks; the organisational system in which the school operates; influences that constitute what knowledge is valued, endorsed and shared; and the role and identity that a principal should and perhaps does assume.

Stake (1995) advises that the quality of the data is important for a good case study. Merriam (1998) advises that the role of the case study researcher is to gather as much data as possible with the intent of interpreting or theorising about the phenomenon. The level of abstraction and conceptualisation in interpretative case studies may range from suggesting relationships among variables to constructing theory. In this study an explanatory framework was presented for how school principals are maintaining their SWB. The model of analysis is inductive (Merriam, 1998). Interpretative educational case study methodology, was utilised in this study because the method fit the questions being asked. According to Merriam, (1988, p. 2) an interpretive case study could be viewed as "ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena".

71

My strategy of inquiry was narrative and the data collection involved the utilisation of structured interviews with structured questions and time for open ended addition of retrospective biographical information. As researcher, I paid close attention to actively listening to the voice of each principal, looking at each story as a window into the experience of the principal. The interview method was employed in order to allow the data to be directly reflective of the Principal's perceptions and the context in which their experiences occurred. My aim was to listen deeply, recording their stories and reflecting upon them analytically to see what the data revealed. It was also important to explore whether any of the selected participants experienced variations in levels of SWB and if they did, how did it manifest. What did they do as a result of it? Did they continue to work whilst experiencing it and what effect did it have on them personally, on others, and what are their learnings?

In summary, selecting to utilise case study initially was difficult due to the breadth of definition of a case study. I read through what VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) term as the 'conundrum of the case study' described this way because "the past three decades of scholarship on case study research have produced more than 25 different definitions of case study, each with its own particular emphasis and direction for research" (p. 2). As I was seeking to develop a deeper understanding of case study I found their work somewhat illuminating as it helped me develop clarity around the differing interpretations of case study. For the purpose of this research I understood the focus of case study within an interpretivist paradigm to be through a particular lens that is of relevance to the phenomenon under study. In relation to case study, this paradigm emphasised an often story-like rendering of a problem and an iterative process of constructing the case study (Mabry, 2008). A goal of the research was a "description that goes deep enough to provide analysis" (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 8).

3.3.1.3. Commencing Case Study

Qualitative case study design has numerous characteristics. Stake (1995) describes the case study design as being inductive, descriptive, specific and heuristic, while Hoaglin, Light, McPeck, Mosteller, and Stoto (1982) suggest that it allows the researcher to

suggest solutions. Heuristic means that cases studied illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1988). The term inductive implies that case studies mostly rely on inductive reasoning with generalisations, concepts and hypothesis emerging from the data, data that is grounded in the context itself (Merriam, 1998).

Stake (1981) claims that case study knowledge is more developed by reader interpretation as readers bring their own experience and understanding to the case study, where the reader also forms generalisations in relation to the data. Stake (1981) claims that these generalisations are "part of the knowledge produced by case studies" (p. 36). Interpretative educational case study methodology has been employed in this study as the method fits the questions being asked. According to Merriam (1988, p. 2), an interpretive case study could be viewed as an "ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena".

Bromley (1986) suggests that experiments and surveys frequently use expedient data like test results whereas case studies provide researchers with the opportunity to more closely study phenomenon, partially by means of observation in the natural setting, and partly by their contact to subjective factors such as thoughts and feelings.

This case study was looking at a single phenomenon that was explored through multiple voices. The intention of this approach was to provide a distinctive understanding of the experiences of people in real-life situations, allowing readers to grasp ideas more lucidly the intricacies involved (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

3.3.1.4.   The Strength of Case Study

Case study data should be subject to scrutiny on the grounds of credibility (Bromley, 1986). Bromley (1986) asserts that the aim of the case study "is not to find the 'correct' or 'true' interpretation of the facts, but rather to eliminate erroneous conclusions so that one is left with the best possible, the most compelling interpretation" (p. 38). Bromley's assertion resonated with my intention to tell the story of how some school principals maintain their SWB, from their lived experiences.

Qualitative research methods can be used to investigate "questions about human experience and realities studied through sustained contact with persons in their natural environments, and producing rich descriptive data that help us to understand those person's experiences" (Boyd, 2001, p. 68).

3.3.1.5. Data Collection and Analysis

I spent a great deal of time reflecting upon the best way to gather data from principals, a group of people that other researchers (Hines et al., 2008) have identified as being time poor. I also wanted a method that enabled me to gain an insight into the thinking of principals regarding the phenomena of maintaining SWB. There is an unpredictability in the behaviour of human beings and human experience is characterised by complexity (Somekh & Lewin, 2011) so the challenge for me was how best to capture this complexity.

As a researcher I needed to, metaphorically, "get inside the head" of participants when collecting data to see their situation through their eyes. Some of the tools and approaches utilised by phenomenologists provided me with the vehicle to do so. Patton (1990) suggests:

1. Take descriptive field notes.
2. Gather a variety of information that represents differing perspectives.
3. Select participants wisely, drawing upon their wisdom contained in the perspective they present.
4. Capture participants' viewpoints by utilising quotations so their experiences are retold in their own words.
5. Be as involved as possible in experiencing the fieldwork whilst maintaining an analytical perspective. (p. 209)

Patton (1990) also states that first-hand experience provides the researcher with the opportunity to be open, to discover and deduce what is significant. First hand observation and participation enables the researcher to document "human perception and experiences, consciously using own perceptions in the process" (Mabry, 2008, p. 215). Gathering of data through direct experience enables the researcher to be able to

deeply understand and interpret the setting and understand particular instances of the phenomena (Mabry, 2008).

Prior to beginning this study I had been a principal for twelve years and had developed relationships with principals based on professional trust, and shared with the participants the lived experience of being a principal.

3.3.1.5.1.   Participant Selection and Sampling

The participants in this study represent the class of human service executive managers in non-for profit organisations, particularly those mangers that work in complex environments where they experience high levels of emotional responsibility, personal accountability and are subject to frequent public scrutiny in the way in which they work with and for school students. I am selecting school principals because they belong to a class that research show is experiencing sustained high levels of stress and well-being maintenance issues (Lacey, 2007; Riley, 2012, 2014).

In investigating how best to select participants for this study (i.e., those school principals that appeared to be successfully coping in the role and self-identified as such), I took into account the four key factors Cohen et al. (2007) advised: sample size; representativeness; access to the sample; and the sampling strategy to be utilised. I then explored each of the four factors and their application to this study.

This study obtained twenty sources of data. There appears to be no specific rules for purposive sample size (Baum, 2002; Patton 1990) but the same size needed to be reflective of the phenomena being studied (how school principals maintain their SWB) (Patton, 1990). Sampling in qualitative research usually draws on small numbers as the aim is an in-depth and detailed study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Given the nature of my research questions and the methodology selected, a target sample of 10 to 12 participants was chosen. I did consider selecting a larger sample but this would have meant less time spent deeply engaging with the participants. After weighing up the importance of nuanced, descriptive data I opted for the smaller target

sample of 10 to 12 participants. With this decided I sought ethical approval for the study (see Appendix A). A total of eleven principals actually participated in the study. The second factor to be taken into account in sampling was representativeness. A small group of socio-demographic variables was included to characterise the individuals in the sample and to identify their objective life circumstances (Cohen et al., 2007). How best to represent a group of successful principals considering factors like mixed ages, gender, ethnicity, experience, culture and contextual complexity was a question with which I initially struggled? How focused did I need to be on gender, mixed ages, cultural complexity, and other factors that are ostensibly relevant? When I referred back to the focus research question regarding principal's SWB it helped me to decide on the criteria for principal selection. The criteria included:

- experienced principals with eight years or more in the principalship,
- been a principal in more than two schools and
- currently working in the role of principal.

Eight years of experience was chosen as I believe it is reasonable to assume that by this stage the experienced principal participant had a deep understanding of the role of the principal. Eight years of experience in more than two schools most likely means that the participants have been exposed to a larger variety of role complexities working with different staff, students and communities; thus providing a depth and breadth of richness to the data that can be captured. Rubin and Rubin (2005) advise that when selecting participants for research the interviewees should be very knowledgeable and experienced in the topic focus for the interview. All of the participants selected for this study were both knowledgeable and experienced. Importantly for me as the researcher, they were also prepared to communicate this information in a research study as Lacey's (2007) research had indicated that principals may be reticent to participate.

All of the participants have worked as principals only within the State of Queensland in the country of Australia. This group of principals whilst currently working in the same region at present, have however worked across seventeen different Regions or Districts in Queensland extending from the Far North to the South East. To conceptualise the area this covers I share the following facts obtained from http://www.qld.gov.au/about/about-queensland/statistics-facts/facts/

- Australia is the sixth-largest country in the world. Queensland is the second largest State in Australia with an area of 1,727,000 square kilometres.
- Queensland has a population of more than four million people.

It was thought plausible that the participants most likely would hold different perspectives about work, role and SWB, given that they had a variety of different geographical experiences.

Table 3.2: Participant Details

Participant	Number of years as a Principal	No of schools as principal	No of Different Regions or Districts worked in as a Principal	Size of schools with range of enrolments *
Ella	31	6	3	20 - 430
Sam	10	3	3	480 - 1500
Ewan	10	7	3	380 - 1500
Merv	30	7	1	20 - 900
Emma	11	3	1	30 - 230
Steve	12	5	2	15 - 1500
Amy	10	2	2	400 - 500
Kirk	30	5	4	15 - 1000
Lawrence	20	3	2	25 -1500
Evan	18	6	2	175 - 850
Nev	22	10	4	400- 890

* Note: smallest school at, to largest school at, with broad indicative enrolment numbers given to ensure participants cannot be identified.

I chose to take a sample of those who already are part of the group and take whatever diversity comes with that group (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity and so on).

Thirdly, access to a sample of school principals was an important consideration in thinking through sampling strategies. Given the size of the population of school principals and how widely they are dispersed, I looked at setting some geographical boundaries, rather than conducting a random sample. Given research by Lacey (2007) I purposely selected participants that I knew, assuming that they would more likely to disclose information to me because I had a shared experiential understanding of their role and work (Patton, 1990).

The participants in this study were all experienced principals (see Table 3.2). In providing information about the participants I have taken care to keep their identity

confidential and as such have provided little description around words like 'complexity'. The term complexity is used here to encompass factors like but not limited to: schools with a high level of students with English as a Second Language or Dialect; and/or significant numbers of students with disabilities; and/or students in care of the State). I have also provided very broad indicators including student enrolment numbers to safe guard the identity of participants.

- **Ella** currently leads a large school of over 350 to 430 students. Her school is located in an urban mid-socio economic area.

- **Sam** has been a principal for ten years and currently heads a large school of over 480 students in a low socio-economic rural area with considerable complexity.

- **Ewan** has been a principal for ten years and is a principal of a similar school to Sam in that it is a large school of over 400 students in a low socio-economic rural area with considerable complexity.

- **Merv** has been a principal for thirty years and currently heads a school large school of over 600 students in a high socio-economic urban area.

- **Emma** has been a principal for eleven years and currently leads a medium size school with over 100 students in a rural area of a medium socio-economic level.

- **Steve** has been a principal for twelve years and currently heads a large urban school of over 600 students in a medium socio-economic area.

- **Amber** has been a principal for ten years and currently leads a large school of over 350 to 430 students in a medium socio-economic rural area.

- **Kirk** has been a principal for thirty years and currently leads a large complex urban school of over 600 students in a middle to lower socio-economic area.

- **Lawrence** has been a principal for twenty years and currently leads a large school of over 600 students which is located in an urban upper socioeconomic area.

- **Evan** has been a principal for eighteen years and currently leads a school large school of over 500 students.

- **Nev** has been a principal for twenty-two years and currently leads a school large school of over 600 students in an urban higher socio-economic area.

Given the busyness of schools and the movement of principals from one school to another school (Mulford, 2003) I felt the data collection phase needed to occur within the timeframe of one school year, in the context that was real for principals (i.e., their school). It was an assumption of having been a school principal for twelve years that the first two weeks of the year, the last two weeks of the year and the weeks leading up to National testing be avoided due to the heavy workload on principals at this time. This timing consideration was therefore limiting to the selection of the sample size and also to the sampling strategy selected.

In relation to the fourth factor of sampling I looked closely at the sampling strategy. In order to meet the goals of the research, I chose to capture the voice of experienced principals by selecting a small group of principals that indicated they were willing to participate in the research. In the literature this is referred to as "purposeful sampling" (Cohen et al., 2000, 2007; Patton, 1980; Wiersma, 2000). This strategy was useful as participants are selected for the important information they could provide that cannot be obtained as well from other choices (Maxwell, 2009). Experienced principals in the larger schools (who were not on leave in the selected region) were initially made aware of the research opportunity as it was spoken about at a Cluster Principals Meeting. An email was then sent to 14 principals inviting them to participate in the study. Eight principals offered to participate. Given my target was 10 to 12 participants, I then called all of the principals who had not responded to my email and a further three elected to be involved in the study, giving me a total of eleven participants. When I contacted participants (both a telephone conversation and an email) I explained the study and this included a brief definition from the literature of SWB (definition from Diener, 2006, 2009, within my literature review). Wiersma (2000) asserts that "the logic of purposeful sampling is based on a sample of information-rich cases that is studied in depth, however, there is no assumption that all member of the population are equivalent data sources" (p. 285). How best to obtain data for study was the next crossroad I approached.

3.3.1.5.2.   Data Collection

Stake (1995) suggests that data be drawn from multiple sources to encapsulate the case under study and its intricate qualities. After careful consideration three methods of data collection were chosen: two interrelated interviews; a researcher journal; and a survey (which will be discussed in the Phase B data collection section) however the interviews were the primary data source.

3.3.1.5.2.1.   Interrelated Interviews

Data were gathered through two interviews each approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration. Each participant was interviewed in a setting of their choice which was predominately their school setting, with two interviews being conducted at the University where I work, and one interview being conducted at a participant's house as they were on leave when they were interviewed. All venues for the interviews were selected by the participants with a focus on venue criteria as being private and conducive to no interruptions. Semi-structured interviews were used and all responses were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. A number of specific questions were asked during the interviews and these questions had been provided to participants in the week prior to interview one and prior to interview two. Additional probing questions were asked during both interviews in order to obtain more clarity or depth of information (see Appendices B and C).

All interview data were collected within the space of a year from June 2012 through to December 2012 with two survey responses were later emailed back in February and March 2013. The data collection involved: a total of twenty interviews (eleven in Phase A of data collection and nine in Phase B of data collection, see Appendix D); eleven participant surveys (see Appendix E); and reflective memos made in a researcher journal. Several of the principals commented that they were "under the pump" and they would complete it in the New Year. Reminders were then sent out in the New Year, and follow up phone calls were made, with the last survey emailed back to the researcher in March 2013. The data gathering phase has been summarised below in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Actions and Associated Timelines

Action	Timeline
Phase A interviews • 11 participants • each interview 60 – to 90 minutes long Researcher journal – where I wrote self-reflective notes and created some emerging concept maps.	June – July 2012
Phase An initial data analysis provided the basis for me to develop some questions for the second interview where participants were asked to build upon a concept or idea mentioned in their previous interview.	
Phase B interviews • 9 participants (1 participant on approved leave and unavailable for further interviews and another participant I chose not to reinterview). • each interview 60 – to 90 minutes long Researcher journal – where I wrote self-reflective notes and created more refined concept maps.	October – November 2012
Phase B Survey – involving 11 participants 1. brief survey that showed their depth of experience and their reasons for taking part in the study Some participants sent surveys in months later.	November - December 2012 February and March 2013

The interviews for Phase A were conducted over a three week period. In the first three months (June, 2012) I interviewed all of the participants. Following the initial interview, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and then analysed. For Phase B of the data collection a second interview was conducted – Interview two, with nine of participants over another period of four weeks (October/November, 2012). One participant went on extended leave communicating that they would be unavailable for a second interview and I chose to not reinterview one participant as he/she had, about half way through the first interview, just kept repeating the same information despite my probing questions. All eleven participants also completed a survey.

3.3.1.5.2.2. *Researcher Journal*

In utilising my researcher journal I embraced the advice of Fink (2000) and Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick (2008) of ensuring that as soon as possible after conducting an interview notes were made in the researcher journal to record the physical setting or specific events, acts and non-verbal responses of each interviewee. This was one of the phenomenological tools (Moustakas, 1994) that I utilised.

3.3.1.5.2.3.   *Survey*

Survey data were also from all participants. The survey was designed to be brief as it was assumed that participants were 'time poor' towards the end of the school year and they may therefore be reticent to give up more of their time to complete a survey (Lacey 2007; Mulford, 2003; Riley, 2012). A survey was utilised to test my knowledge and assumptions i.e. years of experience as a principal and why principals had chosen to be involved in the survey (see Appendix E).

Survey data were collected in December 2012 to March 2013. The purpose was twofold. Firstly the survey clearly evidenced the breadth and depth of the participants experience in educational settings. Secondly the survey established succinctly participants' views on their involvement in the research (see Appendix E).

3.3.1.5.3.   *Phase A Data*

Data collection in Phase A involved an interview and the use of a research journal. The design of the interview process was an important stage, considering exactly how the interview should be structured to provide opportunity for optimum data gathering. A structured interview ensures that the content and procedures are organised in advanced, allowing little flexibility. By contrast the unstructured interview has greater freedom and flexibility and is an open situation. By having semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E for interview questions and Appendix F interview schedule) it allowed participants to have advance knowledge of content and procedures but also allowed for flexibility with potentially fluid conversation and discussion.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) refer to interviewing as an art that challenges researchers to hear the data. Interviewees are often not outlining the named concept or idea, just the

characteristics and the researcher needs to hear the data and know how to label the concept. Sometimes interviewing is about listening for distinctions and what is not said as well as tracking down discrepancies. Rubin and Rubin challenge the researcher to focus on those concepts that help the researcher move toward the theory they are developing. The ability to focus on the concepts is enhanced when the researcher becomes sensitive to the data, listening to transcripts and rereading transcripts. In pondering upon what Rubin and Rubin have articulated it is important to understand exactly what defines a concept. Simplistically a concept can be defined as "a core idea that can be summarised as a noun" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 56). In the Phase A data collection part of the focus of the questions was on developing an understanding of how participants conceptualise SWB and how this conceptualisation linked to Diener's (2006, 2009) definition of SWB (see Appendix B).

According to Kerlinger (1970) open-ended questions provide a frame of reference for respondents' answers, but with minimum restraint on the answers, allowing for flexibility and probing. The challenge for the researcher is that the sharing from the participant may provide unexpected disclosures for the researcher. Given that some flexibility was desired by myself as researcher, semi-structured questions were selected as the most appropriate for the study.

In conducting the semi-structured interviews three aspects were taken into consideration: directiveness (Whyte, 1982), anticipating problems (DeVito, 2011; Field & Morse, 1985), and sequencing and framing (Patton, 1980).

Whyte (1982) counsels researchers to be aware of their 'Directiveness' and reflect upon a six point scale of how directive the interviewer wants to be, something the interviewer needs to be mindful of and control as a variable. The 6-point scale referred to by Whyte (1982) is:

1. making encouraging noises;
2. reflecting on remarks of the participant;
3. probing on the last remark of the participant;
4. probing an idea preceding the last remark by the participant;
5. probing an idea expressed earlier in the interview; and
6. introducing a new topic.

In anticipating interruptions, Field and Morse (1985), assert that distractions must be minimised i.e. a quiet, confidential setting will be jointly chosen by the participant and DeVito (2011) refers to this as lessening the 'noise'. Noise is considered to be any distracter i.e. lack of coffee for a coffee addict, to the continual fiddling with a pen by the interviewer, where the participant is continually watching the pen fiddling. It is imperative that the researcher utilises appropriate interpersonal communication skills ensuring that the discussion is confidential. All interviews were recorded and complexities where possible were anticipated i.e. spare charged batteries, and a backup recording device.

The sequencing and framing of questions (Patton, 1980), also needed considerable thought (see Appendix B for the actual questions). Which question comes first and how does the researcher frame it in order to have the participant provide rich and descriptive answers, in practical terms, a sense of question readiness? As a researcher I needed to 'get inside the head' of participants when collecting the data and some of the tools and approaches utilised by phenomenologists provided me with the vehicle to do so. Patton (1990) suggests to:

1. Take descriptive field notes.
2. Gather a variety of information that represents differing perspectives.
3. Select participants wisely, drawing upon their wisdom contained in the perspective they present.
4. Capture participants' viewpoints by utilising quotations so their experiences are retold in their own words.
5. Be as involved as possible in experiencing the fieldwork whilst maintaining an analytical perspective. (p. 209)

Patton (1990) also states that first-hand experience provides the researcher with the opportunity to be open, to discover and deduce what is significant. I embraced Patton's viewpoint, personally having been a principal for twelve years and having many shared experiences with the participants in the study whilst also being very mindful of objectivity. First hand observation and participation enabled me to gather data through direct experience and thus be able to understand and interpret the setting and participants involved in the study (Patton, 1990). This burgeoning understanding was

then used to drill down for more information from participants in the Phase B of the data collection where almost all participants were reinterviewed (see Appendix D for the interview schedule).

3.3.1.5.4. Phase B

The purpose of the second interview was to refine and deepen my understanding, penetrating closer to the phenomenon of how principals maintain their SWB, until a point of saturation was reached (see Appendix C for the actual semi-structured questions). Interview B was also approximately one hour in duration. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that researchers listen for concepts, asking questions that help them to understand what the participants mean and how they are applying concepts. "Sometimes the interviewees state the themes themselves to explain why things occur, and by doing so move you rapidly toward an inductive theory" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 57).

For the purpose of this research Rubin and Rubin's (2005) definition was adopted, "concepts are core ideas that can be summarised as nouns, noun phrases or gerunds" (p. 56). The focus was then on the concepts that help the researcher move toward developing the theory. I read over the transcripts from Phase A of the data and used three broad frames for coding: conceptual links (for example SWB, work, role, agency, wisdom); strategies utilised to build or maintain SWB; and theoretical links, especially those directly mentioned by participants such as positive psychology. After reading each script and thinking about it I formulated follow up questions on the back of transcripts and I referred to these questions in the follow up interview with that participant and sometimes with other participants. These questions related to developing a deeper understanding of concepts and of emerging theories for further clarification in the second interview. The concepts were linked to begin to form a theme or themes as they were "statements that explained why something happened" or what something meant and from there concepts were built (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 57). The implications of burgeoning theories were examined and with further

questions were developed that explored the themes in more detail and these questions were discoursed with the participants in the second interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

3.3.1.5.5. *Phase A and B*

Two participants from Phase A were not interviewed in Phase B of the data collection. One of the participants was not reinterviewed as data saturation (redundancy) had occurred with no new information of significance being obtained toward the end of the first interview (Patton, 1990). The length of the second interview was also determined by saturation. In this study the search was "not the amount of data but rather the richness of the data, not the total counts but the detailed descriptions" (Carey, 1995. p. 492).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) articulate that the participant's life and the researcher's life combine to create a collaborative or co-constructed story. This occurred in this study as I listened to the stories of all participants, deconstructed the data to make meaning of it and then reconstructed the data again to portray the voices of what the school principal participants said about the phenomenon of how SWB was maintained.

To assist with clarity around my own data collection phase I utilised a researcher journal, making memos of my perceptions. I chronicled my own thinking, feelings, experiences and perceptions throughout the research process as shown below in Figure 3.2.
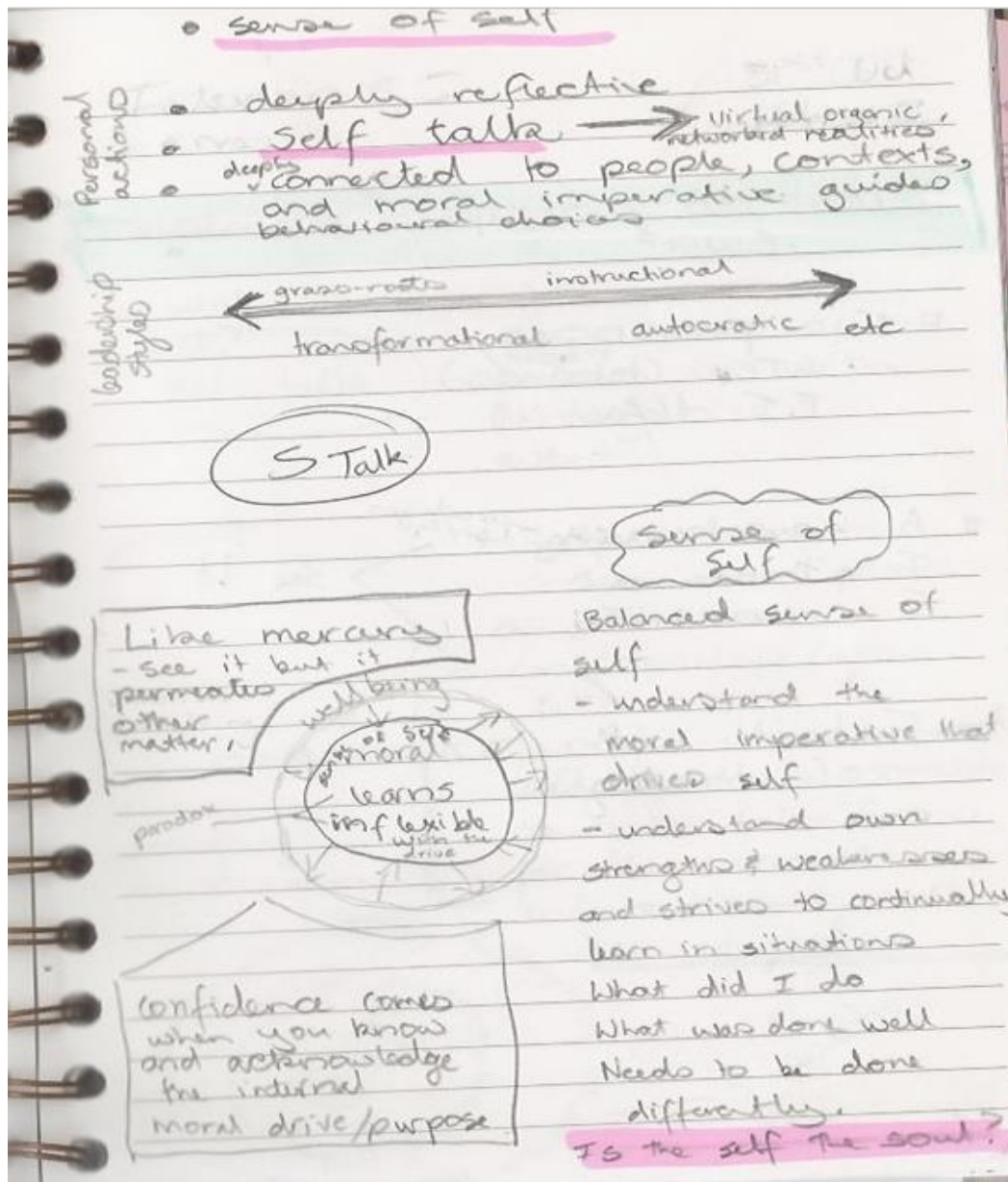
Figure 3.2: An excerpt from my researcher diary entry

3.3.1.5.6. Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative research is an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon, in this case how school principals maintain their SWB, through a process of comparing, contrasting, replicating, and classifying the object of study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The aim of analysing qualitative data is to determine key ideas, relationships, and beliefs that inform the participant's view of the world in general, and particularly of the phenomenon being researched (Cohen et al., 2000; McCracken, 1988).

Stake (1995) defines analysis as "a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). In Stake's view, "analysis essentially means taking … our impressions, our observations apart" (p. 71). Stake clearly recognises the use of analysis conventions for researchers as those "that help draw systematically from previous knowledge and cut down on misperception," but he also advises that precedence be given to intuition and impression rather than guidance of the procedural protocol (Stake, 1995, p. 72).

All participants were supplied with a definition of SWB. The intention was not to limit their view but rather to put in boundaries for the phenomenon for this study. The same definition was utilised in both Phase A and Phase B of the study with participants being invited to share any alternative view that they may have on SWB.

Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (2010) purport that data collection and data analysis need to occur as a simultaneous process in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). After listening to the stories of participants I sought to describe and identify common threads from the perspectives of the participants and seek to understand these common threads and their relationship to a scholarly framework of thought. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by a transcription agency that was highly recommended by numerous academics. On receipt of the transcripts I listened to the interviews to ensure their accuracy. During data collection and analysis, data were stored chronologically and had been de-identified.

During the analysis process there were four specific steps (referred to by Cohen et al., 2007) that I specifically adhered to:
1) Generating units of meaning;
2) Classifying, categorising and ordering these units of meaning;
3) Structuring narratives to describe the interview contents; and
4) Interpreting the interview and survey data.

Cohen et al. (2000, p. 282) describe the process of analysis as "the reactive interaction between the researcher and the decontextualisation of the data that are already interpretations of a social encounter".

In the data analysis process I rigorously investigated empirical evidence to generate units of meaning and accurately describing the themes that emerged. I also sought to ensure the voices of the principals could be heard through the meaning that had been co-constructed by providing excerpts of their storied voices verbatim for the reader.

3.3.1.5.7. *Coding and Comparing the Data*

Semi-open ended qualitative interviews can afford a great deal of rich data, data that can be complex and time consuming to analyse. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest coding as a strategy and they recommend earlier rather than later coding as later coding has the potential to weaken the overall analysis.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 282) aver that "transcriptions are decontextualised, abstracted from time and space, from the dynamics of the situation, from the live form, and from the social, interactive, dynamic and fluid dimensions of their source; they are frozen". Taking Cohen, Manion and Morrison's viewpoint into account I ensured data were simultaneously recorded in the transcript of the audiotape and the researcher's journal (i.e., tone, inflection, emphasis, silences, interruptions, and mood). The challenge for me was to ensure that the transcription was reflective of "...the interview is a social encounter, not merely a data gathering exercise ... and to remember that a transcription represents a translation from one set of rule system (oral and interpersonal) to another very remote rule system (written language)" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 281). The data were therefore a reflection of what data the interviewer has already interpreted. Transcribing was a crucial step as there is the potential for distortion, data loss and loss of complexity (Cohen et al., 2000). Kvale (1996, p. 183) reflects that, "interviewees statements are not simply collected by the interviewer; they are in reality, co-authored" as the researcher makes decisions on how, when, and what to include as they question or prompt participants and also in the way they report findings.

The second stage of analysis involved classifying, categorising and ordering these units of meaning. The transcription data were read and reread as soon as possible following each interview. This was done in two phases with analysis of eleven

interviews in Phase A being completed by October 2012 and analysis of a further nine interviews being completed by March 2013. A sense of the complete data set from each phase was obtained by reading through all of the transcripts in each phase jotting down ideas as they came to mind.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) there are two ways of creating data codes and I utilised the inductive method where data were not pre-coded before the interviews but was viewed after the interview process, following transcription. The data were reviewed in relation to how it functioned as a whole within its context, being mindful of the essence of what was contained within the whole data set. I then read each transcript through in detail, and codes became apparent.

Whilst reading transcripts I made annotations regarding ideas, theoretical linkages, emerging assumptions and beliefs of participants. These annotations were made on both sides of the transcripts and sections of text (from the Phase A interviews) were colour coded manually. A list of topics was created and I grouped these similar topics together in columns with appropriate segments of text in a column beside the code. This data were then clustered into broad categories that related to each other. I decided on some abbreviations for each category and then organised these in a more refined manner with more detailed codes, pulling apart categories into smaller parts, scrutinising forming linkages, and exploring themes. I then reassembled data material belonging to each category carefully comparing and contrasting it, looking for additional linkages or enlightening quotations and doing a preliminary analysis. The next challenge I faced as an evolving interpretivist researcher was, what was 'the best way' to manage my data set? After several weeks of deliberation I chose to utilise NVivo, a computer software program. At this point I was still not sure as to whether I would work through all the data manually or use the computer software NVivo. I partook in a great deal of discussion with colleagues and my supervisors on the merits of both methods and tried to wade through the question of how best to deal with the huge data set and still be true to the interpretivist paradigm. The deciding factor in this internal debate was after further reading I understood that I could utilise NVivo and still be operating in an interpretivist paradigm. Basit (2003, p. 145) asserts "electronic methods of coding data are increasingly being used by innovative researchers". After

making this decision I spent the next week 'feeling through it' to ensure that the decision was right for me as a researcher.

I created a project in NVivo called 'Data First Phase'. The transcripts had been saved as word documents but also in a format for NVivo and these transcripts were loaded into NVivo, along with various memo notes from my researcher journal that captured some of the nuances of the interview. I also uploaded all of the surveys into NVivo. At times I felt first-hand what Basit (2003, p. 153) stated when he wrote that "coding, a crucial stage of qualitative data analysis, is tedious and time-consuming when carried out manually, and it may take several weeks to get acquainted with a software package to code qualitative data electronically". It took me about a month to feel competent in using some of the functionality of NVivo. Rubin and Rubin (2005) advocate for the utilisation of software pointing out that it "allows you to quickly regroup interview data, enhancing your ability to link concepts and themes, refine them, and locate evidence" (p. 242).

After initially working through the Phase A of data collection again and creating numerous nodes, I wanted to work with the data in a manner that my current technological skillset would not allow. Upon finding this I enrolled in the first two day available workshop on utilising NVivo as research tool. My learning at this workshop provided me with the necessary skills to further interrogate my data.

For the third stage of the analysis I embarked on structuring narratives to describe the interview contents. I began questioning myself about what I had discovered so far. After having analysed the data manually from all eleven interviews in Phase A and collected data from the Phase B interviews I then utilised NVivo to work with the data.

In the last stage of data analysis I began interpreting the interview and survey data. I did this by adapting a process outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005):

1. I sorted and summarised the data, importing (except my researcher journal which is a separate book) into a single computer program. Both interview transcripts and the survey were brought together in NVivo software package.
2. Data were reviewed for patterns and then summarised into concepts and themes called nodes and examined.

3. Within each of the nodes, data were sorted, and ranked based on the frequency of occurrence.

4. Different sections of data were compared to provide a basis for generating further questions for theory building. Comparison also occurred between the Phase A transcripts which had been manually coded and annotated with the data notes generated in NVivo.

5. Different versions of similar events linking to the same concepts were synthesised.

6. The accuracy of findings was checked, based on the consistency and patterns of the data to see if initial interpretations were correct. I repeated this process for the Phase B data which included data from nine interviews. Data from both Phase A and Phase B was then analysed as one data set. The same process for analysis was then utilised for the whole data set.

7. The findings were then viewed in relationship to theories that connected with the data. I pondered how far the strategies, and processes that emerged from the data, might extend and what insights were related to a coherent theory.

In analysing my data I was mindful of what Cohen et al. (2000, p. 282) said:

> The great tension in data analysis is between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomise and fragment the data – to separate them into constituent elements, thereby losing the synergy of the whole, and in interviews often the whole is greater than the sum of parts.

3.3.1.5.8. Potential Issues with Using NVivo

One concern that surfaced in discussion with my supervisors (neither of whom incorporate computer software programs for use with data analysis) was how as an interpretivist researcher, was I going to ensure the integrity of my data if using a computer? This question served as a catalyst for me to deeply explore my reasons for wanting to use computer software. I then spent several months deeply pondering and exploring the benefits of utilising NVivo as opposed to manual coding.

Richards (2002) argued that the utilisation of computer software is a valuable tool for what uses it puts to driving a complex and iterative data interrogation process. Researchers caution that one danger in working manually with large qualitative data sets is that the researcher can become bogged down in their data, and not capable of seeing the bigger picture (Gilbert, 2002; Richards, 1998). Bazeley (2007, p. 9) asserts that "computers remove much of the drudgery from coding, labelling and filing; they also remove boundaries which limited paper-based marking and sorting of text". In relation to using computer software, Gilbert (2002, p. 222) remarked "tools extend and qualitatively change human capabilities".

After much deliberation I embraced Bazeley's (2007, p. 2) viewpoint: "The use of a computer is not intended to supplant time-honoured ways of learning from data, but to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of such learning". During my data analysis my conscious focus was also on minimising validity threats.

3.3.2. Goals Component

Maxwell (2009) advises on the need to have clarity around the goals of the study. He outlines three different goals: personal goals that influence the researcher; practical goals; and intellectual goals. The latter two were core components of the research design. The researcher needs to be aware of and take account of their personal goals and how they potentially shape research (Maxwell, 2009). Strauss and Corbin (1998) pose how personal goals are often viewed as bias yet they can be seen to be valuable providing insight into theory and data about the phenomena being studied. The important part for me was to clearly reflect upon what the personal goal was and how this needed to be articulated and acknowledged. My personal goal was to put something valuable back into the profession, something that could be of use to others. This personally motivated goal is what Maxwell defines as practical goals. He asserts "practical goals are focused on accomplishing something—meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some goal" whereas "intellectual goals are focused on understanding something" (Maxwell 2009, p. 220).

Maxwell notes that there are five intellectual goals that are particularly relevant to qualitative studies: understanding the meaning for participants in the study; understanding the specific context in which the participants are located and the impact that the context has upon the participants; identifying unanticipated phenomena and generating new theories about the phenomena; understanding the process by which events take place; and developing causal explanations (Maxwell, 2009). It was my aim to address the intellectual goals outlined by Maxwell, that being to develop an understanding of how school principals maintain their SWB. In order to plan how best to achieve the goals I developed a clear understanding of the conceptual framework needed for this study.

3.3.3. Conceptual Framework Component

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe a conceptual framework stating it "explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variables – and the presumed relationship among them" (p. 18). Maxwell (2009, p. 222) states that "your conceptual framework is a formulation of what you think is going on with the phenomena you are studying – a tentative theory of what is happening and why". Maxwell (2009) sees the "research problem" as an integral part of the conceptual framework as it identifies something that is going on in the world.

The structure, the overall coherence of the conceptual framework is something that you build, not something that is already in existence ready-made, although pieces of it may be borrowed from elsewhere (Maxwell, 2012). Maxwell refers to the conceptual framework as consisting of modules that can be pieced together. He makes mention of several modules that can differ depending upon the research, and stresses the importance of two modules; experiential knowledge and theories and research. Both were part of this study's conceptual framework: the researcher's experiential knowledge; and existing theory and research. The first to be discussed is the researcher's experiential knowledge.

3.3.3.1. Theoretical Frames

Maxwell (2009) advises that researchers need to be aware of the delimiting influences that impact their study based on both epistemological and ontological assumptions. Given that this study utilised the integrative model of SWB (Galinha & Pais-Riberio, 2011) where SWB was integrated with contextual and interpersonal factors, I needed to be sure of how I was going to make meaning of the research generated.

In reflecting deeply upon this, the strong presence of constructivism emerged. Somekh and Lewin (2011, p. 320), assert that:

> constructivism is a term used to describe a theory of knowledge which stresses the active process involved in building knowledge rather than assuming that knowledge is a set of unchanging propositions which merely need to be understood and memorised.

Constructivism describes how one develops and uses cognitive processes, building upon existing knowledge or beliefs to create new ideas, meaning and knowledge. Constructivism is an epistemological explanation relating to cognition, motivation and the nature of knowledge (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). While constructivism provides the epistemological framework for many of these theories, it is not itself an explanation for the psychological factors involved in knowing. Airasian and Walsh (1997) caution that constructivism does not take into account issues such as how the cultural and political nature of schooling influence meaning making. For this reason, I have also embraced social constructionism theory as a way of explaining the social, political and cultural influences on learning (Berger & Luckmann, 1991).

Social constructionism is a variant of constructivism where the locus of human action shifts from the interior region of the mind to the processes and structure of human interaction (Gergen, 1985a). It gives consideration to the socially constituted nature of psychological realities (Lyddon, 1991). Contemporary social constructionism is perhaps best characterised by the writings of the social psychologist Kenneth Gergen. "Social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the process by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (Gergen, 1985b, p. 266).

Gergen (1985b, pp. 266-268) avers that social constructivism is based on several assumptions:

1. What we assume to be experience of the world does not in itself decree the terms by which the world is understood.
2. The world is understood in terms of social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people.
3. The amount to which a given form of understanding predominates or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependant on the empirical validity of the perspective in question, but on the vagaries of social process (e.g., communication, conflict, negotiation, and rhetoric).
4. Negotiated understanding (such as the wave of a hand) are of crucial significant in social life, as they are integrally linked with many other activities in which people meaningfully engage.

In explaining the first assumption Gergen (1985b, p. 267) refers to the work of Averill and Sarbin who question the supposition that "anger is a biological state of the organism". Averill and Sarbin raise the challenge of considering it as a historically dependent social performance. This line of inquiry was drawn out by Sarbin to include a range emotional terms. Sarbin pointed out that emotions cannot be considered objects there for study because emotional terms acquire their meaning from their context of usage not from real-world referents.

Gergen (1982, 1985a, 1985b) advocates a social-constructionist epistemology for the social sciences. According to Gergen, (1985a) social constructionism places knowledge not in the minds of single individuals but rather in the relational processes of social exchange and interaction that compel personal categories of understanding. Gergen (1982) asserted, "knowledge is not something people possess in their heads, but rather something people do together" (p. 270). From a social-constructionist perspective, people categorise the world in a specific manner because they have participated in social processes that make those categories relevant (Shweder & Miller, 1985). Individual knowledge and belief is therefore constructed with links to the experiences and beliefs of the social group/s to which the individual belongs, their epistemological stance. Therefore the social-constructionist notion that personal

constructions of reality are to a large extent mediated by a collective social construction of reality are important for this study as school principals work with and within groups.

In summary, for this study, it is important to understand the social reality of a school principals' work context, in order to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of how principals maintain their SWB. As a researcher my understanding of the phenomenon is socially constructed with the participants.

3.3.3.2. Researchers Experiential Knowledge

Maxwell (2009) asserts that using experience in your research can provide you with a major source of insights, hypotheses and validity checks. Reason (1988) encourages researchers to utilise *critical subjectivity*, a term that refers to:

> a quality of awareness in which we do not supress our primary experience;
>
> nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather
>
> we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process. (p.12)

Maxwell (2009, p. 225) purports that there are few explicit strategies for doing this and he recommends the "researcher identity memo" as one technique that can be useful. Given my positioning as a researcher, where I was interviewing colleagues where we already had an acknowledged way of working, I decided to embrace the "researcher identity memo". This involved reflecting deeply and from multiple angles upon the different aspects of my experience that appeared to be relevant to the study and then writing these down. Initially I did this in the form of a conceptual map which I then expanded in different areas to a narrative memo. In my thinking, I also kept in mind that the role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to, "understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19).

One criticism of interpretivism is that the ontological assumptions are not objective, rather they are subjective (Cohen et al., 2007; Maxwell, 2009). By selecting a paradigm, are not all researchers being subjectively oriented regarding the choices they make concerning the way they conduct their research? Researchers cannot divorce themselves from their perspective as the researcher. As an interpretivist researcher I

put in place techniques and practices to reduce bias. The data were also co-constructed with participants as the researcher interprets and constructs knowledge, jointly with the research participants (Lichtman, 2011; Mabry, 2008). My assumptions were bracketed, the data were analysed thoroughly so that it informed the researcher about what was going on in the environment, rather than my own preconceptions informing the data (Cohen et al., 2007). In order to do this accurately and objectively, I spent time interrogating and acknowledging my assumptions and then carefully and objectively bracketing these assumptions.

Cohen et al. (2000, p. 27) caution that "there is a risk in interpretive approaches that they become hermetically sealed from the world outside the participant's theatre of activity – they put artificial boundaries around subjects' behaviour". This was important for me to acknowledge because whilst my study focussed on the SWB in relation to work and the role of a school principal, a school principal was still a person participating in all spheres or domains of life for example, family life, and leisure time and they would have a level of SWB in those domains (Super, 1976).

Lacey (2007) had alluded to the difficulty of obtaining information from school principals in relation to their well-being, especially if principals felt the information could be used against them by someone who might end up on their promotional application panel. For this reason I included some questions regarding involvement in the study:

- Would you have participated in this research if you did not know the researcher?
- Would you have participated in this research if the researcher had not been a school principal?

These questions were part of the survey that was sent out to all participants. Depending upon which perspective was taken, being an insider, knowing the participants and having shared their work culture can be seen as advantageous or disadvantageous to the research. People are usually much more willing to talk with you if you are known to them (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). For this research I believe it was advantageous because otherwise principals may not have agreed to take part in the research. Lacey (2007) notes that principals are reticent to talk about their well-being as that may

jeopardise their career prospects. Now in my new role as researcher I was not in any position within the system to judge or have any influence on the careers of the participants. "Being an insider can make you seem less threatening, in part because you know the rules and are bound by them as the interviewees are" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Rubin and Rubin assert that the role of insider is best as the interviewee trusts the researcher, having developed shared experiences and shared cultural language and assumes that the researcher is sympathetic. This may mean that information was more openly and honestly disclosed. How information is used and organised brought me to deeply explore theory.

3.3.3.3. Existing Theory and Research

To use a theory or not use a theory as a conceptual framework module caused me to engage in considerable thought. Using existing theory in qualitative research can be both advantageous as a useful theory can help the researcher to organise the data, providing the scaffolding for particular pieces to fit together (Maxwell, 2012). "A useful theory illuminates what you are seeing in your research" (Maxwell, 2009, p. 227).

In looking at what approach to take to well-being, the subjective approach intuitively made sense to me given that each person is an individual, it stood to reason that they could experience well-being differently, according to their own perspective, hence the focus on the concept that arises from the literature: SWB.

After much consideration I decided to use Diener's (2000; 2006; 2009) theory of SWB as a basis for discussing with participants what SWB was considered to be and then invited participants to contribute their thoughts and ideas regarding this theory. This meant that whilst I was using Diener's theory of SWB, I was also inviting input from participants regarding the theory. I was therefore not limited by the constraints of the theory. How then did I use this theory as part of my study became my next consideration?

3.3.3.4. Approach Adopted

In order to understand what theorising is, the researcher needs to have spent time conceptualising theory. Theories are propositions or explanations and in the social sciences they are often considered to be 'guiding truths' and in the social science theories tend to be more frequently challenged "especially if the methodology is grounded in epistemological assumptions that truth and reality are socio-culturally constructed" (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 330).

> Theory is abstract knowledge which has been developed as an account regarding a group of facts or phenomena. It is derived from explanation of phenomena, the identification of concepts and the interrelationships between concepts surrounding phenomena, from which an explanatory framework can be developed (Grbich, 2007, p. 186).

Grbich (2007, p. 185) outlines the process of theorising as one where the results which have been collated and looked at "again through the lens or frame of one or several theoretical or conceptual positions in order to make further sense of them and to lift the analytical discussion to a more abstract level". There are four positions that the researcher can view theorising from; pre-chosen theoretical positions which drives the research and is placed against the research finding; methodological underpinnings which "may constitute the orientation and process of data collection"; researcher choice involves selecting from a large body of theoretical ideas and linking selected ones to the research findings and; theory maximisation "where minimal interpretation but maximal display of data occurs" allowing the reader to make their own decisions (Grbich, 2007, p. 186).

A pre-chosen theoretical position was utilised as a frame for the study, Diener's (2006) definition of SWB was chosen. I was still open to other conceptualisations of SWB by participants as the purpose of the research is to find out how principals are maintaining their SWB according to how they conceptualise it. For the purpose of this study the approach to theorising that was adopted was 'researcher choice' where what emerges from the data becomes the basis for new theoretical explanations, explanations that can have significance in both the practical and theoretical fields.

Given that the study was looking at SWB, I immersed myself in a range of SWB studies, looking closely at how they were conducted. Whilst this has been looked at in depth in the literature review, approaches to SWB have also been touched on briefly here as Maxwell (2009) advises that the researcher needs to consider it within the conceptual framework. I drew predominantly on the works of Galinha and Pais-Riberio (2011), Headey and Wearing (1989), Feist Bodner, Jacobs, Miles, and Tan (1995), Diener (2000, 2006, 2009) and Suh, Diener, Oishi, and Triandis (1998) and investigated the different theoretical approaches taken to the various studies.

Galinha and Pais-Riberio (2011) commented that in past decades researchers strived to investigate SWB through differing approaches. Such approaches included: the top down approach where emphasis was on the intrapersonal elements; the bottom up approach where emphasis was placed on contextual factors; and the integrative approach which combined a focus on both intrapersonal and contextual elements.

Headey and Wearing (1989) suggested that both contextual and intrapersonal factors have an impact on SWB. Feist et al. (1995) tested both bottom up and top down models of SWB in a structural equation modelling analysis and drew the conclusion that both approaches contributed to explain SWB, and that neither was revealed to have a significantly better fit than the other (Galinha & Pais-Riberio, 2011).

3.3.3.5. Integrative Theoretical Model of SWB

For the purposes of this study I utilised an integrative model as it seemed best suited to a study that focused on SWB as well as the work and role of the school principal. The integrative model allows that SWB is influenced by a multiplicity of variables in an integrative and vigorous interaction (Suh et al., 1998). It took into account the multiplicity of variables. Essentially the definition of SWB was contested where its meaning and content fluctuated depending on who was using it, and why they were using it. So whilst I related to the work of Diener (2000, 2006, 2009) on SWB and shared Diener's definition of SWB with participants, for the purposes of this study Subjective Well–Being was defined by each individual participant according to how they used it.

The basic analysis of SWB focused on the cognitive and affective aspects of SWB. The cognitive aspect referred to life satisfaction and satisfaction with life in the work domain and the affective aspect referred to happiness and positive and negative affect as reported in relation to the work domain. The first objective was to build an understanding of the relative contribution of several factors to SWB: intrapersonal factors (cognitive and affective) and contextual factors (see Figure 3.3).
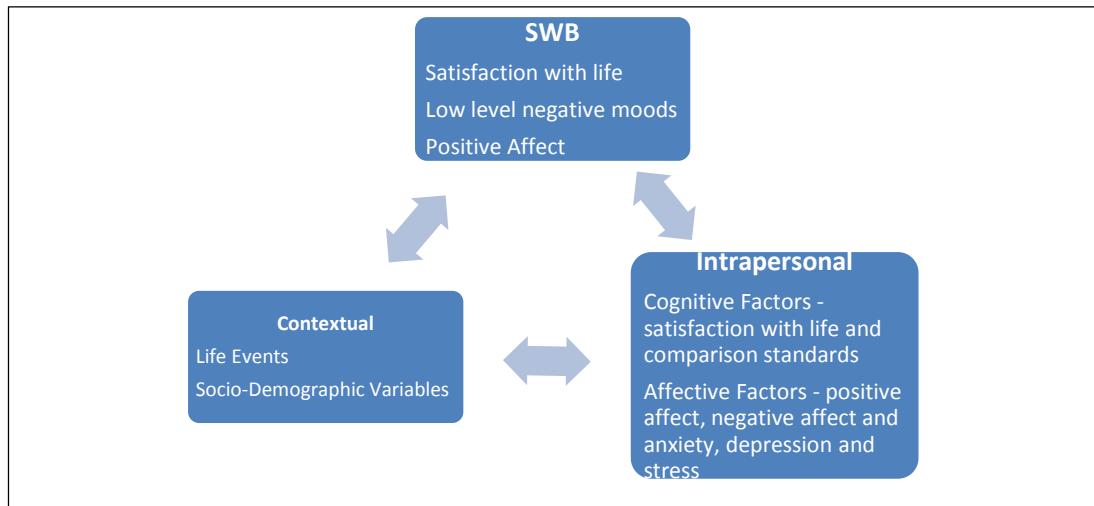
Figure 3.3: Representation of the relationships between factors.

Source: Adapted from the works of Galinha and Pais-Riberio (2011, p. 38).

One objective of this study was to answer the question: Within the role context of school principalship which factors contribute to the maintenance of SWB? Given the amount of literature in the area it seemed reasonable to assume that the intrapersonal factors would be significant predictors of SWB (Galinha & Pais-Ribeiro, 2011).

3.3.4. Research Questions Component

Maxwell (2009) advises that research questions are specifically what the researcher wants to learn or understand as a result of doing the study. These questions are at the heart of the study, connecting all of the components of research design (Maxwell, 2009), establishing some key parameters of the research (Cohen et al., 2007). The research questions have a two-fold function: providing focus for the study and secondly to provide guidance on how to conduct the study (Maxwell, 2009). Encouraging the young researcher to be very mindful of the type of questions being

asked Maxwell (2009) advises a strong focus on process (how and why things happen) rather than on variance (dealing with difference and correlation) as the real strength of a qualitative approach, is "in understanding the process by which phenomena take place" (p. 232).

The overarching question this study sought to answer was:

How do principals maintain their SWB? In considering this question four related focus questions arose:

- How do principals conceptualise SWB?

- In a work context what were the factors that impact upon SWB?

- What processes and strategies were principals currently utilising to maintain SWB?

- What were the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB?

In developing these questions I strived to focus on process questions, on the how and why things happened as this was seemingly omitted from the current literature. I also focused on the intellectual goals of the study (discussed earlier in this chapter). In conjunction with determining my research questions I considered methods and validity.

3.3.5. Validity Component

There is a significant amount of literature on validity in research. Some qualitative researchers prefer the use of the term trustworthiness rather than validity (Richardson, Adams, St Pierre, 2005) and others embrace the term validity (Cohen et al, 2007). This study utilises the term validity. From my review I noted that there are two broad types of threats that are written about in much of the literature: researcher bias and reactivity (Cohen, et al., 2007; Maxwell, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Researcher bias refers to "the way in which data collection or data analysis are distorted by the researcher's theory, values or preconceptions" and reactivity is the amount that the researcher is trying to control for this variance (Maxwell, 2009, p. 243).

Eliminating the actual influence of the researcher is considered to be impossible (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and the goal in qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence but to understand it and use it productively (Maxwell, 2009).

Stake (2006) writes that qualitative researchers need "to minimise the misrepresentation and misunderstanding" (p. 109). He suggests the use of some procedures that constitute the "efforts that go beyond simple repetition of data gathering to deliberative effort to find the validity of data observed" (Stake, 1995, p. 109). By using these procedures, along with inviting participants to check their data, researchers "gain the needed confirmation, to increase credence in the interpretation, to demonstrate commonality of an assertion" (Stake, 1995, p. 112).

I began analysing my own position as a researcher and reflecting upon what bias I bring to the research. Moore (as cited in Coombes et al., 2004) highlights this ethical dilemma:

> Bias, specifically observer bias, refers to the cultural assumptions that researchers bring into their work (Marshall, 1994, p. 363). Therefore researchers cannot be rid of the cultural self that is brought to the research process. Preparation prior to the actual fieldwork allowed me to reflect on my own participation and provided the opportunity to revisit my … cultural values and bias. (p. 110)

For me, Moore (as cited in Coombes et al., 2004) ignited a deeper self-reflection, one that continued throughout the research process as I strived to unpack my methodological judgements and listen to the voices of the participants, whilst also being aware of my reactivity to bias. I deeply listened to what I was being told, holding back my judgment.

The issue of limitations to the research as a consequence of sample bias can be countered somewhat by the different methods of collecting data (Tuckett & Stewart, 2004). As the researcher I was able to consider the congruence and complementarity (triangulation) of each participant's interview one data, with their interview two data, my researcher journal notes including observations and the survey completed by the participants (Coomes et al., 2004).

Maxwell (2012) asserts that there are important strategies that can be used in a qualitative study to deal with particular validity threats, thereby increasing the credibility of the conclusions drawn by the researcher. The literature on validity is detailed with numerous credible suggestions made by Miles and Huberman (1994), Patton (2002) and Maxwell (2009) on strategies that can be utilised to improve validity. Maxwell (2009) cautions that there are many strategies but researchers need to focus on both the specific validity threats to their research and on what strategies are best to deal with these. After careful consideration I identified numerous validity threats and selected several specific strategies advised by Maxwell (2009) to deal with these validity threats, that is:

1. Intensive long term involvement: According to Maxwell (2009) "the sustained presence of the researcher in the setting studied, can help rule out spurious associations and premature theories" (p. 244). Given my study was a single case across multi-participants, the setting can be viewed in two ways: firstly the one broad landscape of Queensland State schools; or secondly and more specifically the setting at each school where the participant is principal. As a researcher and an experienced principal I had the opportunity to understand the culture, being familiar with the state school context. I also interviewed participants in their individual contexts.

2. "Rich" data: Maxwell (2007) advises the use of intensive interviews that enable the researcher to collect "rich" data. "Rich" in this sense was seen to mean data that was detailed and varied enough that it provided a full, detailed and revealing picture of what was happening (Becker, 1970). Such data required verbatim transcripts of interview data, (Maxwell, 2009) which was the process I engaged in for all twenty interviews in this study.

Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) advise that a key approach to limit bias with interview data is to use numerous and highly knowledgeable informants who view the focal phenomena from diverse perspectives. In my research I drew on highly knowledgeable participants but I did not have an informed understanding of how they viewed the phenomena central to the study as I had never engaged any of the participants prior to this research, in conversation regarding this.

3. Respondent validation: Respondent validation involves seeking to systematically obtain feedback from the participants about their data and the conclusions being drawn from it (Maxwell, 2009). I engaged in this process asking participants whether my understanding of what they had said in the previous interview was indeed correct.

One example of respondent validation involved clarifying in the second interview a concept that the participant mentioned in their first interview. I sought clarification and the participant (shown below as the interviewee) automatically cut in to tell me more about the concept. I said:

> "*So I'm just going to link back now to SWB and what those processes that are enacted in the school - because you've talked about them, about what...*"

> Interviewee: "*It's professionally rewarding for me. It makes me feel good to think, ...*"

In implementing this validity strategy I took the verbatim transcript from interview one to the second interview with the participant and the participant was invited to look at it. I had also noted points that I needed to further clarify with participants and in several instances I sought clarification for this in the interview. One example is:

Facilitator: *So what I'm hearing you say is, this thinking part that we still need to unpack what's actually happening here - you often externalise with externalising behaviours to get other perspectives and invite other perspectives in to see what sort of course of action and their viewpoint. But if I come back to this thinking part, what's happening in your own head before you're externalising?*

Participants were also invited via email to ask to debrief with me regarding their involvement in the study (see Appendix F).

4. Searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases: The basic principle here was that you need to rigorously examine both the supporting and discrepant data to access whether it is more plausible to retain or modify the conclusions,

being aware of all of the pressures to ignore data that do not fit your conclusions (Maxwell, 2009).

5. Triangulation: To ensure data validity, triangulation was utilised. Triangulation of data is sought to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Mabry, 2008). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005) triangulation is the combination of two or more data sources, investigators, methodological approaches, or theoretical perspectives within the same study. In thinking through how best to capture data I also pondered the need for validity of the data. Somekh and Lewin (2011) define "triangulation as the process where data from at least three different perspectives on the same event or issue, is collected and can be cross-validated" (p. 330). For this reason, I interviewed participants from across ten different school settings and I decided to embraced the use of a researcher journal, two interviews per participant that were approximately four months apart, and a survey. Appropriately used, triangulation should enhance the completeness of data in research findings presented in this qualitative research study (Maxwell, 2012).

6. Quasi-Statistics: The term quasi-statistics was coined by Becker (1970) to describe the use of simple numerical results that are readily derived from data. Quasi-statistics permits the researcher to test and support assertions that are inherently qualitative, whilst also enabling the researcher to judge the amount of evidence in their data that bears on a particular conclusion or threat, including how many discrepant instances occur and from how many different sources they were acquired (Maxwell, 2009). Quasi-Statistics have been utilised in the data finding chapter of this thesis (such as patterns like, seven out of eleven participants). Data that did not appear to fit quasi-statistical patterns was also investigated and presented.

7. Comparison: Data comparison occurred in this study in an on-going way. All eleven participants were interviewed for approximately one hour and each participant's data were compared with the other participants as I looked for ideas, themes, constructs and relationships. The second phase of data collection

which involved a further nine participants being reinterviewed for approximately one hour, allowed for a three way comparison:

1. A comparison of the same participant's data set from interview one to interview two.

2. All of the participants' data in the second interview was listened to and analysed for similarities and differences, from one participant to the next participant, as I looked for ideas, themes, constructs, discrepancies and relationships.

3. All data were compared and this involved, interview one data, interview two data, survey data, and data from my researcher journal.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that there are three types of data sources that can be used for comparison: time, space, and person. Data sources can vary based on the place, the time or setting and from whom the data were obtained Denzin and Lincoln. In this particular study the place, time and settings varied. Variance in events, situations, times, places, and persons adds to the study because of the possibility of the potentially identifying similar patterns, thus increasing data confidence (Coomes et al., 2004). Three forms of data were obtained from: interviews (one and two); a survey and my researcher journal. However the experience as "a principal" was common.

Essentially the validity of my research lies in its ability to represent the participants' subjective reality, that is to say their definition of the situation (Cohen et al., 2000). In conducting this study and in decreasing validity threats, ethical considerations were also taken into account.

3.4. Theory Development

Initially there was considerable discussion with my supervisors over what would be the best method for the study given the phenomenon being investigated. Case study was selected over grounded theory because it was perceived to best match both an investigative focus and yet still cater for the possibility of an emerging theory. A theory did emerge from the data and I was then confronted with the question of what approach should I take to theory development?

A study of the literature showed that there are two main approaches to theory development, deductive theory and inductive theory building (Bonoma, 1985; Parkhe, 1993). The difference between the two approaches can be noted in terms of the paradigms in which each approach is situated, with the deductive approach representing the positivist paradigm and the inductive approach representing the interpretivist paradigm (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991). Given that this study was located in the interpretivist paradigm the inductive approach to theory building was utilised.

I then began to further explore how theory is developed specifically from case study research. This required a great deal of sifting as qualitative case study theory building literature ranged from positivist to interpretivist in its paradigm alignment. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) assert that the theory is emergent in the sense that it is situated in and developed by recognising patterns of relationships among constructs within and across cases *and* their underlying logical arguments. "The goal in theory building is to identify a small number of explanatory principles that can account for a wide range of phenomena" (Bandura, 2005, p. 23).

According to Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007, p. 25) "the theory building process occurs via recursive cycling among the case data, emerging theory and later, extant literature". The theory is built up from the presenting of empirical evidence:

> In a single case study, the challenge of presenting rich qualitative data is readily addressed by simply presenting a relatively complete rendering of the story within the text. The story typically consists of narrative that is interspersed with quotations from key participants and other supporting evidence. (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 29)

In summary, this study utilises an inductive approach to theory building where theory is built up from empirical evidence cycling among the case data.

As with any writing the writer needs to consider how best to format their writing. Writing up emergent theory can be done is several ways and I went to the literature in search of some guidelines on how this could best be done (Stake, 2006). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) recommend firstly sketching the emergent theory in an

introduction, then linking it to the supporting empirical evidence for each construct and for the proposed relationship between constructs. If this is done thoroughly then the propositions should be consistent with the cases as effectively there is a "pattern match" between the theory and the data (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 30). The next crucial step was to write the underlying theoretical arguments that provide the logical link between constructs within a proposition, with the arguments being drawn from case evidence (Stake, 2006). Finally a visual theory summary needed to be provided, a summary that linked back to the research questions.

3.5.   Ethical Considerations

Ethics can be considered ubiquitous, permeating all aspects of our lives (Soltis, 1990). In exploring ethical behaviour it is of paramount importance to develop an in-depth understanding of ethics.

Piper and Simons (2011, p. 25) state that for the researcher "ethical decisions are the result of a weighing up of a myriad of factors in the specific complex social and political situations in which we conduct research". On reflection I pondered what attributes were needed in order to be an ethical researcher. Researchers must have two attributes; the sensitivity to identify an ethical issue and once it is identified, the responsibility to feel committed to acting appropriately in regard to such issue (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990, p. 244). Educational research is a moral enterprise (Soltis, 1990).

With regard to ethical practice much of what is considered controversial follows the researcher's conception of how they should relate to the participants who join the research practice as the researched (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990). Whilst I acknowledge that there are many ethical issues to any study only four issues will be explored here:

- research benefits and interests;
- anonymity and confidentiality;
- situated ethics; and
- informed consent.

In terms of ethics with research methods in education Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) pose several questions for the researcher to ponder: 'When is a casual conversation part of the research data and when is it not?' and 'Where for the researcher does formal observation end and informal observation begin?' They go on to say that many such questions can be considered; however the key to ethically resolving the issues lies in establishing good relations based on feelings of trust and confidence.

3.5.1. Research Benefits and Interests

One of the ethical issues that initially taunted me was "Who benefits from exploratory research on the subjective wellbeing of principals?" In considering who benefits from the research I had to answer honestly:

1) me, the researcher, as I have the opportunity to learn and interact with participants and in so doing complete my research degree;

2) participants, those that through the course of the research reflected upon their positive practice and;

3) colleagues who may reflect upon the stories of how others are maintaining their subjective wellbeing and this may provide them with insight, hope, courage, curiosity, affirmation or a number of other responses that might be linked to life satisfaction; and

4) researchers of SWB may benefit as a result of the contribution to theory that results from this thesis.

After exploring the question of who benefits from the study I needed to consider what that meant in practice. As the researcher my challenge was to abide by ethical practice, referred to by Piper and Simons (2011) as … 'doing no harm' and ensuring that research benefits participants in positive ways. I perceive this research will benefit participants as outlined later in this chapter in the section on the significance of this research. Participants made comments about the importance of the study and these are recorded in Appendix G.

In reflecting more deeply upon the question "Who benefits from exploratory research on the SWB of principals", I explored the micro level, especially in relation to my own

benefits and interests and where I was located in the research. I needed to be certain that it was not my own voice that was dominant, rather it was the voice of current practising principals who had sustained their SWB amid a complex landscape. Whilst listening to the voices of the participants it was also integral to keep their voices confidential.

3.5.2. Anonymity and Confidentiality

At first glance anonymity and confidentially can appear to be enmeshed concepts as both are linked to the protection of research participant identity; however in reality they are quite distinct. Burns (1998) asserts that anonymity relates to the researcher not knowing or being able to identify the participants, whereas confidentiality involves the researcher knowing the identities of the participants yet masking these identities from all others.

Piper and Simons (2011) assert that anonymity is a process that aspires to provide protection of privacy of the research participants, striving to ensure that participants cannot be identified. As a reader you may be thinking that anonymity does therefore not apply to my research but in fact it is an important ethical component as I must rise to the challenge of ensuring that personal information published in my report is de-identified or anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. The research context is often difficult to totally disguise (Piper & Simons, 2005) and Harreveld (2004) goes further to state "it is virtually impossible to preserve total anonymity" (p. 44).

Given that the selection sample for this research is small with only eleven principal participants from Queensland State Schools, the challenge to strive for anonymity seems daunting, especially if the chosen strategy is purposeful sampling from only one Educational Region. The advantage of participant selection from a localised region is that I already know all of the participants, having worked alongside them as a colleague in trusting relationships and therefore there is a strong possibility that principals will be more willing to disclose information. McDougall (2004) identifies that educators in a school setting have little time for the researcher, often casting the researcher in the role of them, separated from the educators. Having stated one

advantage to the researcher, the distinct disadvantage to the participant is the level of anonymity that can be created.

There is some debate as to whether researchers should take responsibility for protecting the anonymity of research participants (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008; Scott & Usher, 2003). Buying into this debate I have chosen to embrace a democratic approach (Wiles et al., 2008) where participants are part of the decision making process working closely with the researcher. One of the drawbacks of this approach that Scott and Usher (2003) have cautioned the researcher against, is compromised data results. Having worked collaboratively with principal colleagues for some time, I find myself cast in a new role, that of researcher, and I embrace a familiar friend 'the democratic approach', an approach that has worked for me in the past in my role as a school leader. I am however heeding the warning of compromised results and I want to adhere to the integrity of the data, presenting it as honestly as possible. All participants in my research elected to be referred to by pseudonyms.

Confidentiality is a principle that ensures participants can talk in private with the researcher without information about what is said in the confidential meeting being indiscriminately disclosed without consent by the participant. Inherent in the principal of confidentiality is the firm undertaking that the identities of participants will not be revealed in any publication of research findings (Coomes et al., 2004) and also encompasses participants having the right to refuse to allow the publication of material that they believe may be damaging or harmful to them (Piper & Simons, 2011). To ensure confidentiality participants were invited to choose a venue that provided for confidential meetings (i.e., minimised noise distractions, and the potential for no interruptions). This also allowed participants to choose a venue that they were familiar with and this may have contributed to them feeling more at ease during the interview process. Participants were also invited to review their data (transcripts, journal interpretations) and comment upon it, clarify concepts or even withdraw it. According to Piper and Simons (2011) "this demonstrates greater respect for potential difference of interpretation and the right of fair voice" (p. 26).

The reader may question my assumption that all participants will want to be de-identified. Grinyer (2002) raises the possibility that some participants might wish to

be identified in research. I too have spent considerable time pondering this and after reading the Lacey Report (2007) where her research clearly showed that there is a culture of silence regarding access to, and use of wellbeing services with principals, I reflected that the concept of confidentially and published anonymity would be more attractive to potential participants. Lacey (2007) also reported that principals are unlikely to confide in a colleague who might be on their next job panel. Given the potential of possible panellists reading the research I perceive it to be in the participants' best interests to be de-identified. This of course may not be deemed democratic but for me as a researcher I feel it is ethically responsible. To reaffirm my thinking I also asked all participants in the course of their interviews if they wanted to be de-identified. All replied that they did want to be de-identified.

On reflection I need to further think through the challenge:

> How do I adequately ensure that other participants and readers of my research are unable to identify research participants through either their personal stories or the contextual details supplied, yet as a researcher ensure the integrity of the data?

In the words of Wiles, Crow, Heath, and Charles (2008) who challenge researchers to not compromise data, I needed to maintain the intended meaning and intent of individual contributions and to be mindful of situated ethics.

3.5.3. Situated Ethics

Soltis (1990) advises that an issue/event can be viewed from three perspectives: the researcher, the profession, and the public, noting that there are different dilemmas inherent for each perspective. Piper and Simons (2011) advise that it is not possible to anticipate all of the dilemmas that researchers will encounter but it is important to strive to consider the different ethical issues that might arise and consider how these can be addressed.

Ethical practice depends upon how principles are interpreted and enacted by researchers in the precise socio-political context of research project (Piper & Simons,

2011). What are the rights of the individuals, the duties and obligations of differing groups? Researchers have approached situational ethics in different ways with Newman and Brown (1996) suggesting a framework for ethical decision making whist others have posed that the 'ethical moment' is poised with uncertainty and such a framework might not be too rationalistic (Piper & Simons, 2011). It is up to each researcher to consider the complex context in which their research is to be conducted.

For me, having been a principal in Queensland State schools for twelve of the last fifteen years, I feel I have an understanding of the content from the principals' perspective, and perhaps the public perspective but only a burgeoning understanding from the researcher's perspective. On reflection, situated ethics acknowledges the complexity of each situation from a variety of perspectives and as a researcher I have carefully and clearly strived to interrogate issues and events from the three perspectives outlined by Soltis (1990) so that I did blinker my view and comprise my research. The process of analysing research bias, anonymity and confidentiality, and situated ethics has enabled me to honestly reflect upon my own ethics and to thoughtfully and analytically plan and conduct ethical research.

3.5.4. Informed Consent

Piper and Simons (2011) state that most social science researchers adhere to a concept of informed consent, meaning that research participants fully understand the scope, purpose and consequences of the research and give their full permission to be part of the research. There is a range of elements that need to be included in informed consent (Creswell, 2009) most of which can be easily incorporated into the letter of introduction. "Participants should enter into research voluntarily, and they should know what they are getting into before deciding whether or not to take part in any given study" (Flinders, 1992, p. 102). For my research this involved all participants being invited to take part in the study (see Appendix H), completing a written consent form (see Appendix I) upon the understanding that they could withdraw as a participant at any time or withdraw their data (Appendix J).

There is an expectation that participants will commit to the specified time for the research to be conducted with acknowledgement that they may also withdraw at any time (see Appendix I). I assumed that time could be a risk factor, as Mulford (2003) asserts that principals are time poor with an ever increasing list of demands and tasks that they must meet on a daily basis. Given that the researcher's priority may not be the priority of the participant it was anticipated that there could be some issues with participant time commitments. In anticipating this, communication regarding time commitment and professional expectations was explained on the Participant Information Form (see Appendix J).

In outlining the introductory letter, potential risks were clearly explained to participants. In my research project, which was a case study being conducted in multiple locations with multiple participants, with varying states of wellbeing, identifying the potential risks was somewhat complex. Whilst I acknowledge that it is the responsibility of the researcher to strive to mitigate potential risk of harm to participants, inherent in that is the recognition of potential harm to participants. Where possible I have strived to anticipate possible harm and on the surface there seems to be a relatively low risk of harm to participants as they were interviewed. The qualitative interview method that I chose was highly personal and in-depth interviewing opened up what was inside people (Patton, 2002) therefore it was hard to predict what was going to be shared and what could be potentially harmful.

In adhering to ethical procedures, I obtained ethical clearance for the study from both the University of Southern Queensland and of the participants' employer, the Department of Education and Training (see Appendix K). When both ethical clearance approvals had been issued then the next set of ethical considerations was addressed:

1. Participants were voluntarily sought and the nature of the study was clearly explained both verbally and in written form to all participants.

2. The consent of participants was sought during a telephone conversation, with the consent form and details concerning the face to face interview structure and questions emailed to participants. The completed form was then sought in conjunction with a face to face interview.

3. A letter of informed consent (see Appendices J) and a letter of information (see Appendix K) outlining ethical considerations was also emailed to all

participants and explained during a telephone conversation with all participants prior to the first interviews taking place.

4. Opportunity was provided throughout the duration of the study for participants to raise concerns or questions regarding the study and also to seek feedback.

5. All participants were invited several times to read their transcripts. Interestingly though none of the participants took the opportunity to do so.

6. The identity of all participants has been protected through coded transcripts where pseudonyms are used to prevent identification and data has been stored in a safe manner.

3.6. Summary

My research methodology of case study and Maxwell's (2009) An Interactive Model of Design enabled me as a researcher to explore and describe the phenomenon of how a small number of participants were maintaining their SWB while working in the complex role of school principal. As a model it enabled constant bounded self-reflection where each component of the case study was viewed separately but linked in a non-linear fluid manner to all other components, always with the research question at the centre.

By utilising 'An Interactive Model of Design' an iterative process was constructed with the purpose of generating a comprehensive understanding of how the participants conceptualised their SWB and the processes and strategies they utilise to maintain or build their SWB. I went back at different times to think through and review theory design as encouraged with the non-linear relationship of the components. The data collection strategies were based on the core assumption that there are numerous points of entry into any given reality (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007) and that the world is not an objective entity but a function of personal interaction and differing perceptions (Merriam, 1988). These perceptions are captured in the following chapter of this thesis.

Predictability and very broad generalisation is not a feature of this study. The main significance of the study relates to the concept of process and strategy selection that

principals make in order to maintain their SWB and continue to effectively work in their role as principal.

In Chapter Four data is presented in relation to the first three research questions: how do principals conceptualise SWB; what are the factors that impact upon SWB?; and what strategies or processes are currently or could be utilised to maintain SWB?

CHAPTER FOUR – A PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE FIRST THREE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Two, I used the research of Diener (2006) and others to theorise a conceptual picture of SWB. In Chapter Three I clarified and justified my research methodology and I clarified the relationship between my research problem, the research questions and my data analysis procedure. I focused on the presentation and discussion of the results obtained from twenty interviews with school principals as well as their short survey responses in relation to how school principals maintain their SWB. Chapter Four specifically addresses the first three research questions.

1. How do principals conceptualise SWB?
2. In a work context what were the factors that impact upon SWB?
3. What processes and strategies were principals currently utilising to maintain SWB?

Chapter Four has been divided into four sections with Sections One to Three presenting data in relation to a specific research question while Section Four provides a conceptual overview of the data from the first three sections. Specifically each section will report on: Section One - How do principals conceptualise SWB?; Section Two - What are the factors that impact upon SWB?; Section Three - What strategies or processes are currently or could be utilised to maintain SWB?; and finally Section Four presents a summary of the findings.

Sections One to Three afford an overview of the thematic elements that emerged from the data in relation to a specific research question. Each section then positions the thematic elements within the context of the data from which they arose. Narrative constructions are italicised for ease of identification. In line with the narrative approaches of Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2005), the narratives are selected and constructed to make room for difference by reflecting multiple perspectives and

crystallised meanings. While the narratives articulate specific themes they also often correspond to more than one theme.

In this chapter I have provided pseudonyms for participants so that the participants' identities remain confidential. The use of pseudonyms also allows the reader to identify with the actual participants and gain deeper insights into the data whilst ensuring confidentiality of the participants. In giving voice to participants I have on occasion omitted a few actual words that participants have used. The words omitted have strictly been limited to explicit identifiers. These included: the name of the school with the amendment recorded as 'my school'; the name of a specific country visited on holiday has also been omitted; the name of partners or significant others has been omitted; and if a participant gave their own name this was also omitted. Grammatical errors have also been amended. All other parts of the data presented are an exact transcript of the recorded interview.

The data in this chapter comes from the participants, all of whom appeared to evaluate events and situations and construct understandings of these in order to make sense of the world around them. These constructions were all very individual depending upon people's beliefs, assumptions, abilities, vicarious experiences (those insights gained from others sharing their personal experiences), and lived experiences (personally experienced).

The survey data were utilised to cross check that all participants reported being a principal for eight or more years and also to provide some insight into why they chose to be involved in the study.

This chapter presents data themes that emerged from initial coding, providing insight into the way in which the participants in this study: conceptualised SWB; sought to explain the factors that impacted upon SWB; and the ways in which they maintained their SWB. As the meaning is co-constructed researcher memos have been embedded within this data chapter (inside text boxes) revealing some poignant points at which information gleamed from transcripts conceptually merged with notes that I have made in my research journal.

4.2. Section One - How Do Principals Conceptualise SWB?

Given that I had no prior knowledge of how the participants conceptualised well-being and importantly their own well-being (i.e., SWB) this was the first area of exploration. This study utilised Diener's (2006) definition of SWB as a point of reference with participants being invited to outline their SWB in a manner that linked to their own personal conceptualisation of SWB. Diener's definition of SWB can arguably be simplified to judging life positively (life satisfaction) and feeling good. He outlines three components of SWB, all of which involve *cognitive appraisal*: life satisfaction – where one has cognitively appraised that one's life is good; high levels of pleasant emotions; and relatively low levels of negative moods.

All participants' viewpoints appeared to be consistent with how Diener (2006) defines SWB in terms of the three components: life satisfaction; positive affect; and low level negative moods. Sam commented about mental health stating:

> *Health is part of your SWB. If you are have poor mental health how can you process information in a way that leads you to logically know that you are satisfied with life, that you are happy because all you do is get locked in a situation and how bad it may be. You need to not feel too anxious, too stressed.*

All participants expressed viewpoints in alignment with Diener's components of SWB. Life Satisfaction which Diener (2006) avers as where one has cognitively appraised that one's life as good was mentioned by all participants as exemplified in Emma's remark:

> *Yeah, so in terms of achieving and experiencing success I feel that having that fulfilment, that does actually influence and affect feeling valued and having some self-worth, again, whether it's with regards to your personal life, whether it's with regards to your work context and the job that you actually do.*

The second component of SWB that Diener (2006) refers to is positive affect (pleasant emotions). All participants made reference to pleasant emotions as part of their SWB. With Sam commenting:

121

> *SWB is my ability to walk into this room and perform at a standard which I'm happy with each day.*

Emma's remark was typical of participants. She said:

> *I feel that the happiness of the place; being happy, whether it's a student or a parent or a staff member, that if you can get that vibe and that feel, it's a place where you want to be. So, from there, if you - also, I think having that happiness fuels a positive attitude. So, whether - and I often talk to the kids about you can choose your attitude. So, you can have the worst day before you walk through the gates, but you can choose to say I'm going to make the best of this day. I am satisfied with my job, let's get on with it.*

The third component of SWB according to Diener (2006) is low level negative moods. All participants made reference to low level moods negatively impacting their SWB and pleasant emotions positively affecting their SWB as characterised by Amber:

> *So your level of mental wellbeing is better and you don't have that constant state of stress and anxiety that comes with it. So between - a good family balance and a different outlook to solving the problems of the world, my level of negativity, positive – whichever one you want to look at - is improved because I tend to be fairly optimistic about things anyway.*

All participants also outlined their understanding of SWB in a manner which was consistent with all three of Diener's (2006) three components illustrated in a typical response by Emma:

> *What is - and the peace thing also struck a chord with me, because I believe that the part of that being able to think, I suppose, is being able to be confident, have that level of sense of self that you can have some very still moments in your life and, perhaps, it's that serenity - that's what the word - and so that's where I'm thinking that links to spiritual for me; the serenity type of - and that's within - that you're in a good place.*

> *… I thought, okay, happiness; let me examine….. I thought, well, it has to be based around the sense of yourself. That's when I started to think about well, it's about physical, it's emotional, it's social, it's all of that. It's the intellectual;*

122

it's all of those things, I believe, that make up me. So, therefore, that's how I feel about those things, what I think about those things in relation to myself. It becomes my subjective wellbeing and it's influenced, I believe, by all these things that I've talked about here.

..... So, words like confidence, pride, achievement, success, fulfilment, and satisfaction, all of those things.

Emma's comment demonstrates alignment with Diener's (2006) definition of SWB in that she articulates engaging cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction, positive affect and low level negative moods.

All participants also focused on sleep which they averred was an element of health, either physical or mental. All eleven participants made mention of sleep in relation to their SWB, related the lack of sleep to difficulties in thinking through and actioning complex work issues which caused some anxiety because the participant did not feel sure of the decision or competent in what they were doing. Sam's response exemplifies this:

Oh how much sleep I got. That's pretty important. Confrontation is my weak point but if I have had sleep I process this differently, handle situations differently and this impacts on my wellbeing. Lack of sleep and confrontation, that's the part that takes my energy away and sleep can also help restore some energy. With lack of sleep my anxiety over issues intensifies and I find it harder to think clearly, I mean focusing on the actual issue and not getting sucked into the emotional saga that can be compounded negatively by a lack of sleep of poor thinking. Because it's those bad decisions that keep you up at night, that don't give you peace of mind.

Evan saw sleep from a very different perspective, as a time for working through problems and the problem resolution linking to his SWB in a positive manner. Evan commented:

Well I don't know whether I'm creating headspace or it's just something that's on my mind. I've probably thought about it on the way home in the car, I'm still thinking it about, something at the conversation reminds me - that makes me

think about it. I mean the reality of it - I mean the science is there and I believe it - that even during - you go to sleep thinking or with a problem on your mind and then in the morning often the solution is there because your brain hasn't stopped thinking about the issues even though you're asleep. I still see that while I might be having a conversation with the family or friends, part of the brain is still dwelling or thinking about an issue and something that could be said could click with me and I'd say oh yeah that's right, I was thinking about that.

Diener's definition of SWB was reinforced by the participants in this study. Exploration of the data also exposed that all participants termed their SWB as being "*in balance*" or "*tipping to out of balance*".

4.2.1. SWB That Is Unbalanced – A Tipping Point

During the twenty interviews all eleven participants made reference to the balance of their SWB, most inferring or directly stating that there was a tipping point. Numerous respondents noted that a person's SWB was in danger of tipping with long term impacts if two components (home and work) where simultaneously not going well. All participants made remarks about being out of balance. The following excerpt from an interview transcript with Emma demonstrates this:

If you're feeling that you just don't have that energy to try and pick yourself up again. So that's what I meant by out of kilter. Because often if something's not quite right or there's something underlying going on in your personal life, whether it's a tragedy or there are some issues with a relationship, whether it's brothers or sisters or an impact that somebody's not well, professionally it's not impacting because I think you tend to come to work, even though it's in the underlying area of your brain, once you come to work you're in that zone professionally so you know your energy is isolated from that personal.

Merv shared:

> *So my level of subjective wellbeing, I think, is quite high and it's quite balanced.*
> *It gets out of balance occasionally but, in general, in the long term, my level of*
> *subjective wellbeing is reasonably high.*

Like Emma and Merv all participants talked about SWB being 'in balance' or 'out of balance'. In Section Two of this chapter, the concept of balance will be discussed in more detail.

Participants in this study conceptualised SWB in a similar manner to what Diener (2006) theorised. They viewed SWB as being satisfied with life, feeling happy (positive affect) and not being too stressed and anxious (low level negative affect). It is important to note that all participants all made explicit reference to a tipping point with their SWB.

4.3. Section Two - In the Work Context What Are the Factors that Impact upon SWB?

Analysis of the data revealed that respondents viewed numerous factors as having an impact on their SWB. The participants talked about these impactors as being either negative or positive. For the purposes of this study the terms used by participants will be used to describe the factors that impact upon SWB (i.e., either negative impactors or positive impactors).

4.3.1. Negative Impactors

When participants were asked: In the work context what are the factors that impact upon SWB? Seven themes emerged from the data as result of negative evaluations that affect (impact) SWB. The themes that emerged in relation to negative impactors on SWB were: perceived lack of time; perceived lack of support; perceived lack of supervisor trust; self-doubting; inability to safe guard others; and questionable/poor decision making. As a result of experiencing the impactors (what participants reported

as impacting upon their SWB) participants outlined two consequences (the result of the impactors as reported by the participants) that they believe affected their SWB: experiencing a lack of sleep; and experiencing high levels of stress. The impactors in Table 4.1 are listed from least to most frequently mentioned.

Table 4.1: Factors that Negatively Impact SWB

Participants	Negative Impactors						Occurs as a consequence of the previous six negative impactors
	Perceived Lack Of Time	Perceived Lack of Support	Perceived Lack Of Supervisor Trust	Self-Doubting	Inability To Safe Guard Others	Poor Decision Making	Lack of sleep And Stress
Ewan			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kirk			✓		✓	✓	✓
Merv	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Nev		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Steve		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sam			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lawrence			✓		✓	✓	✓
Ella	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Emma		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amber	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The narrative data from which the themes arose provided a window into the lived experience of participants. Participant data were similar in that they all identified a small range of between three and seven impactors. In common with all participants was that experiencing a lack of sleep and high levels of stress were identified as consequences of impactors that they believed lessened their SWB.

4.3.1.1. Perceived Lack of Time

Four participants in the study noted that their perception of a lack of time was a negative impactor on their SWB. Time was referred to with breadth as being 'time to learn'; 'time to experience'; 'time to think'; and 'length of time in the role of principal'. All four participants expressed similar views. Data from both Merv and Evan has been

detailed here as it captures additional details and the nuances of time as an impactor on SWB. Time was discussed by participants in relation to a lack of time and this involved: insufficient 'think time'; a preoccupation of thinking about work when in non-work related contexts; insufficient time to complete the workload and attrition of principals; time and budget impacting upon work shadowing, an endeavour that was seen to build knowledge and competency; the lack of available time for staff to engage in professional development and learning; and a lack of leisure time. Merv articulated:

> *So you have to try and find some quiet isolated time to think and if you don't you find yourself-thinking about work things when you shouldn't be. Occasionally my wife will say you're not paying any attention to me are you? It's because my head is somewhere else. So if you're not careful your thinking time encroaches on other people's time so it's a struggle to find time for that to reflect and to ponder and to make quiet decisions about important work things. Look at the attrition rate of ex-principals, the highest attrition rate is in the younger, beginning principals in one teacher schools. That is, I think, primarily because there is no time and no process for them to learn those skills. We used to once, we used to go through the process of being a principal in one teacher school where you controlled yourself and your biro and then two teacher, three teacher, and so on and built up slowly. It was like an apprenticeship, whereas now there's no apprenticeship, people are just thrown into those roles and they can chuck from one role into another fairly quickly.*
>
> *So the time to develop those sorts of skills is not there. They may well and truly have the curriculum knowledge and they may well and truly have the day to day managerial ability to control a budget, pay a bill. But what they haven't learnt, because it takes an enormous amount of time, are the skills of managing people, managing schools, managing yourself, managing those mental processes and those planning processes. All of those parts of the job come purely from experience and time.*

Merv's response highlights the importance of having adequate time to not only complete the priority work tasks, but also the importance of having time to think through complex situations, develop skills to deal with the situations and draw upon experience learnt over time.

Merv made mention of the attrition of people new to the principalship. He mentioned that both time and budget impacted support programs like work shadowing, which helped to build knowledge and competency, contributing to the SWB of the participant. Merv said:

> *Work shadowing was a process that contributed positively to your SWB but and it's fizzled in many places because people don't have the time because life has become very busy. They also don't have the financial resources because school budgets are very tight. So for a lot of people to buy in a teacher to replace themselves in the school to go and work shadow somewhere else at $400 a day, destroys the budget. They also don't have the time to creatively think through how else they could resource it. It is about coping with the moment for them, coping with the plethora of issues simultaneously impacting and yet the reality is they haven't had the time to develop the skills and knowledge that experience and work shadowing can bring.*

It appears that the amount of leisure time that one has impacts the level of one's SWB. Participants in this study also passed comments about the negative impacts of a lack of leisure time on their SWB, especially when they were on holidays and contacted by systemic personal to report on a work related issue. Evan said:

> *On holidays it would be rare for me to go for a week at the beach without facilities ringing me about something and so yeah, that's how I would deal with it and that's how I plan - this year, I tried to last year at another school, but the personnel weren't appropriate - to say to my DP if it's right for you this week all the calls will go to you from regional office because I'm away.*

> *Again the only way you can get away with that with EQ is to say you're interstate. If you say at the beach they still ring you. I've had that happen.*

> *I don't mind being rung if there's a fire in the school, which is what happened last week, but to be rung because there was a data hitch in some of the enrolments and they want someone to go in and fix it up four days before Christmas because the Director General is doing a purge on it, no. That's some of the silliness that happens sometimes.*

In summary, when participants perceived lack of time (as in Merv's case) for deep thinking, work shadowing, and self-development (while Evan related it to a lack of time for leisure), a pattern was noted where perceived lack of time was referenced to something that was useful in maintaining SWB (e.g., time for thinking or leisure). This lack of time which appeared to be a part of the organisational culture, became a negative impactor as a result of each participant's' evaluation of not obtaining what they valued as important for their SWB such as competently performing in their role as a school principal.

4.3.1.2. Perceived Lack of Support

Six participants made reference to a perceived lack of support effecting their SWB and mentioned issues including: a focus on expected competency; collegial gossip; political agendas; and a perceived conflict of interest between a systemic focus and school focus.

Steve discussed the lack of support making reference to supervisors being focused on the competency of the principal rather than on the principals themselves and the principals' wellbeing. Steve articulated:

> *So I think the level of support as an organisation, when it comes to wellbeing, it's very poor. That's a culture that comes from the top. Our bosses don't care if we are well, they care if we deliver on the job.*

Steve discussed the lack of support and made reference to the culture of the system being one that is not always supportive of principals but also noting that principals themselves are part of this culture. Among principals there appeared to be a level of expected competency and if this competency was not demonstrated then peer support did not seem to occur. He mentioned that the 'gossiping' behaviour of some colleagues was seen as a negative impactor to SWB:

> *I think there's a level of immaturity in principals when they get together and gossip, that is unhealthy, especially those who are competing for job promotion. People talk about who's applied for jobs and who didn't get jobs, or who got interviews - you know. Who thinks they're great? Which is really unkind stuff. I've seen people talk - , he's fallen over or she's fallen over. I think*

- fallen over what? That's not the way we talk about people. I don't talk about people like that, why do you? Don't like it. I don't like it at all.

Six participants very similarly remarked on the negative impact of political agendas reflected in organisational culture, upon SWB as they felt there was no support for the work a principal needed to do (i.e., making a positive difference in the lives of students as opposed to additional administration task). Ella explained the situation:

> *It'd be the politicising of education. So, when you, you know, when you think that you've got it all together and you're getting that message across, we've got to be able to do CTC* (Curriculum to Classroom) *or whatever it is, and the government comes in to be able to say that they've dropped that and now they've done something else. You think, well, shit, I've just sold all of that and done all these things now. Now, you've got to say, well, all that work that we did for that - you know, and I sold it to you, to be able to say this is the greatest thing and we've got to really be able to do this - well, now they say it's not, so what do you do, you know?*
>
> *So, I get really disappointed about that, it affects your wellbeing. You've got to kick start yourself again, to say, well, yes, I do have that credibility and I did spout all of that, but we'll go along with what we're doing.*

Two participants made similar mention that the system expectations did not support their SWB as there was conflict of interest between trying to have a systemic focus that was not aligned to the school focus. Merv's response exemplified the situation when he remarked:

> *You've only got to look at the last restructure that the government has undertaken to cut numbers of staff in regional offices. So there are jobs that are being pushed back into the school and when I say they're being pushed back into the school, its code for it's being pushed back onto the principal. You may not physically do each job but you've got to find someone on your staff who will and find a process to make that job happen. A good example of that is they've eliminated those cleaning coordinators positions.*

On the face of it that's a minor issue, anyone can ring up and organise to get a vacuum cleaner repaired or put in an order for some detergent but when you look at it more deeply there's the questions about who now provides the professional development to the cleaning staff? Who now makes sure that the calculations for a new building and therefore the hours of cleaning that are allocated to those buildings are done and done correctly? There's financial implications around that, there's industrial implications around that, there's workforce implications around that.

So all of those tasks multiply and add onto the tasks that we've already got and while you might not personally do every one of them, you do personally have to arrange for every one of them to be done, one way or another. So unless you've got the capacity to structure your thinking and manage those positive and negative stresses and maintain a certain momentum and energy level then the enormity of the job just builds and I think that's when people fall over. That's a real impact on SWB.

Exploration of the data findings brought to light that a perceived lack of support was also an impactor on participants SWB. Perceived lack of support appears to be about what people value as important for their SWB (i.e., feeling supported) and the lack of support seems to be a reflection of organisational culture.

> Researcher Memo:
>
> Mmm… I suspect that the principals who experienced system expectations that did not support their SWB were actually feeling frustrated because their perception of their role as principal was not aligning to what they considered was their worthwhile work in schools (what they thought needed to be done).

4.3.1.3. Perceived Lack of Supervisor Trust

Nine participants (see Table 4.1) in their interviews talked about a lack of supervisor trust as impacting upon their SWB. It appeared that if principals felt they needed the support of their supervisor they were unsure of how the supervisor would interpret this, assuming that it could be attributed to a lack of competency on behalf of the principal seeking the support. All nine participants held very similar viewpoints as typified by Steve and Kirk.

Steve remarked:

> *Even when you are down and under pressure don't think you can turn to your supervisor to help. They are on contracts, they just want to know that you can do the job competently. If not move over and let someone else do it. You can't trust that they will come in to help. Assume that they collect information on your performance in there – all talk about it – easy to do when you are not on coal face any more. Seen as not performing well, well guess what, you just miss the opportunity for that acting position. You just find you don't get that promotion.*

Kirk remarked:

> *You need to manage your moments and create an image for the supervisors that you are competent even under extreme pressure. That is the way it works, lots of word of mouth, and often you don't even know it, don't know what they talk about in Regional Office, mostly we have no opportunity for recourse. Having to do this when you are under extreme pressure, knowing it is a dumbass choice to turn to a supervisor and honestly disclose you need some help to do your job, just adds to stress. Not great for your SWB but that's just part of being a principal, part of this role in this system. Only the dumbasses reach out and think it will not affect their career. That's just the shit that goes on!*

Lawrence shared:

> *I don't disclose to my supervisor this isn't going well or that's not going well. They may be on the panel that can be used against me. I know it sounds paranoid. But people have actually articulated that to me.*

I asked the question of one participant: 'Do you think principals ring their supervisors for support?'

Nev replied: *Shit no.*

I asked: Why would that be?

Nev replied: *Trust. … It's a new regime, you know as well as I do. In the old days the inspector was someone who'd been there done that and had no political agenda. We knew politics played a part in the higher echelons, always of course, but now it's filtered down to a level within our system where it's problematic because that senior level is using political pressure to achieve an outcome. They've lost sight of the real deal.*

In response to the same question: Do you think principals ring their supervisors for support? Ella responded:

> *You should be made to feel that that is okay, to be confident that I will get through this in sometime and when I come back I'm not going to be judged about it.*

> *I think that that's not what happens though. I've seen a couple of principals that happened to and they have not coped. I believe it's because they haven't had the support or the encouragement and they didn't have the skills to recognise and deal with it. I think because there's some sort of stigma attached to the fact that if you need to talk to somebody, like your supervisor, you are not competent.*

There were also inferences made that perhaps the supervisors were not honest and open in their feedback. Evan's comment typifies this:

But I've seen a number of principals fall away. I think sometimes what would help us as - and I'm talking now as principals rather than principal. I think sometimes if we're not "cutting it" I think we should be told rather than let it just hang out.

I think there's a number of people who in our system have got capability ratings in the last 12 months and probably thought they would get positions locally but haven't. But I wonder if that's because someone hasn't had a tough conversation with them. I think we need that. If I wasn't doing my job well I would like to know and I think most people would, to be honest.

All nine participants perceived their supervisor as expecting them to cope under perceived extreme pressure and not being able to honestly share this with their supervisor impacted the participant's SWB. This lack of trust by principals in their supervisors was reported to affect SWB.

> Researcher Memo:
>
> Mmm… I suspect that because of the lack of trust that principals had in their supervisors, they were not willing to ask for support assuming that they would not be given the support they felt they needed. Given the number of principals that felt this way about different supervisors it would appear that the organisational culture is not strongly evident of trusting relationships between principals and supervisors. What emerges from the data here is that the organisational culture does not support what principals' believe that they require in order to maintain their SWB.

4.3.1.4. Self-Doubting

In the decision making process nine participants detailed how self-doubting negatively impacted their SWB, and several participants talked about self–doubt being involved in relationships with conflict. Both Ewan and Emma clearly illuminated the effects of self-doubt.

When asked how prevalent is your self-doubt? Ewan answered:

> *The self-doubt comes and goes. I think there wouldn't be too many principals that don't have self-doubt. You just learn to live with it but sometimes it doesn't feel good, keeps you awake at night. Did I make the right decision? What could I have done differently?*

Emma also experienced self-doubt and explained in more detail an example of and how it deeply affected her. Emma shared:

> *I self-doubt, yes, I do and sometimes I think about… Actually, each time it's most probably been around a time when I have changed either locations or my role, my job. It's about the self-doubt before you step outside the box sort of thing; going from classroom teacher to doing an acting principal stint and then going back into the classroom and then being asked to do another stint somewhere else. There was actually self-doubt in each of those situations where I had to talk myself around that to apply for a principalship and then relocating, and then putting my hand up for another position and going through that process.*
>
> *That self-doubt is tied up doubting my skills, and it can impact on your confidence as well. I think prior to the self-doubt I wouldn't say that SWB was low but I think the self-doubt is most probably the onset of it being lower.*

Several participants (Emma, Ewan, Nev, Steve, Merv and Amber) talked about self–doubt being involved in relationships with conflict. The incidents are very similar in terms of the impact onto the participants recounting the events and the underlying self-doubt. The impact depth of such incidents is captured in a story shared by Ewan:

> *Perhaps seven weeks ago a male staff member at school had an incident with another teacher and treated her poorly. It just so happened that I heard the interaction and stepped in. That gentleman has been on stress leave for the last five weeks. You make the decision then you think it through again and again. …Did I dot my 'I' cross my 't'? Was it right?…. The day I pulled him up and called him on his behaviour was a day I had to give blood. I have to give blood at the moment because I'm what they call a carrier for haemochromatosis, so I have too much iron in my blood.*

The day I went into hospital, that day my blood pressure was 180 and they wouldn't take my blood. I wasn't feeling well that day but it was a shock to me and… Yeah, I had a touch of flu so there were extenuating circumstances as to why my blood pressure was high. I think even at that stage I'd been listening to the state elections, they were taking the politicians' blood pressure and they were high every day. So I was reasonably fit in my own mind. But when I went in there and they wouldn't take my blood, I thought right this has to stop…. So I went through a process with this staff member and I think because I took the initiative to call the behaviour, in my mind all of a sudden I felt better.

But it's been a conscious decision by me, but a bit of a wake-up call that sometimes by taking on the problems of other people it actually does cause you stress internally. You are constantly thinking is this the best course of action? Is this the right thing to do?

Merv articulated:

Self-doubt can certainly keep you up at night as you search to make the right decision and second guess.

For all participants that experienced self-doubt it occurred as part of the process of self- reflection, pushing the person to deeper critical reflection as they strove to be more competent. Emerging from the data is the organisational culture where principals are expected to be competent, where they feel that they will not be supported if they are not competent therefore they strive harder to be competent. This pressure to be competent this seems to be accompanied by self-doubt.

4.3.1.5.   Inability to Safeguard Others

All participants talked about the importance of student safety with six participants explicitly remarking on the impacts of a very emotional side to the principalship detailing how death or harm to a student significantly negatively affected their SWB.

Sam, Evan, and Nev very similarly commented about the death of a student as having a significant impact on their SWB, which is exemplified in Nev's story which he recounted with great sadness:

> *I suppose the death of a student was pretty hard, my lowest point. I had to lift above that sadness and actually help the community and staff and everyone else mourn and get the closure and all that sort of stuff. So that was pretty hard because I put myself second in all of that and that was really close to home. Two kids died. I was however at my lowest point during the floods. I went to seven school-related or six school-related funerals last year, you know, and that seems to be where you actually really feel it.*

Lawrence, Emma and Ewan all recounted a time when their SWB was very low and they had trouble sleeping due to worries about student safety. Lawrence outlined in some depth this worry recounting:

> *Usually they're often those ethical dilemmas around suspending kids or child protection ones, you know - and you've been there I know because we've had that conversation. Directly behind you in that car park, I've actioned an SP-4* [form requesting intervention for a child thought to be at risk of harm] *which has actually resulted in the police and Child Protection coming, interviewing the children and the children not going home with that family.*

> *At the time, it's a sad event. But as I've often said in the debrief with the deputies later on or the respective teacher, we've actually done the right thing because that child is going to be safe tonight, they're not going to be beaten or whatever or exposed to what-have-you. But at the time, that's the emotional face of our job that lots of people actually don't see. It's also about keeping kids safe without sounding like doing the knight in shining armour thing. That is our core business. It's about the collateral damage after the event. Rationalising. Like a video, you play the movie back in your head and you're cross-checking that what you did was the right thing and you know it's the right thing but you know it's had a significant impact on that particular family.*

> *Sometimes it's actually about that child coming back to the school but they are actually there with a carer, not with the family. That's rewarding because there have been a few times there with Education Support Plans, you know, ESPs,*

state wards who wanted to take those state wards and place them all over the region wherever.

I've tried to do my best to advocate for them to stay in our school because that's been the only thing that's actually constant in the child's life, is their mates and their classroom teacher who cares about them. The new carer who really doesn't know the child and our school, but it's convenient for them to be over at their closest school or whatever so they don't have to drive.

I always try to advocate for them, I guess. I'll talk to the police - sometimes I'm not successful - to say look, this really is the best outcome for them because it gives them stability. It is particularly hard personally to work through it when you are not successful.

Researcher Memo:

Mmm…. There appears to be evidence here of what Figley (1995) outlines as compassion fatigue as participants have experienced events where other people close to them have been seriously injured or been the victim of harm. These events are distressing for the participants and in all incidents recounted, the principal ensures there are mechanisms of support for the community and available counselling. It is demonstrated within the literature that death of others a person has a relationship with impacts SWB (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Headey & Wearing, 1989). If a participant felt uncertain about how the intervention or support they implemented should have occurred, they also experienced in their decision making and the literature shows self-doubt is also related to affects in SWB (Srivastava, Locke, Bartol, 2001).

The impact of student harm or death on SWB was relayed with particular sadness and deeply felt by the participants as they saw keeping students safe as fundamental in their role as school principal. Notably absent in the data is any mention of support for the principal or of the principal's supervisor acting in a supportive manner when principals where faced with events such as student harm or the death of a student.

4.3.1.6. **Poor Decision Making**

In exploring poor decision making the questions need to be asked: (a) what is decision making; and (b) what constitutes poor decision making? In this study I have accepted that poor decision making will be taken from the subjective viewpoints of the participants (i.e., they have judged that it is poor decision making so it is accepted as poor decision making) with all participants making similar comments about how it impacts SWB.

Sam recounted a poor decision that he personally made:

> *I had some kids mixed up in asbestos, and effectively my poor sense of decision making had resulted in these kids not only being exposed to asbestos in a very minor way - the fault for this sat really with me in me not making some decisions that I needed to make, and that impacted me - just made me sick - sick to the guts. Couldn't sleep, couldn't eat - was good for my weight. And, again I had to get in and fix it up. That's what you have to do. So you get in and you deal with each group of those people, including the kids and their parents and bloody department hanging over your shoulder, and they were pretty good really given who I am, what I did. I'm here to help kids, not to hurt them, and through some actions of mine they're parts which are low moments for me.*

Lawrence also viewed decision making from a personal perspective noting the importance of clear thinking and how emotional thinking impacts his decision making:

> *Because if you're emotional about things, then it gets - if you're really emotional about the way that you're operating, you're operating on a different level. You're not really thinking with your head, you're thinking with your heart and it's really important to think with your head. It's those rushed decisions that are the shockers, because they are not considered decisions. There are a lot of other people and a lot of other factors that you - sometimes when you consider, you just give the yes to something without really fully considering it and it can negatively impact on other people.*

In trying to understand the connection between poor decision making to low SWB I probed further, enquiring how a decision that negatively impacts on other people, also impacts Lawrence's SWB. Lawrence explained:

> *It's not all happy families, I mean, I'm not in the job for a popularity contest. But I think morale is a really important thing in schools…. My own personal view is that respect is actually generated by your actions and what you do. It's not really about being everyone's very best friend. I'm actually - that's sounding like a prickly, clinical old bugger - I'm not employed to be everyone's best friend. I'm here to provide the best quality leadership I can in the school. You need to be philosophical about you win some, you lose some.*

Lawrence's response depicted the focus on decision making which was quality leadership which impacted more broadly (i.e., the whole school community and morale) rather than on making decisions where his personal relationship (i.e. friendship) was the focus of the decision making. By making decisions that might not be popular with individuals (i.e., they might infer that the decision was a poor one) there was recognition that this would mean friendship would not be possible with these individuals.

Poor decision making often leads to self-doubt but self-doubt was not a result of poor decision making. Rather it appeared part of analytical self-reflection where the decision was compared against the core standard of what a competent principal would do in the same or similar situation. The principal was constantly evaluating the decision they made and their own performance in the decision making process.

4.3.1.7. Lack of Sleep and/or Stress

The lack of sleep may well have been the outcome of stress but the lack of sleep and stress were reported to affect SWB levels. All eleven participants made mention of sleep and stress in relation to their SWB, relating the lack of sleep to difficulties in thinking through and actioning complex work issues, issues which caused stress and anxiety. Sam's response exemplifies this:

> *With lack of sleep my anxiety over issues intensifies and I find it harder to think clearly. I mean focusing on the actual issue and not getting sucked into the*

emotional saga that can be compounded negatively by a lack of sleep, then poor thinking. Because it's those bad decisions that keep you up at night, that don't give you peace of mind.

Five participants linked stress to a lack of sleep with similar comments as expressed by Merv:

When you're worried about something and losing sleep, you wake up at three o'clock in the morning with ideas in your head that tends to be the trigger for commencing that process of needing to think things through. So I think the need of stress is the other trigger for it.

Lawrence commented:

Some people bail - I've seen over the years. They get quite stressed and they bail and they need to run away - the flight syndrome.

Nev made a comment that reflected upon the cognitive evaluation of alternatives:

I've had two subpoenas sitting on my desk last week and I've got a grievance against me at the moment. I think part of that keeping awake at night is the reflection, so what happened, why did it happen and what would I do differently if I could do it again? They're often questions I ask myself.

Probing deeper into the connection between excessive 'stress' and SWB I asked participants what are the effects of that - the negative dwelling and the feeling of stress? Evan provided an account that encapsulated the perspectives of the other participants. Evan said:

I think it's when you wake up at three o'clock in the morning and you're thinking about it and it's no solution. It's the weighing on your mind because you know that given another person, this issue would be dealt with okay, but because this person is that type of person it is - you don't have a relationship with them - it's much harder to do it therefore you're spending more time, more thinking energy which is draining if you're sitting there at three o'clock in the morning. It changes your being and that's when you're wife says - about time you had a game of golf because she knows. I mean the reality of it, the science is there and I believe it. Even during sleep you're thinking or with a problem on your

mind and then in the morning often the solution is there because your brain hasn't stopped thinking about the issues even though you're asleep. I still see that while I might be having a conversation with the family or friends, part of the brain is still dwelling or thinking about an issue and something that could be said could click with me and I'd say oh yeah that's right, I was thinking about that.

The reason that a school principal has difficulties sleeping and reported experiencing high levels of stress may well be different to the issues that confront other groups in society. What was evident in this data set is that many principals had difficulty sleeping because they were evaluating and re-evaluating the decisions that they had made, could make or should have made against their self-defined competency standard. They experienced difficulties sleeping when this evaluation put in question:

1. their competency as a principal in how they had acted in a moment; or
2. the positive outcomes that students should obtain; and or
3. the attainment of positive relationships with staff and parents.

Sleeplessness or excessive stress appeared to occur as a consequence (the result of the impactors as reported by the participants) of perceived impactors (what participants reported as impacting upon their SWB) like lack of time; perceived lack of support; perceived lack of supervisor trust; self-doubting; inability to safe guard others; and questionable or poor decision making. Some participants reported that a lack of time for sleep (due to late evening work commitments) resulted in inadequate amounts of sleep. Their tiredness was then compounded by poor sleep as they were awake worrying about their lack of time to completed tasks and also knowing that they were going to feel tired when they awoke. The strong focus placed on sleep by all participants is worthy of further exploration.

4.3.1.8. Multiple Influences in Two or More Domains

Whilst the participants in the study outlined that there were specific impactors on SWB they definitively made comment that a person's SWB was in great danger if two or more areas or domains (also termed in the literature as spheres) of their life were not

going well and this was the greatest impactor to SWB. Domains are defined as specific areas of the work, family and life interface. One participant's response encapsulated succinctly the viewpoint of all participants. Kirk articulated:

> *So if your work life's no good, your relationship life's no good and the other bits like your leisure and mates is not good, then you're in real trouble. I guess that's what I look at, those three spheres. It's like any person; they could be having troubles at work, but if they've got a good stable relationship at home, and they were good within themselves (own time for sport or leisure) then things are good for them. Two out of three is okay. I look at that and when I'm looking at how well I'm travelling, I make sure I separate those things and get two out of three right because you don't want to drag them together. You need to see the spheres that are going well. If you've got one out of three you're in real trouble, probably physically and mentally and your SWB … well you are probably not functioning in a logical manner.*

Researcher Memo:

Mmm…Here it appears as if the participants are doing their own analysis and evaluation regarding when and why SWB is very low.

All participants made explicit comment that if a significant amount of negative impactors were present in work life and home life simultaneously than SWB was "*in danger*" or "*at risk*" and this results in the person having a "*complete melt down*"; "*break down*"; "*not coping*"; "*not competently managing*" or "*going under*". While this is important further exploration of SWB in domains beyond the work of a principal have not been explored as it is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Negative impactors were termed as factors impacting SWB only after the participants had made an evaluation that what occurred in that moment was actually negative. Further analysis of the data in the following sections begins to reveal how participants are employing the evaluative process.

4.3.2. Positive Impactors

Participants also outlined a number of positive impactors to their SWB. The first level of analysis revealed that there were a large number of factors that participants reported as positively impacting their SWB. These have been condensed into the more prevalent positive impactors. The positive impactors identified by participants are explored in order from least mentioned (only five participants made reference to the positive impactor) to most frequently mentioned (where all participants made reference to the positive impactor).

Positive impactors of SWB were outlined as: compartmentalising; exhibiting agency and maintaining control; levels of physical and or, spiritual and or mental health; achieving life balance; thinking optimistically, with clarity and multi-perspectives; engaging with others leadership opportunities; engaging in worthwhile work; receiving recognition; experiencing success and achievement; acquiring self-knowledge; deepening self-knowledge of own influential abilities in situations or contexts; and building trusting and supportive relationships. Table 4.2 depicts the emerging themes in relation to which participant data set the themes arose from.

Table 4.2: Positive Impactors

Participants	Compartmentalising	Exhibiting Agency And Maintaining Control	Levels of Physical & / Spiritual & / Mental Health	Achieving Life Balance	Thinking Optimistically, With Clarity And Multi-perspectives	Engaging With Others In Leadership Opportunities	Reframing To Worthwhile Work	Acquiring Self-Knowledge	Deepening Self-Knowledge	Trusting and Supportive Relationships
Ewan		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kirk	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merv		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nev		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Steve	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sam	✓		✓				✓	✓		✓
Lawrence			✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Ella	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emma		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amber		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The first level of analysis revealed there was a large number of positive impactors outlined by participants and these have been condensed in Table 4.2 into the more prevalent positive impactors. Table 4.2 shows that some people reported more positive impactors than others. In the following exploration of these factors we will see if there is anything of relevance in relation to the number of factors reported.

4.3.2.1. Compartmentalising

Five participants (see Table 4.2) articulated that compartmentalising acted as a positive impactor to their SWB as it allowed them to focus on the current priority and compartmentalise other factors or issues that may have previously occurred. Ella and Kirk's comments best typified compartmentalising, inferring it as a way of working that contributes positively to her SWB.

Ella remarked:

> *So, for me, I'm quite good at being able to separate my personal life from my professional life. I've always been able to do that. If I have lots of things that happen in my personal life that are quite confronting and emotive and everything like that, I don't like to be able to bring that into my professional life. Sometimes things niggle and that niggle if it is not compartmentalised intrudes on other thoughts and issues, issues that need my full attention and energy. I have learnt to compartmentalise, it helps me work through the day, accomplish things with less mistakes and then I feel better.*

Kirk remarked:

> *I just file it for later, come back to it when I can, when I have time to unpack it. This means I can concentrate on the most important stuff at the right time. Go back and critically reflect later and then plan what needs to be done. This means you do not get overwhelmed in the moment.*

In this data compartmentalising refers to the way of experiencing a moment but deferring some of the evaluation of that moment to a later time which is more conducive to thoughtful evaluation.

4.3.2.2. Exhibiting Agency and Maintaining Control

There was considerable evidence in the reported responses of all participants that they were all exercising highly developed agency in their interactions with their school communities, their colleagues and their supervisors. However, nine participants (all except Lawrence and Sam) explicitly depicted agency in their response to a question relating to how they maintain their SWB.

In this study the participants conceptualised agency as being at an individual, peer and collaborative level where people were using their capacity to act by making their own free choices. Four participants commented about cognitive evaluation involving individual agency as embodied by Steve's comment:

> *I think I'm achieving it by the self-awareness and rather - and tackling things, rather than just letting them be a victim - becoming a victim of it. I take action to obtain a better outcome.*

Kirk articulated:

> *You have a choice to take action personally do something so that things will change.*

Four participants talked about how they supported colleagues by ringing them from time to time as exemplified by Nev and Kirk.

Nev remarked:

> *I rang a school recently just for no reason. How are you going? He said oh, you know, I don't believe it's just happened so he described the situation.*

> *I said mate it's not an issue unless you make it one, so you've got these alternatives. He said oh man thank you.*

Kirk remarked:

> *If I know someone is not travelling well, and I do not know them that well, but I know that one of the other principals is mates with them, I will ring the other*

principal and say I heard this… I don't think your friend is travelling too well. Can you give them a call?

Three participants also made very similar comments about what can be termed as collective agency as represented by Merv:

If we know that someone is in trouble and or they have a mate we discreetly get them to contact them so that that network can then be - it doesn't sound like secret men's and women's business - but we as a group orchestrate it. Sometimes this comes out of our informal group meetings or from more formal principals meetings like our branch QASSP [Queensland Association of State School Principals] *meetings.*

Agency was evident also in examples of balancing empathy with staff or students who had been ill or were striving to actively engage in their future learning. More broadly, examples by eight participants reflected their capacity to have a measure of proactive control over interactions and interpersonal relationships, while retaining a shrewd understanding of how those interactions and relationships impacted them personally, their school community and those also undertaking the role of principal. There was also evidence of pleasures in the participants' responses, albeit tacitly, in the acknowledgment of having supported a fellow colleague who may be in perceived distress. Responses were very similar as typified by Kirk:

You have a teacher …. going off like a pork chop. You could control the situation in one way but instead you listen, wait for them to finish. Then you ask them questions that lead them to realise that have just unloaded on you because things are not going good at home. They apologise for their bad behaviour and you ask them what you can do to assist them. They say 'thanks for listening'. That lunch time if you can you take their duty and tell them to relax and have a cup of coffee. Next time things are a little complex that teacher will most likely be there to support you, help your idea to grow when you are trying to enact change that is in the best interests of the kids, of the school. So you manage the moment for the future and the impact you can strategically

have. It also feels good to be in charge of you own emotions and have control
of your emotions as well as being able to make a difference for someone else.

Examination of the data highlighted that participants found that being agentic and thereby having a sense of control was a positive impactor for their SWB. There was considerable evidence from nine participants who provided responses indicating that cognitively evaluated the situation and acknowledged a feeling of control positively enabled SWB.

> **Researcher Memo:**
>
> Mmm… What does control mean? In referring back to my researcher journal I can see that I had reflected about this concept and referred to the literature where control can be defined as a process in which a person determines or intentionally affects what another person, group, or organisation will do (Tannenbaum, 1968).

The nine participants (all except Sam and Lawrence) viewed that they had some control over situational factors and could influence proactively a more desirable outcome, rather than just actively managing the situation. This was exemplified in the following statement by Nev:

> *I have the ability to influence the outcome. I say ability to influence, it depends*
> *on my behaviour as well as the other person's behaviour. If you're talking*
> *about that sort of scenario here in the workplace, yeah because I own my*
> *behaviour. Whilst I'm thinking for myself, I'm also trying to think for the other*
> *person to a point,…. to move them where I need them to be for their own*
> *realistic self-reflection and behaviour choice.*

Ella eluded to control as she choose what activity she elected to be involved in and how this would be shaped:

> *I run the musical, and I just love that, because you're showcasing your school*
> *once again, and I'm getting the opportunity to be involved with, like, 150*
> *children over a whole term repeatedly, you know, every afternoon. I choose*

that. I get to influence the direction of their learning drawing everyone together for a common purpose, shaping learning that is real world, influencing interactions to obtain a positive outcome, a musical that a community can be proud of.

Agency encapsulates a great deal of the complexity of the aspirations commonly ascribed to school principals, as well as of the contexts in which those aspirations are sought and sometimes fulfilled. During this study agency was evidenced in numerous ways by all participants. Examples included assessing the effectiveness of principal–parent, principal-staff member, principal-student, colleague-colleague and principal to supervisor relationships. It was also evident with participants responding to changes in the school context as strategically as possible and constantly searching for feedback from school community members in order to try and ensure improved future outcomes.

Whilst participants found that having elements of control contributed to their SWB, nine respondents also reported that physical, mental and spiritual health was a positive impactor for their SWB.

4.3.2.3. Maintaining Levels of Health

Participants made references to 'health' in terms of physical, mental or spiritual health as impacting upon their SWB. They said "*better health*" or "*good health*" allowed them to more competently engage in all areas of their life. Six participants linked their health as being inclusive of physical, mental and spiritual components including appropriate amounts of sleep which allowed them to more competently engage in all areas of their life as exemplified by Sam and Nev:

Sam noted:

Health is part of your well-being. It is shown on television – physical, mental and spiritual health. Physical wellbeing is an important part of your mental wellbeing as well. If I haven't slept, and you want me to have one of those really difficult interviews, or confront some enormous emotional situation, nine times out of 10 you'll see me in tears. It's just part of my makeup and how I operate. So sleep is really important to me, and my physical wellbeing's really

important to me, to how I think and perceive my world. I would be a pretty firm believer that if you keep working when you're unwell physically or emotionally, you're pretty silly. It's not going to get the results you want. It's a better than average chance you'll make a decision that you'll regret, and you're better off to be at home and make a decision. You need to make the decision and take action to get your health (mental and physical) back into some balance.

Nev remarked:

I think the obvious physical ones: being at ease, having a healthy diet, body's rhythms are in place, able to do what I want to do; I don't have a headache - you know, the old I don't want to go for a walk because I've got a headache; happy to do all the physical stuff, the emotional stuff; everything's on an even keel; spiritually as well, being in touch because I'm a "God botherer" so that's fine. I just know - knowing that all the tenets and values that I adhere to are still the right ones. I make decisions and set in place actions to help my health, like going to Church.

I've always looked after myself in a workplace. That's not to say that things don't stress me or whatever because they do, but the differentiation's important and I have always considered my wellbeing and again, physically, mentally with controlling emotionally and spiritually………. Deal with it I suppose spiritually. I've got a view of the world; it might be a little bit different to the norm but that helps a lot.

In this study participants revealed that they were taking deliberate action to ensure their health was at an appropriate level (as determined by them) so they could competently function in all areas of their life and this helped them to maintain their SWB.

4.3.2.4.   Achieving Life Balance

Nine of the participants in this study evaluated their life and espoused that life-balance contributed positively to their SWB, with the view that life balance meant an appropriate amount of time spent on work and away from work, according to the subjective decision of each participant. The participants detailed how they deliberately made decisions to create and maintain life balance and articulated that this sense of balance (determined differently by each individual) helped them to maintain their SWB. Six participants linked life-balance to their relationships at home as typified by Merv's comment:

> *There has to be a lot of laughing and smiling and happiness to make a weekend or an afternoon or an evening pleasant. All the homework and those sorts of things, if you're not careful you can be just overwhelmed by the drudgery. You've got to find time - our girls at the moment they've got tickling, well that just gets everybody giggling and that breaks things up.*

> *So there's got to be the opportunity for that sort of fun with the family and then in another good example was we took the girls to a birthday party yesterday. The parents that were running it fabulously under control and so the parents that came with their children didn't have to actually work or do anything to make the party happen. So we all got to sit and drink coffee and talk and eat good food which was a world away from being at work. We all have different occupations so there was no chance to talk work; we all talked about lots of other things. So there was lots of light conversation and light laughter, not serious conversation and serious tones.*

> *So to have that mix of laughing and being silly with my own children and laughing with adults, there was a nice balance. So that's a better switch off than many other things on the weekend. Whatever it is laughing releases, endorphins, whatever it is. You've got to have a few laughs haven't you?*

Lawrence outlined life balance in terms of his time spent with his immediate family but also from a personal perspective about individual balance:

> *I try to have some quality time with my wife or my son and daughter. For myself on the weekend I've got to go out and cut firewood, because we've just about*

run out. So I'll go out with a mate and we'll go 20 kilometres or 30 kilometres out into a paddock and cut firewood, feel good about that. So there's a physical balance to the mental work. So it's a bit like the scales, life scales. I have professional networks and friendship networks apart from that. I just try and keep that work-life balance.

Seven participants linked their work life balance to the importance of holidays which improved their SWB. Lawrence captured the essence of what was said:

It's really only when the holidays come, if you allow it, that you have that reprieve. But that's the other reason that I use my long service leave the way that I do and use it strategically. I think I use it strategically. So my wife and I'll go for a trip somewhere, we'll travel or I just took a week in the middle of the year, three-quarters of the way through the year.

Two other participants (Ella and Emma) made mention of how they cognitively reflected drawing enjoyment from one context to give them support in another context when things were not going well. Ella clearly explained this commenting:

So if I'm having a really bad day at school I always feel that I can come back and draw on that enjoyment of being at home to be able to support me in the difficult challenges I might have at school. Then if I have lots of challenges at home, personally and in my own personal life, I can then draw on the fact that I love my craft and love my profession as a teacher and as a principal and draw on that love of that to be able to offset then, how I'm feeling at home. Now, some - and I can quite clearly separate the two and they don't mesh. So I always feel that I need to do that because if I bring the negativity sometimes, of how you're feeling about your personal life to school, or then that can curb then, and skew how you operate. If you then bring the other way, it can skew that.

But I can always - I'm very good at being able to separate it. But I can then bring the best of both to offset the other.

Work life balance was implemented differently by participants depending upon their own subjective appraisal but all participants clearly articulated that it positively

impacted their SWB. Participants also explicitly mentioned thinking as a positive impactor for their SWB.

4.3.2.5. Thinking Optimistically, with Clarity, and Using Multi-Perspectives

Nine participants (all except Sam and Lawrence) made explicit reference to specific thinking helping them to maintain their SWB. The participants mentioned the importance of thinking in determining better outcomes which allowed for increased feelings of competency. They shared that thinking needed to be positive (e.g. the situation could be improved) and have clarity (e.g., what are all the facts in the situation) and what perspectives need to be taken into account (e.g., why might the child have reacted in this manner and what did the teacher do and say that may have triggered this reaction?).

Four participants made similar references to positive thinking, all linking to optimism as characterised by Evan's response:

> *I think I'm blessed, because I'm a fairly happy person and take an optimistic view of the world and I'm usually fairly trustworthy with people and so forth and look on the bright side of life.*

Merv linked to optimism as being a chosen mindset that contributed to SWB:

> *The only difference between one task and the other is your mental outlook. Writing can be homework and is drudgery or she's writing for the sheer pleasure of it and suddenly it's a relaxation. It's the same with the concert, you can be rehearsing for a school concert and you're planning for sheep stations or you put just as much effort into putting on a little bit of a show for mum and dad and it's enjoyed.*

> *The only difference is the mental outlook of it isn't it? The task is still the same but the outlook, the mental thinking and mindset, if more optimistic it can better enable positive SWB.*

Six participants articulated that clear thinking in a positive manner from multiple perspectives contributed to their SWB as it provided the basis for better decision making and lessened the probability of conflict. The six participants all linked to strategies for creating thinking time, obtaining multi-perspectives (often from others in the leadership team or from mentors), brainstorming to maximise areas of influence to generate a better perceived outcome as exemplified in Nev's remark:

> *The issue would be if you don't clear it, you can't think clearly. You self-intervene to try and change things. So I guess by taking a walk, you're throwing around everything that's happening, you're weighing it up in terms of what's really real and what's perceptional, what I can do with that, to improve it, make it better. How have others perceived this and what do they consider the facts? You know what I mean? I guess creating that clarity in the mind will come up usually with an approach to take which may have been completely different to what you would have done if you had not gone for a walk.*

> *So I guess that's what it's about. It's about taking a break, it's about giving yourself that opportunity and space to think through what's happening around you - the reflective type stuff. That's what I'm thinking.*

Kirk linked to his experience as a positive impactor as his experience helped inform his thinking, giving it clarity, as he recalled advice from mentors. Kirk explained:

> *I guess experience tells you how to cope in complex situations over time. Back to when your earlier start when you then come across things that you haven't had the experience in, it's what references you've got to draw to, whether they be the mentors or whether they be what your readings are or things that have happened to you that help you to then make some decisions about how you want to approach that. So your mentors kind of guide your thinking even when they are not physically present. I don't know how you get some of those - you just keep finding them. So my way thinking contributes to positive impacts on my well-being. I think that in many situations - and I've used an example earlier today where you've got someone sitting in a seat beside you because they're mentoring and working with you, something arises and they can then question you, challenge you about your reactions or thoughts to that, clarify with you what actions you're going to take on place - or take place as a result of that.*

That clear thinking that you learn, you always have and can apply it in different situations so you feel less anxious and that contributes to your well-being, feeling good because you're not anxious.

Four participants disclosed that they were utilising self-talk as a way of thinking to enable their SWB and all four participants used self-talk in a similar manner. (Self-talk will be discussed in more depth later in the chapter). Steve's remark characterised how participants cognitively evaluated and then linked their thinking to self- talk and SWB:

I'm forward thinking, planning or rehearsing for that particular scenario.

I think the thing is when we talk it is about getting over the fact that you're not actually hearing voices in your head, it's actually a strategy that you're using for your own wellbeing. It's not you've got three different voices and this one's the mad whatever professor from what - it's actually a strategy you use so that I think you don't get put into positions too often where you're feeling down or out or where it really affects your wellbeing.

> Researcher Memo:
> Mmm… From this data set it appears that there is a relationship between SWB and clear optimistic thinking as optimistic individuals are more apt to report themselves satisfied with life.

4.3.2.6.   Engaging with Others in Leadership Opportunities

Nine out of the eleven participants articulated that shared leadership contributed to their SWB and within the interview transcripts there were significantly more references made to shared leadership than to any other positive impactor. In talking about shared leadership it appeared to mean:

Shared leadership is about "*connecting with and trusting others to conceptualise ideas and projects*", "*building ideas collaboratively, valuing the input of others*", "*giving and taking constructive criticism in the development and refinement of ideas*",

155

"*allowing others to share in the school vision developing and implementing ideas and projects*", "*offering support when needed and sharing in accountability*". It also involved "*positive recognition of individual contribution*".

Lawrence commented on shared leadership but his viewpoint of shared leadership did not align with that of his peers or literature in the field. Lawrence remarked more upon how he debriefed with staff and how his staff looked after him. He made no mention of collaborative discussions utilised to grow and challenge his thinking in the same manner as the other nine participants. For this reason I did not include his data in the theme of shared leadership. Lawrence's viewpoint of shared leadership was captured in his remark:

> *I've got a team of people that when my flag's fallen, someone else can take it up for me.*

Ewan, Nev, Evan and Steve viewed shared leadership as providing the opportunity to more deeply develop an idea and they had very similar views that were characterised by Ewan's remark:

> *I find that I have a core group of trusted, thoughtful people that I go to, people within this school and there are people outside of this school. I would have thought that that's a deliberate tool that I use because I like talking things out with people, broadening and checking my ideas. If I have an idea I like to talk it out whether it's with the Deputy or the Head of Curriculum or another principal. So I would definitely use shared leadership for my subjective wellbeing, absolutely. It is how I make better, more informed decisions.*

Six participants mentioned shared leadership in terms of benefitting their thinking and responses were characterised by remarks made by both Ella and Merv. Ella explained:

> *I think that that parallel leadership and I know I've mentioned it several times, it's really important as far as my own personal wellbeing and job satisfaction is concerned. It's not mutually exclusive. It's beneficial to all - it's reciprocal. I think that's really powerful and over time it's been really nice to see that parallel leadership has grown and there's a much stronger leadership density*

in our school than there was 10 years ago. Not just with the three administrators in the school, but other teacher leaders in the school.

Merv articulated:

> *In teams there's a level of honesty, a level of clarity and a level of positivity, I think that helps everyone. Because while you're not empathising with yourself and feeling sorry for yourself on a downward spiral, you're actually pumping people up. I think people see that. You can't disagree with someone. It doesn't mean you're all happy families but it just means that because you're evaluating what their response is, you're actually acknowledging what they're bringing to the table and building on that.*
>
> *It gets to be like an orchestra - you've got six people in the room on any deputy team. You know that's one's going to take some time to think about it so you're going to let them think but then call back on them and say, remember a couple of minutes we were talking about that. What do you think now? Just that self-awareness in saying that was good, move on, how does that help? It's like [super] differentiation. That's what self-talk is helping.*

All nine participants who utilised shared leadership described their leadership teams very similarly as "*trustworthy, analytical and utilising confidentiality*". In reflecting upon the large number of references made to shared leadership perhaps participants were cognitively evaluating situations and events and by involving others they had the opportunity to obtain feedback about themselves and introspectively review their own performance "I think I am doing a good job. Others tell me I am doing a good job. I feel good about the job I am doing". This feeling could then be viewed as contributing to their SWB. Further analysis of the data revealed that respondents also found that worthwhile work acted as a positive impactor for their SWB.

4.3.2.7. Reframing Tasks to Worthwhile Work

Additional analysis of the data exposed that participants were focusing on what they valued that made their work worthwhile to maintain their SWB, especially in tough times. I will now report this using the term 'worthwhile work'. Participants made

reference to evaluating the work they performed against what they perceived as worthwhile work. All participants passed comment about their work, delineating between work that they had to do in their role and worthwhile work. Worthwhile work contributed to their SWB because they evaluated their performance and decided that they made a positive difference in the lives of students when they engaged in worthwhile. All responses were remarkably similar as typified by Ewan:

> *I've had to learn to look at what didn't work out so well, but I have remained focussed on my core business and my hopes and dreams for these kids and that is they will be successful in the future; that they - whatever that success means for them, that's fine, but the fact that we're catering to that and that we are doing the best we can for those kids. This way of thinking is like a maintenance strategy for my SWB. So, if I can bring them back to that level, every time, then that helps in terms of dealing with the disappointments, dealing with the challenges, dealing with the conflict that you see in the workplace. So I see my work in terms of moral imperative, there are some difficult things you must do because it makes a difference, a real difference in the lives of our kids and sometimes these decisions involve some pretty shitty events and consequences for people to work through but you just do it because it makes a difference to the kids.*

All participants also articulated that if they were having a difficult day they reminded themselves of the importance of their role in the work that needed to be done, deliberately reframing their thinking to remind themselves of their core motivation. When asked how, Kirk explained:

> *Go and spend some times in classrooms. I might start where a message had to be delivered; whether it's talking to a child or talking to a teacher or taking something down. Yeah that gives you another purpose to be out there (meaning the office). I might just go back to my roots basically and go and be with the kids for a bit. Think about the importance of what I do and why I do it.*

Another participant gave insight into how they constructed what they deem as work from the systems and how this is then prioritised into what is important and worthwhile. This prioritisation of work appeared to help maintain their SWB. Kirk said:

I don't care about an audit in one school. If it doesn't get me fired, is that going to really reflect on me? What are they going to do? But some people get all stressed out about going and doing an audit and the audit is coming and everything's got to be right. That might be some of the ways that I deal with it by just going yeah, that's not big on my agenda.

The school has developed a set of school improvement agenda audits which we do and there would be eight or nine of those every year built about school children in the community. I guess that's my filter so if it comes through that, it's important. The things that I'm mentioning aren't in any of that. They're operational maybe, they're things that just have to happen, just work.

As long as there's a bottom line balance, does it really matter how we got there? As long as there's no money missing, I'm not going to stress about it. But however, if we haven't got a curriculum implemented, that might be a bit more of an occasion because that's on our list of agendas that we're going to - our school audit agenda we're implementing C2Cs [Curriculum to Classroom] *and Maths and English.*

So I guess it's prioritising and the prioritising is about what we're doing as a school. That's usually something we've undertaken through negotiations so everybody's clear about that.

The things I mentioned earlier - if things have to be done - there was a kid locked in a car here yesterday - so that's a safety and health issue. So everything else gets dropped and we go out and make sure the firees and the RACQ get here to let the kid out of the car - do you know what I mean? That's sort of distressful. Lucky it wasn't hot or the kid would have cooked in the car.

Participants in this study also linked knowledge of self with worthwhile work and SWB. Ella's comment typified the shared perspective when she said:

So, that wisdom of being through lots of confronting situations. So, at the end of the day, if I'd had a really difficult day with some really challenging staff issues and student issues, that I can still say, well, I did make a difference with regards to something I did in a classroom or with someone there, and someone has said to me, thank you, and I want to come back tomorrow. So at the end of each day,

I'm still working here at 6 o'clock or whatever, I want to come back tomorrow and I'm going to do this, even though I've had the worst day. Does that make sense?

Well, for me, my personality sits really well with an idea. My whole - how I operate is through the ideas, like being an IDEAS [Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools] school, but they mesh really closely. So, my personality meshes with an Ideas school, so I find it really easy to be able to operate in that mode all the time. So, having that strong culture and that strong vision where I like my school to be able to go - and working with my staff and my students to be able to attain that - gives me a great sense of belonging and credibility and kudos and feeling of wellbeing, in the fact that I do have a sense of where I'm travelling and I do know that journey, it feels worthwhile.

Kirk and Steve expressed a similar view about worthwhile work connecting in the importance of experience as contributors to the maintenance of their SWB. Kirk said:

It's that sense that - you know we said your job has meaning - it really does make a difference. I guess that's experience, also. You know it, because you've seen so many children go through in your career, and you know that what you do impacts upon that child's future chances. I think, for me, when you've seen it over a lot of years, you really know it - that that is my job. It's not just an all children learning to the best of their abilities. It's well, guess what, I really do have to get all kids learning to the best of their abilities, because in the future - and this is very global - they may be the future councillor, they may be the shop owner, and that's community.

That's global - people are together. What I do as a principal to make sure all the children in my children are learning and are happy, impacts down the track. This is what makes community.

This concept of worthwhile work, was underpinned by a belief that the core of their work made a difference in the lives of students and this buoyed the participants up, for some perhaps it mitigated the full effects of negative events. The belief by all participants that their worthwhile work made a positive difference in the lives of students acted as a means of cushioning SWB from life demands.

4.3.2.8. Acquiring Self-Knowledge

All of the participants in a similar manner emphasised the importance of cognitively evaluating themselves and introspectively developing self-knowledge in relation to the maintenance of their SWB. Self-knowledge appeared to be a broad term that encompassed what you know about yourself, as typified in a response by Ella:

> *You need to be in a good place for yourself. Know who you are, how you think and behave. So you need to understand what that means. What are your strengths? What are your negatives? And are you able to deal with emotions well? What are your beliefs, how much integrity to you have? I know what I am good at and I use my skills to advantage because I know myself.*

All participants also linked self-knowledge with experience as shown in Sam's remark:

> *I think that sense of togetherness about who you are and what you stand for - it comes with age, but it's critical to leadership.*

When participants referred to self-knowledge this appeared to be on a continuum of some self-knowledge to deep self-knowledge and it was related to the subjective determination of their own level of competency.

4.3.2.9. Deepening Self-Knowledge

Emerging from the data it became apparent that there was the concept of deep self-knowledge, different to self-knowledge in that the person had spent considerable time cognitively evaluating themselves; exploring their weaknesses through not just from their own perspective but using multiple perspectives such as feedback from others; considering aspects of themselves that they might not like and then coming to terms with the weaknesses; owning the weaknesses and then using this knowledge with continual feedback from multi-perspectives to see themselves even more clearly with a view to optimism. Nine participants (excluding Sam and Lawrence) showed evidence of deep self-knowledge. This deep knowledge and understanding of the self was then utilised in the application of problem solving: how can I best influence the outcome? Steve highlighted this new understanding when he said:

I think you've got to look inside yourself. It's about - I think I'm achieving it by the self-awareness and tackling things, rather than just letting me be a victim - becoming a victim of it, what do I need to do differently. Thinking through how I perceive myself, then going hang on, how would others look at this, at me, and then what do I need to do now. So while I am talking to you, I am self-aware, using all the information that I have about myself, my self-knowledge and then helicoptering above myself. What is my body language like? What do I need to do differently to get this person on side? Shit… look at me. I always talk too fast. I need to talk more slowly so they go away understanding what I've said. Then that's what I do, I talk more slowly. I know I talk too fast, because people tell me.

Nev's comment also exemplified deep self-knowledge this:

I'm comfortable with the outcome, I was aware of my tone, my point making, their response, tried to gentle things when I listened to my tone. If it doesn't go according to plan, like if we're having a conversation that's really hostile, people keep going off their nut or whatever, that's fine, I can live with that too. I don't have to predetermine everything. I try and shape what I can, influence it and mould it and live with what I own – the skills and knowledge that I have contributed to the context and how I have best managed myself with my strengths and tried to manage my weaknesses, listening to myself, watching myself and then manage the situation to get the best outcome. How do I get the best outcome in a difficult situation? You need to know who you are.

Ewan gave an example showing his deep self-knowledge in his honest reflection:

I think what I would think is my strength is also my weakness. I would think that a fair percentage of my personality trait is humanistic. So what can be a strength and support to a lot of people is also my downfall because I question that this is my fault that this person is like this - that they're aggressive to other people. I take on the blame that I should be doing something, I have to do something. The reason they're like this - so I guess because of my humanistic beliefs in myself or how I behave I sometimes take on the problems of those other people. Where I think I have to sometimes almost step outside my own

body and look in and say no, this is not about you, this is about me. You need
to let others own what is theirs.

According to participants, self-knowledge and deep self-knowledge enabled SWB as did experiencing positive relationships.

4.3.2.10. Building Trusting and Supportive Relationships

All participants in the study made comment about the importance of relationships and the contribution of support from a 'significant other' as increasing their SWB levels. They also talked about the deliberate action of engaging in trusting, supportive and positive relationships, especially at times when they were tired, knowing that engaging in such relationships would make them feel better thereby helping them to maintain their SWB. Relationships were noted in terms of: relationships with colleagues and members of the school community; a significant other; mentors, supervisors; and networks.

All participants remarked on the importance of developing appropriate relationships (which is a subjective judgement) with all members of the community including, staff, student, parents and the broader community. In building and investing in these relationships the participants received satisfaction from their job and also consciously endeavoured to build and improve the relationships in the knowledge that it was rewarding to do so and this contributed to the maintenance of their SWB. Lawrence explained the nuances of relationships with staff in relation to the core motivation of helping others:

> *But it's more the stronger your relationship in that professional but personal*
> *league, understanding and helping with your community, helping them with*
> *their sick leave if you've got a child - if you've got a teacher who's got an issue*
> *like I have at the moment and helping them through, establishing how they do*
> *their sick leave.*
>
> *Those sort of relationship things that they can talk to you about it, talk to you*
> *confidentially but as a principal people will often come to speak to you even*

though they're not close to you to tell you that - just to let you know I'm pregnant and I'm going to have to take leave or that I've got cancer or my child has got cancer and they talk to you because they know you're the boss. The person who - if they share with me it will be able to help them to their job - to balance their job and their family situation, whatever it is.

So it's a nice side of it in that way, but it's part of that relationship that I have with staff that generally they can talk to you about it. It makes you feel good because you are helping others and it is also something that you at times have to make time for. You have to try and develop trust with everyone in your school community, it makes your job easier when people, kids especially, know you care. If I didn't have that, I think that would greatly add to my stress.

All participants commented about how effective relationships with the school contributed to an ease in their workload as typified by Nev's remark:

I don't have to spend more time on dealing with the issues because it's - you've got the relationship to work through much quicker. Time is saved, conflict or misunderstandings are vastly lessened and this enables me to function feeling more positively towards issues.

All participants in the study made comments about the contribution of support from a significant other as increasing their SWB levels. Six participants explicitly mentioned a single person as being significant and positively contributing to the maintenance of their SWB. Five out of the six participants outlined the importance of their partner in relation to their SWB. Ewan articulated:

I think my wife plays a huge role. I think it's an advantage because she's in education, because she understands. So she gives me my moment in the sun, but probably makes sure it's not too long. So she's been really good with that.

Lawrence made several reference to SWB where his SWB was no longer in some form of "*balance*" or equilibrium and discloses that he does not always recognise that he is at a tipping point with his SWB. It is a significant other that helps him to regain balance. Lawrence shared:

Well sometimes it's actually not me that knows when I am tipping and really stressed - unbalanced, it's my wife. She'll just say, you are being really crabby today, you've had a bad day. Like we normally sit down, have cappuccino or we'll have a beer but if things are not well I'll wander in the garden. She'll find me, instinctively and she'll know. It's lovely.

She tends to know if I'm troubled about something. I don't burden her with it but clearly she thinks that it's useful for me sometimes just to relax, to talk, to know I am loved. She's my wife but she's also my confidante and my greatest critic and best friend.

Five participants (see Table 4.2) articulated a mentor as a significant other in their life, someone they pictured as solutions focused, who they turned too when they felt anxious or frustrated because they trusted their mentor to work through a situation with them, to help them better find solutions. Emma's response typified the role of a mentor as a significant other, she termed it as like a maintenance strategy to her SWB. Emma remarked:

It's that support, and not a person to solve your problem, but someone else that you talk to and say oh blah, blah, blah, this has happened at work today. They can go yeah I know what you mean. That gives me a sense of okay, I guess it is a strategy I use to maintain good feelings, a sense of worth. I'm not the only one struggling to problem solve complex situations. I'm not the only one going through this. I can cope with this. I can vent, but we can also problem solve at the same time – what other options are there, what else could I do?

There's a difference, you've got to be able to vent safely. Then problem solve it. There's no use just ringing up and venting and talking to someone to vent. For me, I need to then go into problem solving mode with that person. This allows me to find a better solution, learn and also feel better.

All participants mentioned relationships with their supervisor impacting upon their SWB but only one mentioned it as positively enabling their SWB. Kirk stated:

Relationship would drive that. If I liked the person and trusted them, I wouldn't have an issue. If I despised them, as I have done with previous ones, I wouldn't even give them the time of day, let alone how I was travelling. So I guess that

> *comes down to the relationship that you have with supervisors or any of those*
> *people for a matter, yeah for sure. Your supervisor can be a support and be a*
> *help in balancing your well-being (not often done though)!*

All participants (except Sam) articulated the importance of networks as exemplified by Lawrence's comment:

> *I am a very strong believer in networks and in just having people around who*
> *are likeminded or in like situations, you will learn something from them. We*
> *have built very strong networks around Cluster, around QASSP, through ACL*
> *and it is amazing how much - and I'm not saying I use that. I'm not saying I'm*
> *a user because I'm a contributor and I put a lot into it but what you get out of*
> *it is just unbelievable.*

> *I think that's where a lot of people don't do that. The people who didn't finish*
> *up in those networks get out of it but sometimes I think they don't even know*
> *they're in there and why they're there or what they're getting out of it.*

Positive relationships (as subjectively defined by each individual) were reported by all participants as helping them to maintain their SWB.

In summary, the narrative data from which the themes arose provided a window into the lived experience of participants. There were only two participants who identified less than seven positive impactors to their SWB: Sam and Lawrence who both only identified five positive impactors. There was some commonality in the positive impactors (experiencing physical, spiritual and mental health; acquiring self-knowledge; and engaging positive relationships) that both Sam and Lawrence identified but there was more commonality in what they did not identify as positive impactors. Both did not identify: controlling factors in a situation; thinking optimistically, with clarity and multi-perspectives; engaging others in leadership opportunities; and deepening self-knowledge of own influential abilities in situations or contexts. The other participants all identified nine or more positive impactors to their SWB. Some participants reported more positive impactors than others and the two participants whom the data depicted as using less of the more common strategies (evidenced in Table 4.2) also shared that they sometimes struggled with their SWB.

This study did not however measure well-being levels so no specific comparison is entered into here regarding the levels of SWB and the number of positive impactors but it is noted as an interesting finding, worthy of further study.

> **Researcher Memo:**
>
> Mmm… Thinking back to the data captured in Table 4.2 in this chapter, two participants appeared to have significantly less positive impactors than their other colleagues who had participated in this study. There was also commonality in what both Sam and Lawrence did not identify as positive impactors. They both did not describe: deep self-knowledge; engaging with others in shared leadership opportunities; exhibiting agency and maintaining control and thinking optimistically with clarity and from multiple perspectives, as contributing to their SWB. Is this significant?

Whilst the participants clearly outlined positive impactors, in terms of actions, the analysis of these actions revealed that by working in a particular manner the participants were more likely to experience a positive impact that enhanced their SWB as a consequence of a positive evaluation of a moment. For the purposes of this study a positive impactor is defined as that which enhances a person's SWB as a consequence of a positive evaluation of a moment. A positive impactor was linked to a way of working intended to achieve the core motivator and enable the person to make a positive evaluation of their competency and therefore feel satisfied with life or feel positive affect. This may involve relatively minor action such as re-thinking through a situation or it may require substantial strategising and on-going action.

4.4. Section Three - What Strategies and Processes Are Principals Currently Utilising to Maintain SWB?

The participants in this study were asked about what strategies and processes they currently utilised to maintain SWB. It became apparent that their responses did not link to just strategies or processes but rather to a "way of working", influenced by their prior learning. The term "ways of working" arose from the data and it describes an

activity based paradigm that encapsulates how actions are conceptualised, prioritised, and performed on the basis of personal and socio-cultural contextual knowledge acquired through experiential learning. In explaining what that did all participants used terms like "*it is just the way I do it*", "*it is the way I work*", "*not really sure I can explain it, I just know and work this way*".

A deeper level of analysis revealed that participants were using a specific way of working in their contexts that helped them to maintain their SWB. Participants revealed that they: sought support from a supervisor; obtained positive feedback, celebrated the good times, especially with laughter; separated personal and professional life; focused on health; just stopped; did not own other people's woes; acted professionally; remained calm, used de-escalation strategies; communicated well with others; used a 'switch'; engaged positive thinking; planned and acted, maximised controllable factors; relaxed; networked with trusted others; engaged self-think time, drew on self-knowledge; and used self-talk and then engaged the dialogical self. These findings are then summarised.

In looking for themes and patterns in the data I have outlined the ways of working from least frequently articulated to those most frequently articulated by at least two participants. The only exception to this is the emergence of the dialogic self which I have discussed following on from self-talk as there is a relationship between the two constructs. Table 4.3 depicts the ways of working participants used to maintain their SWB in relation to which participant data set they arose from.

Table 4.3: Ways of Working

Participants	Seek Support from a supervisor	Obtain positive feedback	Celebrate the good - laughter	Separate personal's professional life	Focus on Health	Just stop -	Don't own other peoples woes	Act Professionally	Remain calm, Use de-escalation strategies-	Communicate well with others	Use a 'Switch'	Engage positive thinking	Plan & Act maximising controllable factors	Relax	Network with trusted others	Engage self -think time	Draw on self -knowledge	Use self -talk	Engages the dialogic Self
Ewan									✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Kirk			✔				✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Merv						✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Nev			✔				✔				✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Evan							✔				✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Steve	✔	✔			✔			✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Sam		✔			✔			✔				✔			✔	✔	✔		
Lawrence	✔		✔			✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Ella		✔			✔			✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Emma	✔		✔			✔		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Amber			✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

The narrative data from which the ways of working arose will now be explored providing a window into the lived experience of participants. In looking for patterns in the data it became evident that there was not a great deal of commonality in the first six ways of working listed in Table 4.3. However in the later eight ways of working it became apparent that there was some similarity with the ways of working that Sam and Lawrence were not using.

4.4.1. Seek Support from Supervisor

Although two participants have explicitly outlined that they would not seek support from their supervisor only three of the participants mentioned that they might talk to their supervisor. The participants all outlined that it would be done conditionally dependent upon: the person they have as a supervisor has been a principal; they are not interested in and only in certain circumstances, like a sick immediate family member.

Steve articulated:

> *I do seek support from my supervisor at times but only around carefully thought through issues that I know he would need to be aware of, so I guess I feedforward to my supervisor in case there is any political kickback. To talk to my supervisor - won't matter if I seek support I am not after promotion!*

Emma said

> *I might seek support if it was about a medical issue with someone dear to me and I needed to support that person, by taking time off work.*

Lawrence commented:

If there's a significant event I might talk to my supervisor, and source his support. I ring him from time to time but not about how I am personally travelling. No one really asks that. I seek advice from an ARD [Assistant Regional Director] *and I'll a chat with him because he's been in the chair - been there, done that, got the T-shirt.*

I am unsure as to whether one participant would have spoken with the supervisor if the supervisor had not had experience as a school principal. It also appeared from the data that participants were reluctant to seek support with one participant inferring that by doing so chances of promotion would be lessened. The participants did not clearly articulate any expectations of deep support.

4.4.2. Obtain Positive Feedback

It comes as no surprise that principals in this study, are like other people, feeling that their SWB is at a good level when they receive what they subjectively believe to be positive feedback in the form of awards and recognition of their acknowledged competency. Ewan's remark typifies the sentiment shared by his peers in regards to recognition:

People in my own school took the time to nominate me. Then it had to go to regional office and they had to write, so that was really - but probably higher than that - not probably, higher than that was our curriculum audit. When our curriculum audit came back and it was seven highs and an outstanding and based on what other people were getting at that time, that was probably my highest moment I've had. The reason being is I think that that was a point in time report card for us as a school but particularly for me as a principal, to either know we're doing some good stuff or we've got a few problems.

So I would have thought that one was fantastic and I've never felt higher than getting that phone call from the auditor saying congratulations, this is what your school has got. Then the odd phone call after that, from people like my supervisor and my peers.

Five participants explicitly remarked on positive feedback from others as a positive impactor to SWB as typified by Emma:

> *Probably the best thing for me is that you get that feedback from students about how they really love being at the school, and this is a great school.*

It appeared to be important to the majority of participants that they were recognised by their Parents and Citizens Association as doing a good job as typified by Evan's recount:

> *The P&C president has gone up and what they've had to say about me as a principal and as a leader and then put it in writing in a card has just, wow. It just shocked me to the moon, basically, because it was recognition for what I'm trying to achieve and that just, yeah, that was a pretty amazing thing. So, that, again, is around somebody giving me recognition for what I'm doing.*

Recognition of the work was seen by participants as a positive impactor to SWB so too was success and achievement.

Several participants reported actively seeking positive feedback from a variety of trusted sources (such as students, parents, colleagues), as a way to maintain their SWB. Three participants (Ella, Kirk, and Emma) similarly commented that they actively sought out positive feedback which could be verbal or non-verbal from other people they trusted when they were *"feeling a little bit low"*. By obtaining the positive feedback they could then reflect upon areas of competency and change their thinking to be more inclusive of all of the good things they were doing. This in turn helped them to make a different cognitive evaluation and see themselves as making a difference in the lives of others, thus helping to maintain their own SWB. Here is one way Ella exemplified obtaining positive feedback from students:

> *I go for a walk to see my prep students when I am feeling a little bit low. You get that feedback from students about how they really love being at the school. They are always very keen to talk to you and show you things. They give you positive feedback, not just through their words but also their actions where they are accepting of you, they want to read to you, involve you. This then let's*

you focus on all the good you do. Yes I do make a difference in the lives of students!

The positive feedback enhanced the participant's mood, helping the participant to maintain their SWB as low level negative moods are a component of SWB. Investigation of the data revealed that some participants focused on health in order to maintain their SWB.

4.4.3. Celebrate the Good Things Like Laughter

Three participants (see Table 4.3) explicitly mentioned that they celebrate the 'good things' and there was some contrast to what was celebrated and how this was done. Laughter or giggling was mentioned by all three participants as a way of cognitively moving away from any negative thinking to being able to see the world around them as a good place and there role within it as worthwhile.

Lawrence remarked:

A sense of humour is fairly important. You need to just celebrate the simple things, the good things. You've got to have a giggle in the workplace. Your whole team has to be able to experience some joy, feel good. This means that if you have together experienced things that are negative and frustrating you can balance this with some positives, laughing and remembering that the world is indeed a good place and together we have shared experiences, many of them good.

Amber and Nev had a very similar viewpoint, explained here by Amber:

When you're away with family and friends, you're that person - they're not actually draining energy from you by having to problem solve. You are just in your role as family member (helping others who appreciate your time). They're giving you energy, is the way I describe it, because you're not having to solve the problem, having to work it through and do this and know the answer to everything. You're just a person that's part of a group that's maybe laughing, having fun, feeling capable of being you in this setting. You're not having to

173

problem solve everything. You stop and think about the good things in life, like the sunshine, the rain, the flowers and laughter.

All three participants were taking a moment to cognitively evaluate their life. They reflected on the good things like laughter and in so doing they engaged deliberate thought processes that focused on positive aspects of life, in this case laughter and these are considered to be part of SWB.

Examination of the data highlighted that participants were deliberately delineating their professional and personal lives as way to maintain their SWB.

4.4.4. Separate Professional and Personal Life

Three participants (Emma, Kirk and Amber) explicitly articulated that having a separate personal and professional life helped them to maintain their SWB because it allowed them to still focus on the things that they were doing well. If work was problematic they could look to the social non-work areas of their life where they were feeling loved and happy knowing that they were doing something well to be loved and appreciated by their family or friends. This also transferred across to work in respect to if things were unhappy in the family sphere then they could go to work and enjoy their job, feeling successful at their job.

Emma commented:

Build on the strength of being able to operate well in my professional life so that I can get on with my personal life. I can clearly reflect on the aspects that are going well in my life. If some areas are not going well, like if there is an issue at work, I can look at my girl friends and my family who love me and know that I am doing something right. I am still making a difference in some good ways. They love and appreciate me.

Kirk asserted:

Good balance in what you do, interests outside of work. Having other things to keep your mind off it, having your escapes to be able to turn off and get away from things, especially if tough decisions are being made and there are people not happy with what is happening at work. I can focus on the other things going well. All of these things help me to maintain my SWB. That way you can see areas that are going well, like getting on with your mates, even if a day at work was shit.

I'm not taking emails home and doing them at night, which was one of the suggestions (from Education Queensland). Take all of your emails home, no I'm not doing that. I'll do that in my work hours. I start work at seven, I usually leave at five, some days later. I'm doing 10 hours a day and everything I'm going to do is in that time….. Shut the computer and walk out. Go home and enjoy my life!

Amber participant commented:

I like to be able to not take things home after that time unless I'm really pushed, so that I can enjoy and have that down time at home, and do those other things that I like to do.

Also physically being in a different space, for me helps my SWB. Being not the principal, but being the wife, being the mother, being the daughter. That gives me energy, and maybe that's because the people that I'm with on the weekend doing those things are the people I really care about - and you get energy from people, the ones that love you. I'm a real people person, so I get energy and satisfaction from other people, the positive exchanges.

These participants all linked to how a separation of their personal and professional lives allowed them to view more clearly what was going well and what was not and then to feel good about what was going well. The cognitive evaluation involving satisfaction with life and positive affect, are both components of SWB and have been evidenced here in what participants articulated. Additional analysis of the data exposed that participants were focusing on health to maintain their SWB.

4.4.5. Focus on Health

Three participants (see Table 4.3) articulated that health was important to them in maintaining their SWB. They articulated that they were aware of what was healthy and they had to make deliberate decisions to stay at what they perceived was a healthy level to competently do their job or be the person they wanted to be. This involved deliberate actions such as going to sleep at certain times even if they had to leave important work unfinished as with inadequate sleep they felt they could no longer competently function. The participants considered different aspects of health including: using a 'switch'; obtaining adequate sleep; eating healthily and personal hygiene.

Steve stated:

> *I made some decisions about my physical health and I stopped drinking. I felt a lot more alive and alert. My acuity was much better. Then I decided I had to do something about my weight, so this year I've really used that self-control. I feel like I've taken control of my life again, and I think that's showing at work as well. I can operate more competently and this makes me feel good.*

Sam averred:

> *Sleep is really important to me, and my physical wellbeing's really important to me, for functioning, to cope, to make decisions.*

Ella remarked:

> *I've got to be able to do some cooking. You know, I love cooking. I've got to look after myself, eat healthy. I've got to have a shower or a bath or something, feel clean, look good. I then look the way I believe a principal should look, or*

a successful women should look. I feel like I have achieved well to be able to look this way. I've got to make sure I go out and call somebody to go and have some coffee. I'm not worried; let me go out to dinner, you know? Makes me feel good.

Focusing on health seemed to enhance Ella's mood, helping her to maintain her SWB as low level negative moods are a component of SWB. Both Sam and Steve felt more capable which could be linked to both positive affect and perhaps more satisfied with life as a result of focusing on health.

4.4.6. Just Stop

From further examination of the data it emerged that participants were deliberately using 'just stop' as a way of working to maintain their SWB. Four participants described this as taking a moment to pause so they could think about what they were doing well (feel good about this), think about what was not going well (think about how best to solve this) and to also know what needed to be prioritised and what they could come back to later. One participant (Emma) felt she needed to stop when she felt her SWB was becoming unbalanced. The other three participants (Merv, Amber and Lawrence) mentioned 'just stop' as a way of turning off a work focus and changing their focus to the non-work aspects of their life which brought a sense of fun, joy or fulfilment as typified by Merv and Amber.

Emma revealed:

Somewhere in your life you have to have those big moments where you actually just have to stop and do nothing because, physically, emotionally and socially - and obviously talking about your subjective wellbeing is not in a good place and that's what you need to recharge yourself. You need to find a sense of peace again, (think about what you do well, develop a sense of knowing that you do it well) regain energy. Actually I did take six months off and I did finish my study as well- it just gave me a place to actually say, gosh, a lot has happened in my life in the past 12 months and, guess what, you needed to have this break.

Merv articulated:

> *Sometimes you just need to stop work. The externalising behaviours really are about doing completely different things, not doing work. Spending time thinking through and engaging with those activities that make you feel good. For example, there were plenty of distracters on the weekend, there was gardening to be done, lawns to mow, little girl's birthday parties to take the kids to. There was ballet, there was music. I think we talked about this last time too but part of the secret is you've got to have something else to do that's not work that brings you a feeling of fun, fulfilment, whatever turns you on. This helps balance those times when work is complex and draining.*

Amber discoursed:

> *For me, my mind stops at work. I walk out of here, and my mind just goes yep that's work finished for the weekend, if I'm going away. I do not think about work. I become the other person which is the mother, the wife, the friend, and I get a sense of fulfilment and love and I don't actually think about work. Therefore you've got a different space in your head. ... I find when you shut down, you're actually able to come back and deal with the problems at work, because you haven't consciously dealt with it all weekend. You've found a different space, and it's calmer.*

One components of SWB, positive affect was evidenced here when participants articulated that they just stopped, some took time to breathe deeply working through to obtain a feeling of calm, a way of communicating with themselves sparked by self-awareness, that they were at a tipping point with their SWB.

4.4.7. Don't Own Other People's Woes

Five respondents (Kirk, Evan, Merv, Nev, and Amber) articulated the importance of not worrying about other people's woes as a way to maintain their SWB, as this way of working lessened their overall stress levels. The participants talked about focusing on what they could improve, what was theirs to own, and the areas they needed to concentrate their efforts on in order to be more competent. Kirk's response was typical

with three of the participants also utilising the term "monkey on the back". According to participants this was a coined term, used from time to time at school principal meetings.

Kirk remarked:

> *Other people needed to solve their own woes to be competent because if you take them on, you actually really can't solve them for the person and they don't learn as a result. They simply want to take your energy all the time, not think for themselves and have you fight their battles. This makes no sense as it doesn't feel good and all you do is give away your own energy levels, energy that you need to run your school well, be a good husband.*
>
> *Not taking things on board is an important strategy. People who just pick up everyone else's problems dig themselves a hole and end up overwhelmed. Monkeys on the back stuff, you know. Everyone wants to tell you what's wrong with everything else and if you sit there and take it all on board, you're going to have a crushing day. A lot of what I've done is, you say, is that right? So what do you do about that? You put it straight back on them. I'm not going to do anything about it, so you ask them what are you going to do about it? Next you know they disappear. I guess that's a state of wellbeing, is the approach which you take to those things when they come at you.*
>
> *The ones that I find interesting are those people who want to come and whinge to you about something that's not right or someone else's behaviour. They won't do anything themselves and they expect you to deal with it. I've learned in time to say to them, what will you be doing about this? So I don't have to have their problem which I think a lot of people do. They take that on board because someone else is telling them about it, you know what I mean? Well it's not my problem, you're the one with it. You're talking about it, what are you going to do about it? I usually finish and say, is there anything I have to do here? They'll look at you and go, well not really.*
>
> *It's good for my wellbeing because I don't have to do anything more than I am already doing. Less time pressure and with that less stress and more time to do core tasks. It makes me feel like I've dealt with an issue, it's finished, I don't*

have to revisit it. Yeah, sometimes I'll go back and say look, how did you get on with that thing the other day? Oh, well yeah - so you didn't do anything about it? No. Okay, so it must not have been important. I use that one a lot and I walk off. It makes them realise, I shouldn't say this - I don't get a lot of people whinging at me anymore because they know that's going to be the response. So if they want to come with a genuine concern then you work with them to resolve it.

Merv shared:

You work out fairly quickly if they are real issues that you need to work through with them or if it is an issue of their making that they need to solve themselves. Recognise the monkey on their own back and take some ownership of it. We are not here to nurse maid but we are here to run an efficient school and support staff. .... People sometimes need help to solve the problem but they must take ownership in solving the problem.

Nev remarked:

You just don't take other people's monkey. Let them deal with their own issues. Our job is just to help them see sometimes the path or action before them, upskill them. They must then develop their own skills to deal with the issue. If we solve the issue they will not learn to solve such things in the future.

Kirk, utilised questioning to lead the person to identify the issue and who needed to fix it, if indeed it needed fixing and how it could be fixed. In doing this he was 'not owning' the emotional frustration of someone else's issue and feeling time pressured or stressed to complete yet another task. Kirk, like the other five participants who outlined this way of working, was utilising problem-focused coping; recognising that there was a problem; considering how it could be solved; who needed to solve it; what support they needed in order to solve it.

> **Researcher Memo:**
> Mmm… Perhaps principals were utilising problem-focused ways of working to lessen stress and remodel the situation or context. By lessening stress the participants were therefore more likely to experience low level negative moods.

4.4.8. Act Professionally

Examination of the data brought to light that participants were deliberately focusing on acting professionally, so they themselves and others would perceive them as competent. They defined acting professionally as "*looking professional with attire and make up*"; "*speaking and acting in a professional manner*". Seven participants (see Table 4.3) remarked on the importance of evaluating their performance knowing that they were operating and appearing professional as it contributed to their SWB. Participants detailed that this involved cognitive choices about the clothes they wore on different days (e.g., "*sometimes you are really tired after a P&C meeting and the next day you would like to just wear jeans and a T-shirt, but you don't*"). The participants thought negatively about what a less then competent or professional principal would look like and evaluated this deciding that they needed to implement a set of actions to ensure that they acted professionally. The responses shared show the breadth of how participants conceptualised components of acting professionally and then deliberately took actions that aligned with their self-imposed view of acting professionally (e.g. "*if you are at a social school fund raising activity and you feel like the second glass of wine, well you just don't it, it doesn't look professional*") .

Sam remarked:

> *Do the right thing, put the effort being in the right place and doing it right, and sweat less about the hierarchy. Usually it's - I start with trust and it's earned - you earn levels according to your performance. So if you perform well, you earn more trust, and I think that the trust aspects the most critical to being professional. People see you as competent and this feels good. You also have less issues if you have trust and you have acted professionally.*

Lawrence stated:

> *Investing in an emotional bank account is always a good thing because then if you've got to go to the well, then the parents know that you are there to support them through the good times and the times that aren't as shiny. You act in a professional manner and people then work along with you, respect you. Unprofessional stuff, just leads to screw-ups that you can't afford in our job.*

Amber and Ella viewed acting professionally from a different perspective. Amber's remark typified their thinking:

I always act professionally but appearing to act professionally I sometimes need to work at it if I am tired and busy. When I look professional, dressed professionally, I feel better, nice clothes make up. Shows the world you are coping, you care about your professional image. People expect you to look a certain way and in the role we have you need to look professional.

Elements of trust, establishing relationships, demonstrating personal competency, and image arose in relation to acting professionally as outlined in the comments by Sam, Lawrence and Amber. Here participant responses could be related to fuelling or increasing the feeling of life satisfaction, or it may be that by operating in a competent manner mitigated more stressful situations which could link to low level negative moods, another component of SWB.

4.4.9. Remain Calm, Use De-escalation Strategies

Additional analysis of the data exposed that participants were endeavouring to remain calm and de-escalating situations to maintain their SWB. Seven participants (Ella, Merv, Sam, Ewan, Kirk, Lawrence, Amber) mentioned that when they felt they were beginning to get angry and perhaps be in danger of acting unprofessionally they made a deliberate choice to remain calm and tried to de-escalate the situation. All participant responses were very similar as typified by Ella and Sam:

Ella talked about remaining calm during a conflict, using ways of working to de-escalate the conflict which allowed her to more competently communicate and perform her role as principal. She remarked:

While you're in this situation, it's like you're paddling wildly underneath the surface, trying - and remaining calm. Looking calm, sitting still and listening. It is like part of you intervenes and you automatically project the appropriate image. So, there is a skillset there. It's around listening, thinking with clarity and waiting for the opportunity to talk. So, when you come out of that situation, what I will tend to do, if I possibly can, I'll shut the door and just go and sit,

and then calmly work through what just happened in my head. I'll go somewhere where I know I can have a bit of privacy to work through my emotions and return to an even keel, find a sense of calm, knowing the situation would have been much worse for me if I had not have remained calm and de-escalated the problem.

Merv responded:

At least on the very surface you've got to be calm and collected and under control. Head can be racing but the view image can't be racing. So if you can bring a sense of the balance of calm to everyone around you then that brings back a sense of calm yourself. You feel better.

Positive affect, a component of SWB, was evidenced here when participants talked about their feelings and how they worked through situations in order to obtain a feeling of calm. Further analysis of the data revealed that participants were utilising 'just stop' as a way to maintain their SWB and also to establish a sense of inner calm.

4.4.10.   Communicate Well with Others

Further exploration of the data revealed that participants were utilising communication as a way of working to maintain their SWB. Eight respondents (Steve, Kirk, Ewan, Merv, Lawrence, Amber, Emma and Ella) articulated that communication helped them to maintain their SWB. There was considerable consensus in responses with two perspectives on how communication linked to the maintenance of SWB with participants articulating: communicating well makes life more manageable; and it allows you to predict and clarify so information obtained which can lead to a better decision making and outcomes.

Steve articulated:

I think I operate on a level which is getting the job done, ... people working together on a shared goal or the whole school vision or mission. I'd found that, over the 10 years of being a principal here, difficult at times because of the

resistance or natural behaviours of others and probably the way I dealt with it. Communication if done well makes life much more manageable.

Kirk articulated a communication process that lead to better decision making, better outcomes and improved relationships.

I use a little model called LACE which is in situations with people you listen - the first thing you do, you listen. If you don't listen to them, they don't engage with you anyway, you know what I mean? A lot of people are quick with their mouth open - they want to respond all the time in a conversation. So until you've listened to somebody and got out what they want to hear and that's a good thinking time. You need to create shared goals and understandings and you can't do that unless you listen!

You're thinking, you're predicting what they're going to talk about, you're not - it's easy because sometimes you really want to do that - you want to open your mouth and talk. You can't do that, okay? So you do the listening, the next side of it is that accepting side where you say to them I hear what you're saying. You don't have to agree with them - most people want you to agree with them. I've done that a lot around here where people want to talk to you because it's usually whinging about someone else so you can say I hear what you're saying. It doesn't mean I agree with you. But they hear that as saying oh, he agrees with me. It is part of the process to get better situational outcomes.

Then you do the clarification stuff and that's as much for me as it is for them. Oh, what do you mean by that? So you start to clarify that and along the way I'm thinking yeah, this is usually where I'm thinking to myself so what is really this person on about? So whereas before it was about two people fighting and suddenly it comes down to a communication issue - so I've taken that time to be able to get to that. So when you clarify, so really it could be about a communication thing, yeah, most likely. Righto. So what can we do about that?

That's the exploration side of it where you then begin to make some resolutions or some solutions or talk through how things are going to progress. This makes a difference in the school community, people appreciate it. This process is also

building relationships as the others involved develop trust in the process and in you as a communicator.

Obviously you've got the same issues, get them out and let's see what we can talk about. Then people open up and that in itself is a reassuring fact that it's not just me.

Here participants have explained that communicating well with others helps them to maintain their SWB because they can competently resolve conflict or a make a difference within their communities which links to the SWB component of positive affect.

4.4.11. Using a 'Switch'

When participants were asked what helps to maintain their SWB eight participants (Nev, Kirk, Merv, Amber, Lawrence, Emma, Ella, Evan) responded that the drinking of alcohol helps them switch off from school and focus on the non-work domains of their life. The drinking appeared to enable them to more easily stop focusing on work and engage in social action which usually involved laughter (i.e., positive affect) and reflective thinking where participants refocused, and evaluated what was good in their life (i.e., satisfaction with life). All responses were similar as exemplified in the following three exerts:

Have a chardonnay; that's my favourite saying. Go home and have a chardie [white wine] *with my partner or my friends. Have a laugh and think about non work things.*

Well, go have a glass of wine. Yes, I'm going to go and have a glass of wine with my partner. Have two. Yes, I'm going to do two and together we will talk about our day. Then we will plan our weekend, and discuss social events like going to the movies.

So I've got to be able to have that glass of wine - it's a must in my life! Life is good with a glass of wine. I tend to enjoy a glass of red wine or whatever but I don't abuse it and I'll have a glass of red with my good friends but I won't sit

down and drink bottles of wine by myself because that's not healthy and it's not very social either.

In this study the participants talked about drinking as a 'switch'. They wanted to move from thinking about work to engaging in non-work social interaction, so the action of drinking was used as a 'switch' to turn off thinking about work to turn on engaging in social situations that involved talking through their day and engaging in laughter. There may be other things that acted as a 'switch' but the data only revealed drinking.

4.4.12. Engage Positive Thinking

Further exploration of the data brought to light that participants were utilising positive thinking as a way to maintain their SWB. Many of the themes now emerging in the data set are interconnected, and the continual use of cognitive evaluation comes through the themes. Self-think time and positive thinking were often mentioned together but they also mentioned separately and not all participants articulated their engagement in both. For this reason I have addressed the ways of working separately. Eight participants (Emma, Amber, Kirk, Steve, Merv, Ella, Ewan and Evan) made twenty four references to engaging a process of positive thinking to help to maintain SWB. The process was very similar with all participants (except the new element of a mantra introduced by Amber) but the stories were different. Participants used social comparison and visualisation in conjunction with reflective questioning to kick start a change in mindset from 'woe is me' to 'life is good' as exemplified in this story by Emma:

So to keep me on that feeling good, I think, really, is that really bad? Like, gee, I've got those poor sods down the road and they're really struggling with that, so look at the great things that we've done. So, I always go back to think, don't get yourself in a big knot, this is an issue, but look around you. I always used to say to my own mind, look, what are the great things that you're doing here?

I've just got this kid, or look at that great work on the wall there, or look at the grounds, or you know, I just look out and see Phil mowing and thinking how he's taking great care in being able to do that. So, to keep me on that level then, I think, well, look, it's not that bad, don't get hung up on it, how can you work

through that? What can I look at to be able to keep getting back up again, and now? Right, I'm in that mindset now, now I can go and tackle that. So, I just look at the physical good things, I look on that wall out there. Sometimes you can go and pick up my newsletter, because I love my newsletter. To me, I always think, well, if I look at my newsletter, there's so many great things happening here. I feel good. I think, I'm energised again, and off I go. So, I'm looking at those positive things and I have got lots to draw on, when I do have a difficult parent who's going to - or, you know, I have a staff member that's going to take me to the union or something like that, or a parent that's going to do something to me.

Emma also referred to positive thinking from a school wide perspective in relation to the implementation of change:

We're doing all the things there, but we take the good of what they've got and just add it to that, as opposed to just throwing everything out and then saying, well, here's *a new thing. I've never, ever, in my whole time since I've been in IDEAS,* [Initiating, Discovering, Envisioning, Actioning and Sustaining (see Andrews et al., 2004; Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002; Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009; Lewis & Andrews, 2007)] *taken all of that stuff and thrown out that. We've kept our core, and we've just laid another level on that to enhance what we've got, and then I've never gotten myself into trouble then. I thought, I'll always protect myself to say that, well, then - you know, you told us that we're going to do that and now they're taking it away. They just say, well, we've got the best of that.*

Another participant talked about the input from selected other people and how the input of these people helped the participant to engage in positive thinking. Ella articulated:

Sometimes mentors and critical friends, or loved ones they do give me a different way of thinking about it, but often just the act of talking I actually will come up and think, ah, something else I didn't get that side of it. There is a different perspective. So, when those things happen, it does take a little while to - and even at that stage, I'm not in a good - my self-worth, I can look at it intellectually and say, well, this is ridiculous, because of this, this and this. You

did this and you should be happy that that was your stance or the actions that
you actually came up with.

Amber introduced the use of a mantra to engage positive thinking. She shared the importance of being kind to yourself if you have been engaged in a difficult situation, rather than dwelling on the negatives have a positive mantra. Amber advised:

Try and be gentle with yourself and not kick yourself too much for - because we all make mistakes and there will be - there wouldn't be a situation where I haven't felt that there was something I could have done a little bit better. Next time, say, well, that's something I've learned. Use the mantra "Next time I'll know better" rather than this wasn't good enough.

All eight participants talked modelling the firm tone of the self-talk to engage positive thinking as they recounted events; however one participant articulated so that it came through in the transcript. Here is what Emma said:

Don't let it get to you, calm down, yes that was awful, but don't be a baby. Don't be too emotional about it, because it shouldn't be personal. Don't take it so personally. It's all that sort of stuff. So, that's the talk that - that's to calm me down. Put it in a compartment where it lives, it takes a while to get to do that. So, that's the type of stuff I would say to myself. Don't let it get to you; don't let it get to you. You know that even though that was said, it was most probably not personal. I say this with firm tone. Toughen up, take a teaspoon of cement, that sort of stuff. You just have to contrive to choose the right attitude and be happy.

Six participants (see Table 4.3) talked about the importance of being honest with yourself, knowing your own capabilities and how this knowledge (termed in this study as self-knowledge) helped them to engage positive thinking and the ability to choose action with an element of control. Kirk shared:

Be honest with yourself and don't get yourself down by it because, you've got to make these decisions a million times a year or be confronted by these things. You're going to get most of them right. There'll just be the odd one that'll test you; test your knowledge. Not having that anchor dragging behind you all the time that seems to pick things up. Once the anchor's out, it just keeps picking

things up. It doesn't matter how good you think you are, so you've just got to make sure there's no anchor dragging along, picking these things up all the time, yeah, being positive too. Control what you can control, know what you can't control and try and influence the rest, including your own positive attitude.

Personal optimism, or positive thinking as evidence in this data could be perceived as control (i.e. feeling that one can achieve desired outcomes through their own actions and optimism thereby contributing to their SWB).

4.4.13.   Planning and Acting with Control over Factors

Further exploration of the data revealed that participants were utilising strategic planning, and enactment of the plan with a belief that they had some control or influence over factors in their context, as a way of working to maintain their SWB.

Nine participants (except Sam and Lawrence) made twenty similar references explicitly to planning and acting with a level of some influence over their outcomes as being a positive contributor to their SWB. All nine participants mentioned the importance of knowledge utilisation in the planning and enacting of decisions with the belief that situational outcomes could be influenced. In contrast Sam and Lawrence articulated that "events can be managed" whereas their peers articulated factors could be influenced and controlled to change outcomes. Merv and Ewan's statements typified what was articulated by the other participants. Merv shared:

Well taking time to plan and act with a knowledge that I have some control very much is a part of my sense of inner wellbeing. I consider the big picture, alignment of priorities with our core business. My well-being is heightened when you have that sense of control. Sense of control comes from having a level of knowledge about what's going on and a level of contentment that well I don't have to micromanage everything. There are people who are managing the things that are going on. So you need to have the knowledge of what's happening linked to the knowledge of who's dealing with it and what they're doing to deal with it means that your sense of wellbeing is heightened and the

need to micromanage is reduced. Another factor, I think, that contributes to my SWB is having a very tangible sense of control over your day.

Ewan remarked:

> *I think through in my head, plan the day strategically, the priorities. This takes into account knowledge of the context, the people's individual personalities, the issues, and my own self. Well I believe in the control and no-control theory, so I'm doing what I believe I can do to control the situation, manoeuvre the influential elements. In other words, I've prioritised that an email must be sent, planned and actioned this. I've emailed and sent an email off to who I think I have to email, and now I'm trying to put it aside because there's nothing else I can really do until that person responds to me. So any amount of thinking about it, any amount of unpacking of it will actually not sort it out. The reply to my email will sort it out. So I can't do anymore, so I've got to try and teach myself not to worry about it but focus on the other areas that I can control, actioning what needs to be done according to the strategic plan, but more the daily plan in my head.*
>
> *There's 90 per cent of the stuff that you can do nothing about and there's 10 per cent of the stuff you can do something about. You put your energies into the 10 per cent rather than throwing all your energy at the 90 per cent. I may never change the fact that 50 per cent of my kids will come from a home that doesn't have breakfast. So rather than spend the whole time trying to get them all to have breakfast before they come to school, I can spend 10 per cent doing something else, like maybe putting loaves of bread out in the morning when they turn up.*

Merv talked about how his planning and taking control of situations helped him to maintain his SWB. He commented:

> *You've got to be able to draw a line through the events that have finished. You've got to be able to say to yourself, I've dealt with those things and that is now closed and not dwell on it for a long time. I used to be a bad dweller and so it was very hard to shake things off. Now I'm far more clinical in terms of closing off on what's happened on the previous day or the previous week. So I*

guess that's the first thing and then the second thing is you have to have a sense that what you've done to close off those issues or those events, what you've done was not only right but it was the best - they were the best decisions. Or the best actions given the circumstances and the information in front of you at the time. So for example, we did a particularly difficult suspension last week of a long term wilfully persistent offender who's had a series of previous suspensions, has had an enormous amount of external input but hasn't given anything back. So we've reached the point now where we're at a 20 day suspension with a recommendation to exclude. To get to that point was particularly trying but having reached that point I have a sense now that we've done every single thing we could do. We've done it well, we've done it properly and the decision that's now been made is not only the right decision, it was the only decision that could be made. So there's no more dwelling on that, close it off, don't give it another thought, move on. I think you've got to be able to make that break between what's happened and what's happening, you deal with what's happening and compartmentalise what's happened as previous events or different events and let it go.

> **Researcher Memo:**
> Mmm… Merv's self-reflection of his competency in the given situation also seemed to impact here. Is this significant?

Strategically planning, utilising knowledge of the context, and maximising influence or control over elements was linked by participants as a way of working that helped them to maintenance of their SWB.

4.4.14.   Relax

Further exploration of the data revealed that participants were utilising relaxation as a way to maintain their SWB. Ten participants (not Sam) mentioned that when they felt stressed, like things were getting too much, relaxing positively contributed to their SWB as it allowed them to be more balanced and more a competent. The participants presented a variety of forms of relaxation all linking to non-related work activity that

191

they enjoyed. There was a commonality in responses with some spread in the type of relaxation enjoyed.

Lawrence mentioned how engaging in a relaxation activity helped him to cope with work stress saying:

> *There are sticky decisions that cause a lot of stress. I might get up in the middle of the night, I might have a hot drink, a MILO, I might sit and watch TV for a bit and this helps me relax so I can then think a little bit better, be more balanced and competently reach a better decision.*

Nine participants shared how relaxing with family (no mention of alcohol during this relaxing) contributed to their SWB as typified by Merv:

> *So to have that mix of laughing and being silly with my own children and laughing with adults, there was a nice balance. So that's a better way, let work problems go and focus on other things, focus on the weekends. Whatever it is laughing releases, endorphins, whatever it is, you've got to have a few laughs haven't you?*

Three participants highlighted the importance of friends in helping them to relax. Emma shared:

> *Talking to friends and it may not necessarily be, if my subjective wellbeing is low but it's about getting out and having coffee with friends or lunch with friends.*

Six participants detailed the importance of activities like exercise and fishing. Lawrence explained: *Gardening, fishing, crabbing, - I used to do swim though I've been very slack with swimming in the last few years - walking the dog and I don't think about work, I am just enjoying myself.*

The majority of the participants disclosed that holidays helped them to maintain their SWB. Ewan shared:

> *I enjoy the holidays ……..I travel every year and we do a good four and a half weeks overseas. Every couple of years I take a couple of other weeks off out*

of long service and we make it a seven week. That supports and helps me [endless]. I know that by the time - even last year when we landed I was relaxed.

Relaxation activities are associated with life satisfaction and positive affect, two components of SWB. Almost all of the activities that participants engaged in for relaxation also involved at least one other person and the importance of trusting relationships became apparent. Further examination of the findings revealed that participants were utilising networking with trusted friends as a way to maintain their SWB.

4.4.15. Networked with Trusted Others

Ten participants, all except Sam, made thirty one explicit references to networking with "trusted others" as contributing to the maintenance of their SWB. Interestingly, it emerged during many interviews that networks established by the educational system could be used for this purpose but were not be trusted and that the only networks to be used for the maintenance of SWB were trusted networks. This following comment by Merv forefronts the mistrust of principals in District Office personnel (people within the system who are expected to support and advise principals) was typical of participants in this study:

You don't want to be judged by having a phone conversation with somebody about how you're feeling. You need to be careful, how they interpret it and who they tell. Because they do tell tales, and not in a supporting way.

Kirk explained simplistically why he used trusted networks:

That's my network that I've used to get a result for me. Then along the way in conversations other people suggest things that they've been doing or have done. I talked to a good mate about [Hattie] so he gave me whole presentations on Hattie which then I've injected into this. Suddenly I look like a legend but really I've done nothing but use some of my networks and contacts. My work is lessened, my knowledge and that of my staff has grown and I inadvertently have more leisure time.

The majority of participants mentioned that their trusted network contained members of their school administration team and this team was made up predominately of other classified officers like the Deputy Principal, Head of Special Education, Business Services Manager with only one participant from a smaller schooling mentioning a classroom teacher as part of this network. Lawrence's explained:

> *Well, then I'd look at my admin staff. So, I'd look at my trust - my group around me - of who I could go to. So, it wouldn't always be - like, I always make sure that I only have a small core.*

Lawrence also remarked on utilising different types of networks depending upon the enormity of the issue:

> *So, I would go to my own little core, and I've learnt that over the years, that you only have a small core there within your workplace that you can trust implicitly and go to them. If they weren't available or something like that, and it was even too big for that, I would then have a core outside of my school that I could go to, like a mentor or someone who had been in that profession or someone who is just a good listener, and I would go to them to be able to just vent, so that I could come back to be able to do that. …. You've got to be able to draw on those people that you can trust to be able to give you that strength to be able to move forward, or give time and accept that support.*

Nine participants held a similar view stating that people in the trusted network had informal the roles that involved of questioner, facilitator, guide whose purpose was to refine the thinking of those that accessed the network. Steve articulated:

> *You need to think deeply about your network and who participates, because it's all about guiding you. It's not about giving you the answers. It's about - it's a guide, it's a process, a guide I had this situation. It's a peer, it's a colleague, and I just need to talk to somebody about it and just bounce off them, refining my thinking so have clarity around not just the issue but also my actions.*

Emma stipulated that the people she utilises in her network are trusted but they also have a conceptual understanding of the situation because they had been in similar situations:

I suppose somebody who I know will listen. Somebody who has had experience in similar situations, which we've all had, similar experiences. But, somebody I can trust, somebody who I know I could have a talk to and they won't think less of me, won't make a judgement and are happy; know that it's reciprocated, that they would ring me and know that they can.

The networks were based on trust, they were non-judgemental, but the data also made clear that competency was also a prerequisite for network membership. It is interesting at this point to consider what if a school principal is not particularly competent? Does this then mean they are excluded from networks and may be a factor in why that principal relinquishes? The answer to these ponderings is beyond this study but worth future consideration.

It appeared that the participants formed their networks very strategically and independent of formal networks. One participant explained:

There are a number of networks but they may not be formal. There's nothing formal. There is the collegial - that close buddy network. You know when your close mates are having some difficulties, so. That can extend to a less formal network of people, where somebody sometimes takes on the role just to follow that up.

According to Nev it is important to reach out so that assistance can be given in a difficult situation whilst also being honest about the details of a situation. Merv remarked:

The moment you think that, then you become the sole responsibility of fixing everything in the world and you can't do it and that'll drag you down faster than anything else in the world. So it's a matter of sharing. You know the old a problem shared is half a problem solved or something. So that's what you've got to do. There's certainly personal things that you're going to have to deal with, but at the end of the day talk to people and if something arises and if it's staff issue, get on the phone. Ring a mate up and say, look this is it but also be very, very honest with yourself about how clear that has to be.

Seven participants (see Table 4.3) clearly articulated that their trusted network included a self-selected trusted, knowledgeable mentor as captured in Nev's remark:

> *The best mentors are people that you find in your life that you like that have been able to teach you something, that you do all those things I talked about earlier. You've got respect for, they're who you've got a little bit of trust with; they can empathise with you. They're not being judgmental of you and you seem to pick them up and they walk with you. I've had one or two that ring me and I think I'm pretty chuffed that they will do that and I've got a couple of others that I ring regularly too, just to say, well look this is giving me the Toms. This is what I'm going to do. What do you think?*

All participants articulate the importance of networking as evidenced in Lawrence remark where he explained why networking is beneficial to SWB:

> *I think networking is a really positive part of our wellbeing. Networking isn't just about getting on the phone when the shit hits the fan so to speak. But at other times too, just to pick up a phone…….I'm not the - I mean there are other colleagues that are stronger networks than I am. I think networking is a healthy thing though.*

Another participant explained they did not always access their network of trusted people in person but sometimes recalled the advice of mentors and people in their group creating a virtual network discussion in their head. In probing I asked this participant: What's happening in your head? The participant responded:

> *I don't know whether it's as much hearing the voice as putting yourself in the situations where that may have happened with them or they've described situations affecting them, to get some sort of feeling of what they might do. So it's not like hearing a recipe that this did this and this.*

> *It's funny because I didn't want to mention him - I was talking to him the other day and I said yes, I'm starting to look like you and talk like you. That's how I felt I was dealing with the situation - it was one particular one where you just have to wait, you know? You had to really think through it a lot more than what you would have done. It was about a communication issue and what was*

first there wasn't really what things were all about - you know, a relationship issue between two people. But it really turned out to be a communication issue.

So it was taking that time to think through it and go, well it's no good putting them in a grievance situation or in a mediation situation because it really is about lack of communication. So I finished up talking to both of them about communication - what have you done here, what did you do, what did you hear when you should have heard, yeah, what should you have heard - and I started to sound like him. I'm going yeah, that's right, it's a bit like the way he would have done it but it allowed me to have some sort of take on what he was doing - what he had done or talked to me about - and that's how I guess I used that reflection of a mentor.

Ten participants commented on relationships with colleagues helping to maintain their SWB. These relationships were all characterised by: trust, the other person's ability to listen and where active questioning in a manner that promoted deep reflection, was the normal form of interaction. Emma's response typifies this:

I think it's the shared talk, the shared; this is what's going on at the moment. It's that level of - I'm trying to find the right word - acknowledgement perhaps and edification that okay, there's something similar in our conversations in what's happening in our lives, in around our workplace, around our relationships with our staff. There are some commonalities there and I think it's because you've actually verbalised it. You've actually put it out there on the table. Trust them. In conversation they just put in there: Have you thought about, or this would be something for you to investigate? They give you critical challenge peppered with support and it works in with your resilience level – not too much, not too little.

All participants in this study have indicated that is essential for them to be engaged in trusting, warm and supportive interpersonal relationships in order for their SWB to be maintained.

4.4.16.   Engage Self-Think Time

Further investigation of the data revealed that participants were utilising self-think time as a way of working to maintain their SWB. All of the participants made reference to ensuring self-think time as a positive contributor to their SWB with thirty eight specific references made. Self-think time refers to engaging in thinking whilst not involving anyone else. There was some commonality in participant data sets with self-think time. These commonalities included: time out on your own to just think; reconceptualise; and refine thinking utilising input from other people.

Three participants (see Table 4.3) revealed that they cognitively evaluated what was happening in their environment or context by taking time out on their own using self-think time to forward plan their day as exemplified in Merv's response:

> *When I was travelling, I had half an hour there, half an hour back, that was my thinking time and I'd mapped my entire day out in my head on the way out.*

All participants made very similar remarks about closing the door to the office when complex issues were arising, creating time to think as demonstrated by Sam:

> *I'll shut the door and just go and sit, or I'll go somewhere where I know I can have a bit of privacy. Sometimes, it might mean that I have a cry. I need to find a private place and it's just a release. I think it's a release around how unjust you feel it is.*

Several participants made reference to crying and this reference was made by both males and females (six participants made reference to crying). Some insight was given to the depth of feelings by Emma:

> *So, when those things happen, it does take a little while to - and even at that stage, I'm not in a good - my self-worth, I can look at it intellectually and say, well, this is ridiculous, because of this, this and this. You did this and you should be happy that that was your stance or the actions that you actually came up with. But, on the flip side of that, it doesn't make sense, but you still feel very open and precious - not precious - you feel, exposed, I think is the word I'm looking for.*

Three participants similarly highlighted internalising behaviours as demonstrated in Kirk's remark:

> *Males have got to go to caves, okay and that's part of life. So you've got to do that whole internal thinking to yourself. What's the worst case scenario? What's the worst that's going to happen? You've got to go all the way to the low.*

Eight participants (see Table 4.3) similarly disclosed how they work from experiencing a difficult situation, to utilising self-think time so that they can move to positive thinking. Here is what one participant articulated:

> *It's okay that you feel that way, but it's what you do when you feel that way that the actions that could have consequences. So, I think, okay, that's a bit of an epiphany for me…… You sit down and recognise that it really plays an important part in your life, your emotions, which then impacts on your wellbeing. Then you go "what do I need to do? What can I control? Who might I get help from? I can do this!*

Two participants (see Table 4.3) also shared how they keep themselves busy with other activities whilst creating self-think time. They appear to do this by compartmentalising the difficult situation in their head and then working through the idea while engaged in lower level thinking activities. Here is one respondent's example:

> *Sometimes I go for a walk and I'll go for a walk around the building early in the morning and I'll talk to the cleaners or I'll go out and see what the morning looks like. So I will alter what I'm doing. It's not so much to take my mind off those other things but it sometimes can clear it up or clarify it. I will get up and go for a walk and it's an old saying, you look around the office and think, I'm out of here.*

Ewan, Merv, Steve and Amber shared how they similarly moved their thinking almost along a continuum from the conceptualisation of a difficult situation, to self-think time which provided opportunity for deep analysis, to refinement of their thinking utilising another source and then back to their self-think time. Ewan revealed:

199

I usually talk to people. I engage people. I don't sit on things myself. I will talk them in terms about what are the issues? Making sure that they are issues and they're not just something that I've manifested in my own mind. Then I will then liaise with people about how we can best deal with those sorts of things, whether it be a parent issue, a staff issue, a kid issue. I'm not doing it on my own and I find you try and take something on, on your own, well there's only two things going to happen. You're going to win or lose and losing's not a good option because that just makes you feel worse. So I would certainly say one of my things is about making sure I've got a group of people around me who I can liaise with about some sort of solutions.

Merv revealed how he moved thinking from reactionary to positive thinking through to action taking, articulating:

You've got to be able to draw a line through the events that have finished. You've got to be able to say to yourself, I've dealt with those things and that is now closed and not dwell on it for a long time. I used to be a bad dweller and so it was very hard to shake things off. Now I'm far more clinical in terms of closing off on what's happened on the previous day or the previous week.

All participants except Sam and Lawrence talked through how they utilised the self-think time in a similar way to deconstruct events and then look at what action could be taken to assert some control or influence over the situation to create a better outcome. Steve's comment exemplifies the thinking:

I'm going to deconstruct every second of this conversation, it sounds a bit weird but you do. I think you really do. I am modelling and talking through using the mental language of my thinking and evaluation - kick off and plan and evaluate. Kick off and plan.

Emma revealed how self-reflection is linked to thinking and how the level of SWB determines the way of working chosen for maintaining SWB:

I think I might over-think it a bit at times and actually gauge whether, evaluate whether this is something that I feel I could talk to someone about or whether it's something that I need to get a handle on first and then talk to someone

about. Usually though if it's - lots of times I think I can deal with it, when my wellbeing is low, my subject wellbeing is low, I think I can deal with it through just being still, finding some still time to basically do nothing but just think, be quiet.

The data revealed that in complex situations where negative emotions (such as anger or hurt) were aroused then participants moved to locations where they could be alone (such as their office). They then engaged self-think time with the purpose of: (a) self-regulating their emotions so that they had some control over their emotions; (b) evaluating the need to move their thinking from reactionary to strategic thinking; and (c) then actioning these strategies so that they could obtain the desired outcome.

4.4.17. Draw on Self-knowledge

All of the participants made reference to self-knowledge as a positive contributor to their SWB with thirty four specific references made. Arising from the data were the concept of self-knowledge derived from both prior experiences and from reflective thinking, as illustrated here by Ella and Steve. Ella remarked:

I think back to before 40, when I didn't have that, it was just me, - it came back to that you weren't reflecting on, you were just doing stuff. But now, you're doing stuff but there's got that deeper meaning for you and you want to have sustainability and you want to have quality so you're thinking about how you're doing things. Before, you just did them because you didn't have that experience to draw on or sometimes you didn't see the whole vision, the whole picture of where it was heading to.

Now, I do think - I never thought I'd ever say it, but that wisdom of later years, if you're able to be that really great self-reflective thing, it really helps you then get a deeper meaning out of life and out of your profession. I can now be self-aware and self-reflect whilst I am in the present, currently talking to someone. Years ago that awareness only came after the event not during the event.

All participants referred to self-awareness helping them to maintain their SWB. All participants demonstrated self-awareness, both in their nonverbal communication in

the face to face interviews (which I had captured in my researcher journal notes) and also it emerged in the transcripts as exemplified by Steve:

> *You know, keep thinking, keep watching, be aware but also of yourself. So it's really about a heightened awareness of the goal, the audience, yourself and I think that's very self-actualising. You need to do this all the time. It gives you the opportunity to understand more of the factors at play in a given scenario.*

Emma referred to self-awareness in relation to recognising low energy and also recognising how to re-energise:

> *You need self-awareness of when the fuel package is getting low for want of a better term. Yeah, I think that I'm cognisant to the fact that sometimes the batteries get a bit low. I think we're blessed in our work that we have a holiday every 10 weeks.*

All participants made reference to the importance of knowing their own strengths and weaknesses as exemplified by Ella:

> *Well I'm ISTJ* [Myers Briggs personality type] *so I've got to think through things, so that's just my preferred style. So usually I'm very well-planned, I will have lists, I've thought through things before I want to do them. I'm not good at just standing up and reciting, although it does come out. I much prefer to know exactly how I'm going to approach things and that's how I think through things as well so I can be a change agent in the areas of my work that are really important, you know, making a difference for the kids.*

Six participants (see Table 4.3) also discoursed similar deep introspective examples of reflected appraisals having impact on their SWB, initially negatively but then through positive thinking the focus becomes how can I make this better. Steve illustrated this:

> *When you can talk people through that - what made me aware? Just the physical stuff and also being aware that it was in a confrontational situation and I had to step back to allow that person to continue to get to a point of realisation saying m'hm I'm hearing myself now and everybody else around the room it was validated. Doesn't initially make you feel good, you need to*

take a good look at the ugly, then positive thinking kicks in, knowledge of yourself. You can survive, you can change. Okay so now what? What do we do to help you to get to be where you've got to be to improve what we're on about? When you do begin to improve, you are self-reflecting, focusing awareness on it and feeling a little piece joy at each improvement.

It sounds harsh but even with people I've become quite friendly with, it's about checking yourself. It's like hang on, is this too familiar? What role am I in? Do they understand what role I'm in in this setting? So it's about being cautious in that sense. When I'm having a conversation with someone it's like taking temperature, really. I think we all do it instinctively. I think I've just over time been a bit more explicit about it.

I probably don't pick up on subtleties very well. So having that habit of checking in with myself about how it's going has been useful as a strategy for me in conversations. Then there's a lot of checking about my body language. How am I physically presenting? What's my voice tone? Am I a bit nervous in my voice? Possible? What's not possible? What's the worst scenario? What are the good scenarios?

Steve also shared insight into how understanding your own strengths and weaknesses leads to further learning and development of strategies and an understanding of the self. He commented:

So I would have thought for me it probably kicked in earlier because I learnt that I wasn't going to put myself in that position because I would have thought if I self-reflected I know my strength is my weakness. If I want to make a difference in the lives of kids I need to use all my qualities to my best advantage to enact a change. I mean I think humanistic is a good trait to have, but it's also a trait that can hurt you a lot as well. So I had to learn perhaps not a defence mechanism, but a strategy in dealing with the fact that I'm a humanistic person. I think the subjective good wellbeing - principals have to have - and we've talked about this before – it's a strong sense of self.

All of the participants in this study have utilised their critical self-reflection to develop their self-knowledge, in the belief that it would make them a better principal.

Participants' SWB may be maintained as they self- reflect evaluating that they are satisfied with life, seeing their work as worthwhile.

4.4.18.   Self-Talk and the Dialogical Self

Several participants made comments about how they controlled the tone of their self-talk, ensuring that it was positive. I queried how they did this and Steve explained:

> *Whatever it was that caused the negative self-talk has happened, it's occurred; you've got to put it in context and move on from there. Yes, it's a choice. It's a choice. It has to be a choice. You have to choose to say right; I need to move on from here. Well, it could be and it can be somebody who says something, but it also can be an experience or not necessarily that other person talking to you, but observing a situation and thinking, well gosh, I really don't need to be here because everybody has some sort of challenge that they're facing and so therefore get over yourself.*

Ewan talked about self-talk but also in relation to self-awareness and how this way of working helped maintain his SWB:

> *I know that when you do the head talk, I actually need to physically talk to somebody. Something is not quite right and I am anxious.*

Seven participants (see Table 4.3) described self-talk or 'head talk' (meaning the same thing) and worked this way in what appeared to be a personalised debrief following a difficult situation. The purpose of the head talk was to calm down so that less emotion was attached to the event. This allowed them to then take a measure of control in the situation and think through it in a logical manner. Emma shared:

> *The head talk is where you're driving home, or you've got the ten minutes after whatever situation has occurred and the head talk is more about I can't believe that's just happened. Why am I feeling this way? I should be - it's actually berating yourself a little bit, saying, I shouldn't be feeling this way, I should know better by now that I need to put that in a little compartment and not let it get to me. It's that type of head talk that you have. It's like don't let it get to you. Put it in its place. That's the type of talk I'm talking about.*

Because it's the thing that's put it in its place, don't let it get to you, calm down, yes that was awful, but don't be a baby. Don't be too emotional about it, because it shouldn't be personal. Don't take it so personally. It's all that sort of stuff. So, that's the talk that - that's to calm me down. Put it in a compartment where it lives. So, it's trying to get in charge of the emotions. The head talk would be about trying to calm those emotions, try and get yourself in a calmer situation where the emotions aren't the things talking; that you can actually try and step back a bit and look at it from a thinking point of view, not just purely an emotional response.

Numerous participants articulated that cognitive evaluation using self-talk allows for more rationality or perspective, as exemplified by Steve:

*T*herefore it's easy to have that conversation because there's a bit more rationality in that where being real with yourself about what's possible? What's not possible? What's the worst scenario? What are the good scenarios?*

Merv articulated:

So really important, self-talk and the little mantra, it will be what it will be, gets you through lots of things. Because at the end of the day, it means you're not catastrophising.

> **Researcher Memo:**
> Mmm… It appears as if self-talk is linked with a cognitive evaluation and decisional process.

Steve disclosed that he utilised self-talk as a way of working to help with the anxiety, along with social comparison where he compared himself to someone he perceived as worse off or less able. Steve also embraced agency to bring about a change from negative self-talk to positive self-talk:

I talk self-talk as well. I think there's a lot of self-talk, when something happens. I'm an incredible worrier and I think I've had anxiety issues for a long time and undiagnosed, unacknowledged. But I do worry a lot and I've always worried a

lot. So I've probably had anxiety, and over - my self-talk has been important……..So self-talk's a big one. My self-talk is it will be what it will be, and that stops me worrying about possible negative end points. Self-talk's been my own thing. Talking to myself - I did some cognitive behaviour therapy reading, and I thought I was getting a bit too anxious at one point, with some conflict with one of the Heads of Department, who was very into the union and I felt very targeted. I thought, this is not about me. It's about someone else's behaviour. So how do I fix? I did some reading, and I worked out that my self-talk was really negative. It was - short strand thought was the same thought over and over and over again. I recognised that if I said, this is it. This is why; this is what can be done about it. This is what I'm going to do about it. I lengthened the thought, and it stopped it from jumping around in my head. So my self-talk really got me through that. I think that was, again, just reading about possible approaches and that mental health thing was a very important part to what I've journey - my little journey over the last three years.

Ella explained how she had over years trained her self-talk to be more positive:

When Self-talk is not as well developed it can be more negative but you change this over time, self-talk comes out is in situations that are extremely negative and often the self-talk can be very negative as well and if it is negative it keeps you down. You need to deliberately train your Self-talk to be positive, lift you up, help your to rebalance. I think that at times self-talk can be and has been in the past like you idiot, why did you do that, but the other side of that is, don't beat yourself up about it. There's something to learn from this situation.

Merv revealed how self-talk is a way of working to strategically plan his day.

So for me, it's all about self-talk. So to me, self-talk can drive you mad sometimes but I do that all the time. So on my way to school, like in the mornings as I'm leaving home, I'll talk through, then, in my own mind then. All the things that I need to be able to do for the day and talk up within myself how I'm going to look at that. It is different to recall because there is a justified narrative around everything, it's language rich. So I'm always saying things like oh I've got a really difficult, challenging interview that I've got to be able to do of a teacher today to be able to call on their behaviour and what they've

done. Right, how am I going to look at that, how am I going to do that? I always
say to myself what can I draw on, what can I use in the past in my professional
life to help me with that?

Ella also revealed how self-talk with two voices helped her to work through the
selection of more appropriate actions in complex situations:

So I'm always talking that up, thinking well, have you done this today? Rightio,
if you're going to do that well you're stupid. So I'll always say those things in
my head all the time and for people who probably know me, they'll always say
I bet you you're thinking about, you know, and I'll say yeah, I am. I need to be
able to keep reflecting on that. So it's a really good tool, I think, that self-
reflection, and talk up in yourself, talking it through - self-talk.

The data revealed that participants were utilising Self-talk as a way of working to
maintain their SWB. All of the participants made reference to self-talk as a positive
contributor to their SWB with ninety specific references made. Self-talk ranged from
one voice being heard in a participant's head to multiple voices that were engaged in
a dialogue controlled by the participant. Self-talk had different tones, some more
assertive than others. Participants who used more than one voice of identity in relation
to their self-talk disclosed that Self-talked developed as a result of a very difficult
situation and a desire for success.

4.4.19.   Engage the Dialogical Self

During the interviews eight participants (see Table 4.3) revealed that when they were
cognitively evaluating a situation they were having internal dialogue. The dialogical
self is the term used in this study to describe the action of a person who is engaged in
internal dialogue. Using this dialogue appeared to help participants make better
decisions and be a more competent principal contributing to the maintenance of their
SWB, as the internal dialogue helped them to mitigate negative outcomes. In this
dialogue two or more voices were described by participants as being present in their
self-talk. Ella shared that there were two voices in their head and at times both voices
communicated different things:

Yeah it is, it's like talking back to each other and to do that I have drawn on like when I haven't had the best results of something. So I'll quickly - like as though you're going back in time, a rewind, and thinking oh, when I did that, you know, when I was that person doing that, that didn't work. Now, yeah I remember I'm going to do that, you know? So - or when I read that - so it is two people talking to each other. Like, you know, the things that if you weren't going to achieve that, what would happen and if you did achieve it this way, all the good things that'll come from that. So it's back and forth all the time, thinking about it all, yeah. Then if I haven't come - and sometimes I'll come to oh God, I don't even know where to be able to go next and I'm back talking, I'll think well, who's someone I can go to, now, that could help me, then, work through that situation. So I will say you need to be able to go and see whatever or you'll need to just go home and have a rewind. Just sit down, and chill out. So it is, two people talking in my head the whole time.

Upon further discussion Ella realised that there were more than two voices in dialogue:

Funny you say that. Sometimes it would, so I have me being two people - the positive and the negative, you know, and doing it - and I probably would then have those mentors in my life would be the other voices. So it would be that in that - like you slot into another thing. It might be my mum or my dad or it might be another mentor, professionally, that I would have had. So years ago I had an inspector who was a great mentor to me and I draw on what he used to say there or probably for me, I probably wouldn't have too many other mentors. I'd have lots of friends within the profession to call on, but not someone I go back to. So probably like yeah, two voices strong and then for a special thing I'd maybe two others that would come in to maybe give me advice.

When asked: When the voices come in do they have their own voice? So you're hearing their voice or your own?

Yeah I am, yeah. It's funny, yeah, I suppose it would be. I hadn't thought of it that way. It would be, it'd be me identifying in my head that rightio, what would they say to me? If they were looking at me now doing this, what would their

insight be and then they would talk. It would be me thinking back to knowing them so well that they would say that. Oh rightio, no, I'll do that.

Researcher Memo:

Mmm… Is this self-dialogue with other voices a strategy for very deep critical reflection? Is it part of some sort of process?

The eight participants described the dialogical self in a very similar way asserting it is like a virtual conversation with different people that occurs in the head, with snippets of other voices. Ella explained:

> *Because I probably - the other part of me, like the positive and negative part - the positive would be saying well, remember, that da, da, dum said this? Oh, rightio and then I'd then think what did he say? So then it'd be in the voice of that person of how would be manage that? Oh, he might have said this. Oh yeah - and then I think well, that's him. So I've pictured him in my mind, pictured what he would be saying and that'd be talking back to that upbeat me, you know, being able to try and manage that situation. Then the other negative part would be then saying well, I don't know, that probably wouldn't work out. Have you thought about this? You know?*

> *That'd be me saying oh, yeah, I better, you know, so like you're talking that through the whole time. Sometimes I've got to be really careful that when I'm in the present of that situation where I'm trying to manage that, that I'm not going back to those while I'm trying to manage that situation because then sometimes that could actually skew how you're going to work through that present part. So I always like to have that before and after and I try to be able to train myself not to be able to sit there and not be in the present with that person who I'm trying to be able to manage, so that I'm not listening and I'm not having the capability to be able to coach them or whatever it might be.*

I asked participants how they engaged the voices and Steve explained:

> *Actually, they're just part of me. I don't even have to - you're not calling on them, you're just - it's probably when I self-reflect. So when I've finished a task or when I'm about to do a task it automatically comes in so it's a way that I*

actually think through how I'm going to manage something. So the voices just start straight away, yes.

Amber said that the voices come in when:

I start asking myself questions saying, is this going where I want - evaluating the process.

Merv disclosed that he deliberately engaged the voices for planning purposes and that the voices were usually enacted when the participant was by themselves:

Probably in a quiet place, like it'd be in my car, like driving to school, coming back from school. It'd be like if I'm in my office and sometimes now, as I'm getting older, I probably have to close the door just to be able to think. I don't want to have that distraction, you know, and because it's so busy for me, my professional life, where one backs onto the other straight away. I need to be able to turn it off until I'm ready otherwise I'm not going to get clarity of meaning about what I need, to be able to pace myself through that.

Like just say for example just now I was having a conversation with my Deputy about the bully that I've just been dealing with and he made a comment on how I was managing him - his perception of how I was managing him earlier. So in my head then, I can say I bet you he's going to say - I could even perceive how he was going to say something, so and in my head that person, I bet you he's going to say this. Now, are you ready for this? Now, what are you going to say? How are you going to do that, you know?

Steve shared how he engaged the voices and how often he engaged them:

Probably all the time. I'm constantly doing it the whole time so there's probably never a time - my head's always busy, where it's turning it off, turning it on, doing whatever in my personal and my professional life. I have some tricky people that I've got to be able to deal with in my personal life or things that I'm engaged in, personally and conflict of interest, I'm always constantly knowing now, they're going to be thinking this if you do that.

The participants all articulated that they could actively engage the voices and turn them off but sometimes these dialogical voices just occurred without apparent explicit decision making to work in this way.

Ella shared:

> *I would just say look, I need to be on the ball here. I need to be able to be professional here. Just shut up now and let me work my way through this and I'll sometimes say in my head, I've really - I've got all this stuff from you organised this morning, thanks for that, but off it go. I'm just thinking in my head that was great, that really helped me. You know? Or I'll come back later and I'll have this de-brief in my head.*

Several participants talked about the voices coming in almost uninvited during intense emotional situations. The voices appeared to help to moderate what was actually said, thereby mitigating potentially worse outcomes for the participants. This is demonstrated in the below extract from Merv when he remarked:

> *Do not - don't go there, do not even go down that track and just shut up, zip it and just move away. Like go away, get yourself into gear. So it will do that talk, you know, when I have a - when I think I know I'm going to blurt it out and sometimes when I'm in a really difficult thing like that, I'll just say you just need to be able to zip it.*

I asked Merv if he always listened to the advice given by the voices and he responded:

> *No. Mostly I do. Probably as I've got older I have, but in the early times, no, then I really beat myself up because when I don't listen to it it'll always blow. I'm a real control freak, I'll admit that, and I'll control my emotions. So therefore it'd be a rarity that it would and then I really beat myself up about that and say oh, that was stupid, why did you go and do that? You've gone and blown it. I need to do that sometimes, to be able to not be as a control freak.*

Ella described how she acquired additional voices in to her dialogical self-talk. This appeared to occur through both experience and deep reflection when a complex issue with a high level of potential stress if the issue was not well handle:

Probably only two, and that'd be the positive of me and then the one working off that, you know, having that conversation there all the time. So probably two, and then I got into a bigger school and that, so then it was that I developed - probably - because I didn't actually have a great mentor until I got into the early 40s, where that I drew on that, then, and realised that that was a great way to be able to get quality in your professional life, yes.

So, probably then it became three, when I needed more help, and then it would have been more then, drawing on those experiences and then realising then, the value of family and my mum and dad, thinking oh well, they're getting older and so then they mean a lot in my life. Then those voices came where you thinking all the time well, I need to be able to think about them and value what they've done for me and what are the messages that they're trying to be able to do and it made meaning. So some of the voices take on their characteristics and voice tones to advise me when I need it so I actually make a more considered decision, considering more perspectives.

Ella indicated that voices have different tones and one of the voices is a positive voice and this positive voice strongly comes into play when the participant's SWB is low. The positive voice seems to come in uninvited and very strongly:

No, I think there's probably only ever one positive voice. But there would be probably more negatives. Sometimes when I'm in a really deep, dark hole and then the negatives, there might be - yes probably my worst - you know, in the last year they'd be saying well you should go and give it all up, you know, ra, ra. So they'd be saying those things. They're probably even more, now I think of it, that for me, when you've got your deepest, darkest time in your life that you think you probably have lots of negatives but your positive, I've probably only ever had one positive and that is the strongest core of me all the time.

When you're travelling along well, you might only have the one negative one. Therefore I'm always that same thing there all the time and then when I face a really difficult situation professionally, there probably sometimes would be more than one negative, when it's really, really difficult. Well maybe the negatives would be my perceptions, maybe, of what those people would think or what they would - maybe the negatives are them talking through that. Maybe

it is. I suppose it might be, because then in the professional, maybe in your worst, darkest time, it'd be the people that would be involved in that situation talking - yeah, it could be, talking back and how they perceive that. So maybe it is, I don't know, I haven't gone that far into it.

Kirk also explained that self-talk helps improve his SWB if his SWB is a bit low:

I worked out within my own thing, what I need to be able to do. So I'm really clear about that. So when I'm on a low I'm constantly talking back and forth and saying, you've got to get yourself together here. I could go - and I can picture - I can go into the corner and cry and lose it all, but what's that and then the other will say well, what's that going to do for you?

It seems that when SWB is low there comes a point of awareness or awakening where the participant uses very firm self-talk to reflect upon a difficult question:

But with the physical stuff, realising that it was affecting my wife as well, that was a big thing. That wasn't me just going through it, it was her watching me go through it that I took a while to get. The rational me was saying, what the hell is wrong with you? Nothing is happening to you, that's me, what about me? So your self-talk becomes very important.

Steve also alluded to a point of some awareness that when SWB was low negative self-talk was almost taken over by the positive voices which became louder and stronger.

I guess it is a choice that you are not really aware you are making. It's a choice. It has to be a choice. You have to choose to say right; I need to move on from here. Well, it could be and it can be somebody who says something, but it also can be an experience or not necessarily that other person talking to you, but observing a situation and thinking, well gosh, I really don't need to be here because everybody has some sort of challenge that they're facing and so therefore get over yourself.

Researcher Memo:

Mmm… It appears to be a decisional process. Mmm.

Kirk articulated that the use of self-talk was about increasing control over what he personally did, and control over situations, so he felt more competent. Kirk articulated:

> *So the self-talk is about controlling my natural responses nine times out of ten. Because I can't control them but I can control my natural responses. Doing some work with growth coaching, I think I've put the ego in the back pocket a little bit. It's coaching with a purpose, it's not mentoring. It's more directed than coaching, this is where I want you to go so what questions I want to ask you to see that you're important and how do I need to behave during that time. So it's really about a heightened awareness of the goal, the audience, yourself and I think that's very self-actualising.*

Steve, Ella, Merv, and Amber also disclosed that the dialogical voices were occurring while they were engaged in other tasks. One participant shared that they were using self-talk while I was interviewing them. Steve explained:

> *It helps me slow down the interaction as well... There is never a group discussion so there's no [sort of crisis] going on. But it's just definitely me asking and responding and testing. Even this morning swimming, I found myself-thinking in full sentences and reasons and elaborate thought patterns. They are definitely language-rich rather than pictures and things.*

> *Yeah or I would have had the very clear vision at the beginning of the conversation and I'll be checking - like reassuring myself, it could be. It could be on a number of levels. It's okay that it's going somewhere different. Let him talk. There are many ways to skin a cat. The way they want to do it is better because they'll be doing it, not me. That sort of assurance that I don't have to be right and my plan that I had didn't have to be the one that ends up happening.*

> *It's interesting because I think people see that happening or people observe that happening. You know what you wanted. You said what you wanted before you went into that meeting and look what's happened, it's different - but the outcome's the same. So I got what I wanted. It's not about being a control freak, it's about being well prepared really. So there's a lot of assurance in those conversations when they've gone well. There's a lot of evaluation of a person's*

motivation or emotion when they've not gone well. Then there's a lot of checking about my body language. How am I physically presenting? What's my voice tone? Am I a bit nervous in my voice?

Steve also described a third voice as an intellectual voice which seemed to deepen his thought patterns, and his reasoning which in turn improves the quality of his decision making. Steve articulated:

Then probably the last one is the more intellectual level which is saying okay, crossing things off the list and testing out new theories in my head about where it could go. What's the outcome of this conversation if it's going that way? That worst case scenario, management that you tend to do when you're a principal. This isn't going how I wanted it to go but look at where I need it to go. Is it going somewhere different? What do I have to do?

I find myself doing it quite deliberately when I'm talking to people. Sometimes it actually distracts me from the listening so it's like, what'd you say again? I was actually thinking about what you said in a bit more detail. I tell them what I've been thinking and they find it quite interesting that I'm really listening.

> Researcher Memo:
>
> Mmm… This seems like tacit knowledge emerging here.

All of the participants using head talk, self-talk or the dialogical self, where unaware to the extent that they used it. All were also unaware that other principals were using head talk, self-talk or the dialogical self as a way of maintaining their SWB. A typical comment was:

I've never thought about this.

It appears that many participants are using high levels of processing with self-talk or the dialogical self being engaged at the same time that the participants are involved in a conversation with external others. One participant outlined a negative implication of using self-talk whilst engaging with other external parties:

I fail to listen - hear everything that someone's talking to me - so I can get very engrossed in the options and opportunities so I'll be like, what, what'd you say? They go, who else is here? I'm mindful of that, I think, not getting too wound up in it. But remember most of the stuff talks about my response, not about the outcome. If it's about the effective range, if it's about how I'm behaving, then I'm listening fairly intently and picking up a lot of signs but if it's about action, then it could be a bit different.

All except one of the participants who said they use self-talk or the dialogical self, asserted that they had begun to do so only when they had been in the principalship for a few years and were striving to control or influence more complex situations. Only one participant said their use of self-talk had started at age ten following a traumatic event. All participants who reported using self-talk or the dialogical self, articulated that it triggered in response to a perceived complex and stressful event involving other people and it just seemed to occur as a result of deep questioning and reflection. Here is what one participant said:

Tasks, not a problem. People, a bit more of a problem. Planning and writing and being articulate, it's not a problem. It's bringing people into that world without frightening them away. I've got people who tell me all the time, I don't know how you do it, I couldn't keep up with you. I seem to process information very quickly now on multiple levels.

In order to ensure that self-talk does not become too busy and remains rational as a basis to inform future decision making, Steve advised:

There comes a point that you have to recognise that the voices can also not be good for your well-being. You have to have a sense that what you've done to close off those issues or those events, what you've done was not only right but it was the best - they were the best decisions. So lessen the mind traffic or too many ideas are being simultaneously explored. So there's no more dwelling on that, close it off, don't give it another thought, move on. I think you've got to be able to make that break between what's happened and what's happening, you deal with what's happening and let it go.

Once participants have started to utilise self-talk with multiple voices, it appears to be used more often and more thoughtfully and strategically, rather than just in complex situations where conflict may be involved.

> *So the mental talk and the mental planning probably starts at the point where the task is defined. Whether that's presentation of PD to staff, for example we've got a big PD after now, this afternoon and the process of mental talk started when we first made the decision to run PD. It continues at different times by just popping into my head. So, a few days ago I had a conversation in my head about what my speech would be to open the PD because we've got a visiting presenter coming this afternoon. ..... The sense of inner wellbeing is heightened when you have that sense of control. Sense of control comes from having a level of knowledge about what's going on and a level of contentment that well I don't have to micromanage everything. There are people who are managing the things that are going on.*

It appears that some knowledge is needed in order to use multiple voices. Steve shared:

> *So you need to have the knowledge of what's happening linked to the knowledge of who's dealing with it and what they're doing to deal with it means that your sense of wellbeing is heightened and the need to micromanage is reduced.*

Engaging the dialogical self in order to help maintain SWB requires the user to regularly engage in a certain pattern of thinking before they enter an actual situation. Ella explicitly explained how a dialogic culture contributed to SWB and how self-awareness was linked to SWB:

> *That's probably when three voices come in, so it's me, what I'm doing, saying well this how I should be doing this. Then sometimes I'll have a third voice coming in and that's when I let it come in.....So then that'll be their voice. I'll have that little conversation here that you know, that's my perception of how I should be. That's me wanting to go ahead and then I'll bring in that other one to say well, this is what they would think that - other person - when you go down that track, if you did that. Well, I allow the voices to be able to talk, I allow them. I think that's fine. I allow them to be able to be part of my life. I relax in that and internally - I mean, I pick up on things, internally, for me, like that I'm not travelling well, like so I'd voice that inside to be able to say*

- so I'd listen to them, I suppose as wise people. So for me, that's a strength with inside, that you've got to - and that's my positive and negative talking all the time to be able to say you've got to do this, you've got to be able to get through this, you've got to be able to appear as though you're doing it. Appears the word sometimes, but then inside you're jostling all the time to be able to say what can I do about that, then, to make sure that I maintain that and don't get into a hole. I know myself, there's a deep strength there that I can do it. I will get back on top of it and do it.

The presence of constant very deep self-reflection also appears evident in all of the participants who are utilising multi voices in the self-dialogue. When asked how does deep self-talk help you and help your wellbeing Amber responded:

Because you're always just working it through your head. It's not like you're sitting there going - yeah, sometimes you go well I have no idea where to go to next. But you know, you're constantly moving forward. There are times when I'll go - that self-talk, I just go that self-talk's hopeless because I'm getting nowhere here. That you acknowledge that, and even once you've acknowledged that you kind of go right I need to…

It also appears evident from what participants have articulated that not only are they utilising numerous ways of working to maintain their SWB but that these are utilised in a strategic and procedural manner that allows for fluid flexibility.

> Researcher Memo:
>
> Mmm… Participants, in their ways of working, irrespective of whether they used one way or multiple ways of working, were all involved in decision making. There appears to be multiple processes emerging that are decisional and reflective.

4.5. Section Four – Summary

This chapter introduced the research findings organised under sections addressing the first three research questions.

Section one explored data from the research question: How do principals conceptualised their SWB? In exploring this research question with participants, Diener's (2006) definition of SWB (around which the literature revealed a great deal of consensus) was shared with participants and they were invited to explore it, agree or disagree with it, and then develop and explain their own definition of SWB. The participants in this study explained their concept of SWB as consisting of same three components evidenced in Diener's definition:

1. life satisfaction
2. positive affect (pleasant emotions)
3. low level negative moods.

Participants also made explicit mention of the need for adequate sleep as being a part of health and necessary for SWB. They valued sleep because they believed it allowed them to think clearly and deal with the complexities of their role. If they did not obtain adequate sleep this also worried them and they became anxious about not sleeping.

Studies in the field (Diener & Chan, 2011) show that health can impact SWB, however health is not a specific component of SWB. All participants made comment (which linked to research by Tanton, Mohanty, & Hogan, 2012), regarding a perceived a tipping point to their SWB articulating that if a significant amount of negative impactors were simultaneously present in work life and home life than their SWB was "*in danger*" or "*at risk*" and this results in the person having a "*complete melt down*"; "*break down*" or "*going under*".

Section Two explored data from the research question: What were the factors that impact upon SWB? It is important to note that eight participants articulated that a lack of trust in their supervisor negatively impacted their SWB and only one participant articulated the importance of a good relationship with their supervisor as contributing to their SWB. The data revealed that the organisational culture does not support what

principals believe that they require in order to maintain their SWB (such as trusting relationships with their supervisors and supervisor support).

Section Three examined data from the research question: What strategies or processes were currently or could be utilised to maintain SWB? The data revealed that principals had ways of working rather than just strategies and processes for maintaining their SWB. For some events the principals appeared to use certain similar ways of working which resulted in higher SWB, such as engaging, positive self-talk.

The data in sections two and three revealed that principals like all other people, experience a range of moments, (events / situations / interactions) such as a conversation with a colleague. The participants in this study used these experiences (applying tacit knowledge) to inform their way of working. They evaluated the moments in either positive or negative terms, against their own individual subjective standard of what each individual believed was appropriate. The evaluation that principals were initiating appeared to be on-going, where they were constantly evaluating their own performance against the achievement standard and their core motivators, as a way of working. It seemed that the question which they kept asking themselves was something like: Am I running this school in a way that produces positive outcomes for students, staff and the broader community? It was a way in which individuals could self-determine their own competency. If the answer to the question was in the affirmative (yes), then the individual felt satisfied with his or her performance. They felt as if they were acting in a manner that was consistent with their own perception of a competent principal. In terms of SWB it appeared that when the individual evaluated their performance as competent, this had a positive impact on SWB. At this point I am beginning to understand what the participants are doing:

1. Each individual had a unique perspective as to what constituted competency.
2. The participants were constantly evaluating their own performance against what they perceived a 'competent principal' would do. Thus while all appeared to be engaged in ongoing processes of evaluation, each was doing so against a self-defined measure of what he/she considered a 'competent principal' would do.
3. The process of evaluation seemed to be occurring constantly. Most of the time it seemed to happen 'below the level of conscious awareness'. However the

principals became very aware of this evaluation, if they had arrived at a negative evaluation.

Therefore evaluation could be positive or negative and also seemed to vary in impact where some were very positive, others were very negative, and some appeared to have minimal impact as the concept of competent was subjective. Furthermore, because the perceptions of competence were self-determined, what was very negative for one participant may be only slightly negative to another participant.

As part of being analytical the question then needs to be asked: How do principals self-define competency? Eleven principals were involved in this study and if we acknowledge that all eleven are different it seems reasonable to assume that all eleven will utilise a different definition of competency. Whilst I am not posing that the definitions were the same the data revealed that all eleven principals based there self-defined competency standard on the belief that their role as a principal was to make a positive difference in the lives of the students and have positive relationships with staff and parents.

When principals evaluated that they had not met this competency standard, this impacted their SWB. Therefore a negative impactor becomes a negative impactor when the individual concludes that the outcome is going to have a negative impact upon:

1. the lives of students; and or
2. their competency; and or
3. positive relationships with staff and parents.

A principal will not always be successful in attaining their Primary Core Motivator (resulting in the evaluation: *"This is worthwhile work")* and when it can't be achieved (e.g., the death of a child) then the principal takes deliberate action where the Self-Core Motivator (resulting in the evaluation: *"I am worthwhile doing this work"*) is now about maintaining the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (e.g., access a counsellor; debrief with a mentor to obtain emotional support) in order to perform their role as principal and be able to help others.

When the participants in this study evaluated the moments against a 'standard of what a competent principal should do' and the evaluation was in a positive manner, it enabled their SWB as they: experienced positive affect (i.e., happy with a decision that they made); and /or experienced low level negative moods (i.e., like frustration and anger); and/ or felt satisfied with life. Principals saw themselves as doing a good job because of their actions (i.e., making a difference in the lives of students and others) and this enabled their positive SWB.

As a consequence of a negative evaluation of the moment (i.e., impactor), participants utilised particular ways of working in an attempt to resolve the 'situation' consistent with their core motivation so their SWB could be maintained. For the purposes of this study a positive impactor is defined as that which enhances a person's SWB as a consequence of a positive evaluation of a moment. A positive impactor was linked to a way of working intended to achieve the core motivator and enable the person to make a positive evaluation of their competency and therefore feel satisfied with life or feel positive affect. This may involve relatively minor action such as re-thinking through a situation or it may require substantial strategising and on-going action.

Section Four provided a summary of the chapter and here I have chosen to summarise the emerging findings from research questions one, two, and three as these findings help with the interpretation of data relating to the fourth research question (explored in Chapter 5) which focuses on the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB. The majority of participants appeared to be using decisional processes, constructing professional repertoires of practice through a reflective critique of their own and others experiences. This knowledge was acquired through deep reflection and the embracement of predictive forethought and use of a dialogic culture. This will be further discussed in Chapter Five where data from the fourth research question is explored, regarding the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB. As part of the dialogic culture that has emerged there appears to be three specific processes occurring in relation to the maintenance of SWB and these processes will be discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER FIVE – THE DYNAMICS OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ROLE, WORK AND SWB

5.1.   Introduction

In Chapter Four I focused on the presentation and discussion of the data in relation to how school principals maintain their SWB, specifically presenting data relating to the first three research questions. In this chapter I present data that relates specifically to the fourth research question:

> *What are the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB?*

In this study the term dynamics is taken to mean the pattern or activity that becomes evident in how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB. The participants in this study were specifically a group of experienced school principals and in this chapter they will be referred to as principals.

In this chapter some principals provided detailed responses with considerable similarity in how they conceptualised their role. The data reveals that the participants are engaging in ways of thinking and ways of working where they use evaluation as a central component of how they maintain their SWB.

5.2.   Definition of Role

While principals conceptualised their role in very similar ways, there was also a breadth and depth in the responses. Here I have tried to capture the general consensus of what the role of a principal is seen to be by the principals and also reflect their divergent views.

All eleven principals articulated that the essence of their role was helping children as exemplified by Sam, Evan and Amber.

Sam said:

> *I'm here to **help kids**.*

Evan asserted:

> *I think there's that **shared view of leadership** among principals and it is simply - 'for the children'. Working with your **community and supporting people** to provide a safe environment for children to learn.*

Amber shared:

> *My job is to do the **best I can for each and every child** in this school and that means if I'm going to have a big impact on each child's learning and their future, then it also means making sure that everybody is delivering what they should be delivering. If it's a teacher, it's actually that they are very focused on the best that they can do and the best strategies and their pedagogy and encouraging each child and supporting each child, and the same with teacher aides. In terms of the office staff, it's around keeping the nuts and bolts together. **Everybody has a role** to play but the biggest focus should always be learning.*

All eleven principals articulated that their role was about running the school, dealing competently with whatever issue arose, as typified by Ewan's comment:

> *My role is the **smooth running of the school**. No matter how difficult the community, no matter how bad the staff situation you've been landed in to, historically. Then it's still your problem, because it's the smooth running of the school and you best do it well or you're in a whole world of trouble with no support from above.*

All eleven principals articulated that to be a principal you need to be competent and that this competency (i.e., running the school well) usually developed with maturity in the principalship. All principals evaluated their performance linking self-reflective practice to the concept of competency. Steve's comment typified this:

> *Leadership maturity is needed to be a **competent principal** at a large school, where principals do **reflect on their own performance** or behaviours around their performance. **How can I do it better?** What's wrong with what I'm doing? Why isn't - why aren't things changing? For me here, we've - I question my **own performance** in the same way, as a principal. I was saying, well why have I ignored attendance? Why aren't I dealing with that person's performance?*

224

*Or why isn't my expectation explicit enough? ... So now, I'm doing my job and saying - like that performance. Not impressed with that performance. How about you fix that - and walking away thinking, yeah, that's what I'm supposed to do....Our job as a principal is to manage the worst-case scenario and mitigate what ever happening. You **need experience for the complex situations** that unravel in large schools.*

Merv revealed that:

> *How I do my job has improved with age and experience.... Because I self-reflect. I have gotten better at being a principal, ... being competent in the difficult situations.*

Merv is also raising the point that by going through certain experiences learning occurs that you can cope with stressful and complex situations, and this learning, and resilience allows you to then cope with other more complex and stressful events.

Being a good communicator and developing trusting relationships was described by all principals as important for the role of principal.

Kirk asserted:

> *So I always think that your **communication in your role is vital**. As a principal being consistent with your behaviour and you're **interpersonal relationship is vital** to be able to build then, where people **trust** you and want to be on that train with you and go with you.*

Ella shared:

> *People have to know and **trust** that your **communication** will have that openness, but you are going to be fair, you are going to act through, you are going to follow through. It's working with teachers having a look at their classrooms, keep making connections so you can inspire or support if needed. You have to be constant. A **constant role model** for your staff and community with regards to your **interpersonal skills**, like you're modelling all the time. To me, you've got to be constant in the way that you model about how you **interact with people**. So you're a model and you're being constant in your behaviour*

and that you probably - I still think that you lead by example so that everything
that you do, that you're leading by example.

Principals saw their role as school principal fundamentally as being about helping children, supporting the school community, running the school smoothly and doing so in a competent manner. They discussed how they evaluated their performance and utilised self-reflection to inform their practice and improve their competency. Communication was seen by all principals as important for them in their role.

5.3. Definition of Work

Principals conceptualised their work in terms of what they actually did with considerable breadth and similarity. Here I have tried to capture the essence of what the work of a principal as seen to be by the participants in this study.

All principals made similar statements to what they termed as their core business and this core business was about students, as typified by Lawrence:

> *Our core business is **providing quality education for kiddies** in a safe environment.*

All principals inferred that the work of a principal involved mitigating negative happenings. This involved competently dealing with multiple issues and remaining focused on their purpose (i.e. making a positive difference in the lives of students). Steve's response typified the participant responses:

> *Our work as a principal is to **manage the worst-case scenario and mitigate whatever happenings**…. It's constantly mitigating negative potential… Situations occurring simultaneously. It's about creating that quality world and rejecting those things that impinge on it. Staying focused on the reason for the work – the students. **Controlling situations***

In talking about mitigating negative happenings both Sam and Lawrence described it differently to the other principals, outlining a way of managing situations rather than one of influencing or controlling situations.

Sam remarked:

> *Things go wrong sometimes in our job, things happen. I have to get in and fix it up, **manage it**. That's what you have to do. So you get in and you deal with each group of those people, including the kids and their parents and [bloody] department hanging over your shoulder…. I'm here to help kids.*

Lawrence articulated:

> *You **manage situations**. Things happen. You manage the fallout.*

Principals also all made reference to work stating it is about "*decision making …. using strategies … dealing with multiple issues at once; … having high expectations; being accountable; responding to change; … delegating work; communicating well; …and having high expectations*". Merv's response exemplified this:

> *If we look at the work of the principal, well on the face of it you'd say it's **management, HR** [human resources], **finance, resources, curriculum, IT** [Information Technology]. Really within each of those is a subset of roles or*

227

*tasks or processes. So the work is probably better defined by a set of descriptors rather than by a set of defined jobs, defined tasks. So descriptors like **coordination, delegation, decision-making, supervision, direction**, **problem solving, crisis management**, **guiding, prompting, supporting, steering decision-making**. Those descriptors better encapsulate what the job is than trying to produce a list of these are the 287 things that I do across a month.*

*So when you look at that work, almost all of **it is people directed** or - you see it's either directed by others, you're **responding to the needs or to the wants of others.** Or you are trying to **influence the direction of others** and **define for others what are the needs and the wants of the school or the system** or the student.*

*So looking at those fields, **the work of the principal or the role of the principal are very much the same – the what you do and the what you think you should do.** Your level of subjective wellbeing fluctuates depending on which of those role descriptors you're engaged in at the time.*

In all participant data sets reference was made to self-reflective questioning as being part of the work of principals, as exemplified by Steve:

***Questioning things** and **I question my own performance** in the same way. I was saying, well why have I ignored attendance? Why aren't I dealing with that person's performance? Or why isn't my expectation explicit enough?*

Careful analysis of the data reveals school principals had a similar world view where they saw their work as having four key elements: goal orientated ethical stance focusing on core business (i.e., making a positive difference in the lives of students); mitigation of negative happenings (i.e., competently dealing with multiple issues simultaneously whilst still remaining focused on the core business); descriptors focused on achieving the goal (i.e., coordination, delegation, decision-making, supervision, direction, problem solving, crisis management, guiding, prompting, supporting, steering decision-making); and self-reflection.

5.4.   Role, Work, and SWB

This section captures the essence of how principals explain the dynamics of interplay between role, work and SWB.

Reported by all principals was that their belief that they had made a difference in the lives of students and others contributed to the SWB as exemplified by Amber:

> *My overall **sense** that I'm having input, **I'm making a difference**, **my sense that I'm valued** - one, in the workplace by those above, below and all around me and just your whole sense of self and that you **have a purpose in life**.*

Merv said:

> *What contributes to my SWB is having a very tangible sense of **control** over my day. That's **the privilege of being the principal**, is that you do have some control over your day and the knowledge that you are **doing something worthwhile for someone else**.*

Ella gave insight into the reason principals do their work and how it contributes to SWB remarking:

> *I've had to learn to look at what didn't work out so well, but I have **remained focussed on my core business and my hopes and dreams for these kids** and that is they will be successful in the future; that they - whatever that success means for them, that's fine, but the fact that we're catering to that, **controlling what we can** and that we are **doing the best we can for those kids**. This links to **our vision and reason** for what we do. So, if I can bring them back to that level, every time, then that **helps in terms of dealing with the disappointments, dealing with the challenges, dealing with the conflict** that you see in the workplace.*

Evan, Kirk, Ella and Nev all made similar comments regarding situations which moved beyond their control causing them considerable stress, especially when they felt it prevented them from engaging in their core work (i.e., making a positive difference in the lives of children). Evan remarked:

Dealing with absolute "nutter parents" [illogical and volatile]*, totally illogical, detracts from your subjective wellbeing. Having to deal with "nutter parents", but that's part of your job also. It's the amount of communication. I average 44 emails a week, plus I've got the amount of readings that exists on the bulletins and things like that that. It detracts from doing the core business of helping kids and your staff. But it is part of the job, so whilst a detractor, it's just what you do.*

Nine principals also articulated that performing work competently had an impact on their SWB because they were continually evaluating their own work against a standard of "good work" and they felt they were achieving. Kirk's remark typifies this:

*When you **walk out and it's running like a well-burned machine. You've arrived with a smile on your face**, the groundsman's happy when he's here; the cleaners are **in a good mood. You feel good at your job**. The first of the staff arrive and they want to tell you the good things that are happening. The phone calls from the parents are all positive. The kids are running around - and you look around and you go, yep **the place is running well**. You can get that feeling, this is a good place. Then that's tempered by parental issues or kid issues. ... If you don't have proactive things in place, whether they be a personal nature or a system nature, you're just reacting all the time. We went through some hard and tough times here, so we learnt to put things in place to address those. It is the process like inclusion policies and school positive behaviour processes but it is also **the thinking behind it and the personal thinking processes you put in place**. Different structures to deal with the issues that are arising if they do arise, so I guess **we're reaping the benefits of a lot of good work** that's occurred. In some ways **that's how I maintain my wellbeing.***

Nev also made reference to competency, worthwhile work and SWB, remarking:

*That would've been the lowest point, so many deaths of people we knew, our students, they were our kids, their parents. So many died in the floods and that taught me a lot about making sure that **even when you're down there, you've got to be able to have to something to get yourself out of it. There's got to be something to hang on to.** There's got to be some positive that does come out*

230

*of it. You **search for it, think it through, process it and do.** For me **it was a sense of knowing, a sense that I am a good principal so I am worthwhile.** I put in place some good counselling supports for our community and helped where I could but I grieved. It hurt for a long time.*

> **Researcher memo:**
>
> Mmm… It appears making a difference in the lives of students and also feeling personal competency with a personal sense of being worthwhile, seems to have helped with SWB. Principals all seem to be using evaluation to be aware of their personal competency, using it combined with a particular way of working incorporating deliberate action and processes that help to maintain their SWB.

Principals articulated having a clear purpose (i.e., understanding of their role and how to enact this) and they reflected back upon a standard of what they perceived a component principal would do (i.e., self-evaluation of their performance) and when they achieved this they felt good (i.e., satisfied with life, and/or experienced positive affect, and/or high level mood) and this helped maintain their SWB.

5.5.   Multiple Processes Emerge

In looking at the question of how school principals maintain their SWB, specifically the dynamics of interplay between role, work and SWB, the data revealed that multiple process were involved. Figure 5.1 depicts the three processes that principals utilised in relation to the maintenance of SWB. The process used depended upon the nature of the moment and how the principals evaluated events, including their own performance abilities. Principals used a **Fuel IT (FIT**) process to contribute regularly to the maintenance of their SWB (e.g., going for a walk with a friend). Principals also used an **Awakening, Thinking, Enacting and Reflecting (ATER)** process and the majority of principals used a third process which I have termed as **MegaPositioning**. These processes will be explained in more detail in this chapter.
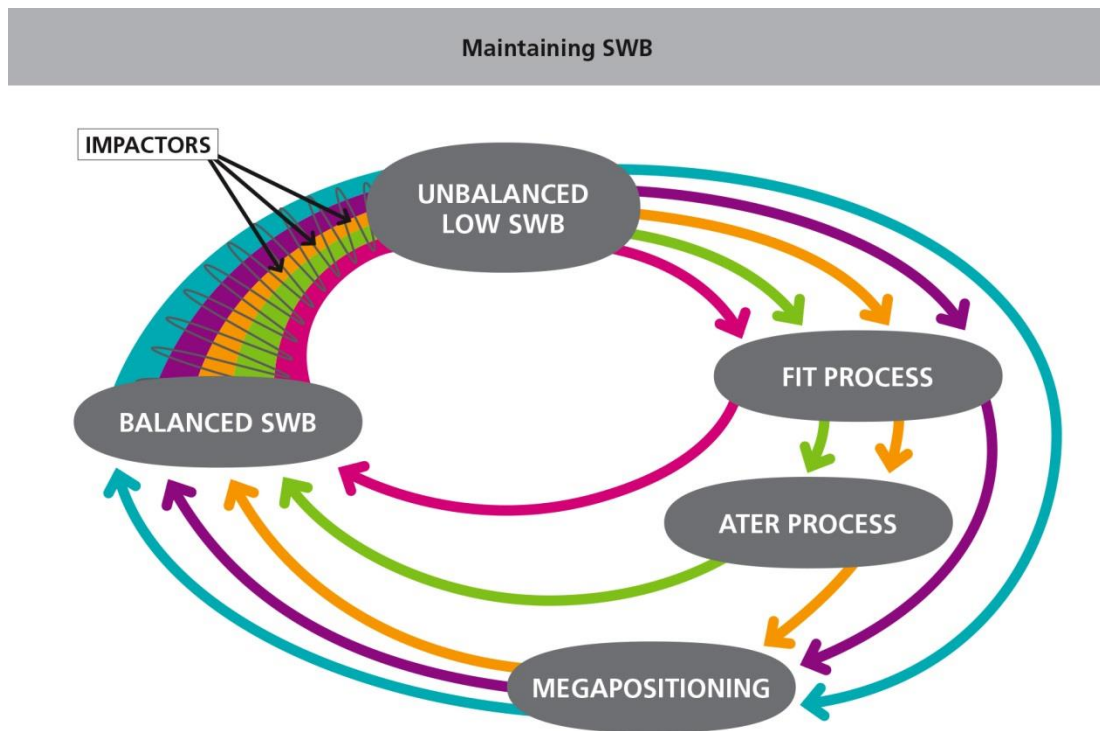
Figure 5.1: Overview of Process used to Maintain SWB

Principals all reported that due to negative impactors there were times when they felt their SWB was a little bit low or worse, "unbalanced". Upon evaluating that their SWB was low or unbalanced (i.e., they did not feel satisfied with life or a situation, and/or they had negative affect, and/or low level mood) the principals made a choice to rebalance their SWB. At these times the principals made decisions to use particular ways of working in order to maintain their SWB. They selected a particular process (FIT, ATER or MegaPositioning) on the basis of the perceived requirements of the situation, to rebalance their SWB so that they could continue to work in their context in what they perceived as a competent manner. I will now reveal a deeper understanding of the three processes.

5.5.1. The First Process that Emerges: FIT

Fuel It (FIT) was a process that principals used on a regular basis to make them feel good. All of the principals reported engaging in activities on a regular basis, such as catching up with friends. All principals also made comment that they did not really

need to think much about using these ways of working, as it had become part of their life, like habits. This was typified in responses by Amber, Ewan and Kirk.

Amber said:

*I **don't really think I think about it**. **I just seem to know if I am a bit tired or low so I go running or socialise**. I love running. It makes me feel good. I just engage in something that lifts me that little bit. I do these sort of things all the time (daily weekly, monthly, just depends on what I need). **I guess I just listen subconsciously to my body** and I just know so I **do these things without really thinking about it**.*

Ewan articulated:

*I just make time to **do things that feel good**. I then go and do them, like go to the movies with my wife. It just becomes part of what I do, we do, in our daily lives. **No thought to it really, sort of just routine**.*

Kirk:

*It is just like a habit, you **do things on a regular basis without really thinking about it but you do it to feel a little bit better**. Like going for a few drinks with mates. I do this regularly because I enjoy it. Don't think about work.*

They articulated being somewhat aware of when they were a little bit tired or feeling a little bit low and then as a result of this evaluation they enacted a process which I have termed as the Fuel It Process (FIT) to help them maintain their SWB through the use of a variety of ways of working (see Table 4.3). The principals reported using these ways of working on a regular basis because they made them feel better (i.e. positive affect).

5.5.2. The Second Process- An Awakening Processes Emerges: ATER

All principals similarly made reference to a cognisant awareness or awakening to the realisation that their SWB was low at some point and they were in some sort of crisis

or out of balance so they needed to do something about their SWB. When principals became aware that their SWB was "low" they all endeavored to try and "rebalance" it so that it was no longer so low. I have termed this process as the ATER (Awakening, Thinking, Enacting and Reflecting) process and Ewan's comment exemplified the Awakening and use of a deliberate process:

> The other thing that **I think can switch it on** is that sense of stress and the negative stress. When you're worried about something and losing sleep, you wake up at three o'clock in the morning with ideas in your head, **you become aware that something is wrong and that tends to be the trigger for commencing that process of needing to think things through**.

Nev gave some insight the **Awakening** with discussion around the sudden awareness of low SWB. He shared:

> I don't know if I can explain the thinking process because it was - you know they talk about the **'ah ha' moments**. It really was. It was just a - I'm thinking one day I see something - it's like - you know someone tells you a good joke and it makes you laugh or you hear a song which you enjoy and **suddenly you stop and think I am not really happy**, **something is wrong**. What do I need to do about it? **You recognise something is wrong, probably has been worsening over time but you just don't really notice until the 'ah ha'**. Then you work through trying to fix it.

The awakening moment or awareness occurred in a timely manner in relation to the stressful complex events but it was experienced differently by different people as they became aware that there SWB was low. For some, self-awareness happened gradually.

Steve articulated:

> My internal behaviours, mostly to worry like hell, and then play out all of the scenarios to a natural conclusion. So a **heck of a lot of mind work** which involves lots of sleepless nights, rehearsal - and again playing out all of the avenues so that I come up with a course of action that is - that suits my - where I want to be with whatever trouble I'm facing - whatever issue has come to disturb my sense of equilibrium, these issues sometimes build gradually and you just **gradually get to know something is not right**.

For some principals self-awareness was prompted by others. The awakening moment that SWB levels were low did not always appear to be initially instigated by the participant. Lawrence explained that his wife helped him to know that his SWB was low because of his external behaviours. He shared:

> Well sometimes **it's actually not me, it's my wife**. **She'll just say, you are being really crabby today, you've had a bad day.** …….. She'll find me, instinctually and she'll know.

Other principals reported being startled into an Awakening by developing self-awareness. Ewan shared:

> I am **not sure how I go from knowing to not knowing** I am not travelling well, **to suddenly being aware that I personally need to stop and focus on me because I am not travelling well**…. It is at times, I think, when I am very **low and faced with a complex issue**, **multiple things exploding at once needing my attention. I think it is just a process you develop. I think you subconsciously develop this, probably through experience**. If I think recently it was probably people's opinion that I valued and someone made a comment that penetrated. Made me stop and think about myself.

Researcher memo:

Mmm…Many principals reported a very negative experience. I wonder if this could be tacit knowledge and if there is a link here to people wanting to perceive that they are competent?

After the awakening moment all principals realised that their SWB was low so they then engaged a **Thinking** process, planning what could be done to improve their SWB. From there the principals described how the plan was enacted and then how they reflected upon what they had done to check that their SWB level was actually alright.

Merv made inferences to a process for thinking that he was using to enact some change, and maintain his SWB, articulating how he reflected after implementing the SWB change action. Merv shared insight into the Thinking component of the ATER process:

> *You've got to be able to draw a line through the events that have finished. You've got to be able to **say to yourself, I've dealt with those things and that is now closed and not dwell** on it for a long time. I used to be a bad dweller and so it was very hard to shake things off. Now I'm far more clinical in terms of closing off on what's happened on the previous day or the previous week. So I guess that's the first thing and then **the second thing is you have to have a sense that what you've done to close off those issues or those events, what you've done was not only right but it was the best - they were the best decisions.***

Ella, Merv, Ewan and Kirk all gave insight into the **Enacting and Reflecting** components of the ATER process, outlining that low SWB impacted their awareness, articulating that when this was recognised ways of working were engaged to lift their SWB, as exemplified by Ella:

> *If you're suffering very negative stress, a sense of being overwhelmed then **cognitive processing speed is slowed** and almost strangled isn't it because you've got so many things going on.*

> *I don't know if I can explain the **thinking processes** because it was - you know they talk about the **"ah ha" moments**. It really was. It was just a - I'm thinking one day I see something - it's like - you know someone tells you a good joke and it makes you laugh or you hear a song which you enjoy and suddenly you stop thinking about it. This was a just a situation where I happen - my being suddenly was affected, touched, whatever by this situation and then that just allowed me to say - start **thinking** about - and it just made me think about the situation there which changed the juices in your body that allow the shoulders to relax that **made me feel more - better in myself** and then you click as you think gee I feel better. You then **reflect on what** you have done and probably focus a little bit more on **ensuring that you really look after yourself** for a while, **reflect for a while** to make sure you are fine.*

The data revealed that all of the eleven principals either made explicit reference or implied reference that they were using a process involving awareness or awaking to the knowledge that their SWB was low; thinking about how they would improve their SWB; committing to action to improve it and then reflecting upon whether they had done enough to improve it (Awakening, Thinking, Enacting and Reflecting - ATER process). If not they continued to enact ways of working that they knew would improve their SWB until they felt better. Their ways of working varied and were inclusive of: seeking support from a supervisor; obtaining positive feedback, celebrating the good times, especially with laughter; separating personal and professional life; focusing on health; just stopping;   not taking on other people's woes; acting professionally; remaining calm, using de-escalation strategies; communicating well with others; using a 'switch'; engaging positive thinking; planning and acting, maximising controllable factors; relaxing; networking with trusted others; engaging self-think time, drawing on self-knowledge and using self-talk.

5.5.3.   The Third Processes Emerges: MegaPositioning

Nine of the eleven principals outlined a third process that they were using to maintain their SWB. Principals made reference to the process involving decisional and reflectional elements. They also talked about prediction or forethought where prior or current knowledge and understandings were utilised to try and be predictive. I have termed this process as 'MegaPositioning'. It involves Strategic Agentism, predictive forethought, deep and ongoing evaluation and reflection, the dialogical self, Multiple Networked Realities (MNR) and tacit knowledge.

Kirk's was one of many similar remarks that demonstrate the explicit reference to prediction. Kirk articulated:

> It's about **predicting** what's coming, it's about engaging with that, it's about coming up with something that then puts something in place to deal with it.

Steve also made a similar comment:

> So **it's around reflection** about what **you could do better** or even trying to understand, for instance, if it was developing forms of conversation, trying to

*understand why somebody said something the way they said it or what their response was to a question or trying to understand what was the antecedent before the behaviour or the conversation? So **you are thinking about what can possibly be influenced**. Then also trying to isolate I suppose what else is underlying. Was there a hidden agenda there and is it something that I need to be aware of. So **trying to predict a little bit** or trying **to analyse it a little bit more**.*

There appears to be a process linked to predictive forethought that involves deep reflection that is personal, internal and also outwards focused as demonstrated in Merv's response:

*To be able to say that they're looking out for people that aren't - you know, how can you identify that they're in trouble, because of the fact that they're **masking it and hiding it all the time? What can you do to be able to help those people that are finding it really difficult? You have to predict possibilities.** Well, sometimes, do they even know, or how can they identify that? So, I think those four things are good. Like, yes, and if you've got your own **good network**, that's good, but sometimes, that mightn't be what you're looking for. **You look at yourself and know yourself and then apply this to what you know of others.** You're looking sometimes to be able to find out, **what is it that I can be doing to be able to make it better**, and who can really tell me that that's pretty poor, and what can they give me **some advice** about; how can I make that better, you know?*

All of the eight principals (not Evan, Sam or Lawrence) utilising multiple voices shared how they used this for both decisional and reflective purposes in conjunction with other ways of working in a procedural manner that allowed them to take "on board" immediate feedback from the other person or people involved in the conversation as well as using the voices to help engineer the outcome that they desired. Several principals also explicitly disclosed that they were utilising processes to maintain their SWB. One participant shared that when they were in a meeting with a staff member about an issue that involved some complexity and stress they utilised the voices in their head to guide their discussion with the staff member. Whilst in a meeting with the staff member, and listening to the voices in their head, they also were

filing snippets/ phrases that worked well, eliciting the desired outcome for future application in other situations. Merv stated:

> ***Whilst a conversation is going on, in your head***, *and another one in person,* ***I listen and think that might be a good phrase to use*** *with when I'm talking to a staff member about an issue. Then* ***I start working that issue as well****. You know I must remember to use that phrase and that's also what I'm thinking about that.*

The data revealed that eight principals were strategically striving to control factors evident in situations in order to influence outcomes. Nev remarked:

> *I'm not expert in it but I actually talk in here this is happening; why is it happening, does it have to happen,* ***what can I do to influence what's about to happen*** *because my behavioural response is actually going to determine the outcome. So that's how I do it. I just think it through. Okay I'm being confronted by this person who's majorly "pissed off"* [annoyed]. *Why? How am I going to respond? What do I look like?* ***What's the outcome going to be and I try and come to an outcome before we actually have the conversation*** *or at least a couple of outcomes.*

Ewan remarked:

> *So if I'm in a conversation with someone and I wanted to talk about something and they've come up with a brick wall, I think I'm engaging in a conversation and I think* ***there is a voice telling you, okay, just be careful here, don't say too much here, chance to back off.*** *So I think there's definitely times when* ***I've been talking to someone and having two conversations at once, and I guess that's to try and get the best out of a situation****. However, I would say that that* ***subconsciously kicks in****.*

> **Researcher Memo:**
>
> Mmm: Is this drawing on their experience and now has become tacit knowledge?

Amber explicitly linked the process of using behaviour and thinking to control or influence a situation, engaging multiple voices and talking in context to real people, to the maintenance of SWB.

*Why do I feel better? Because I've **prioritised -** I've seen where the priority in my life now is or the stress that was caused by that day now is, compared to **what really is important** or that point in time, and I **think** sometimes that life provides us with those sort of situations. If you're just a little bit open to them or aware of them that you - it helps you **get through life and makes you a better person**. That was just one of them. It's not always the tragedy. Sometimes it's the tragedy and people talk about well they're worse off than I am, why am I whinging about this? Sometimes it's the humorous moment, **the perspective moment** which is a nice moment, it can also say why am I like this? It doesn't always have to be a **reflection** on bad, it can be just a reflection. As I said I think life does provide you with those situations that just occur.*

*I think sometimes - I think most of the - most of the strategies I have to be able to **do my job with students**, families, staff I have - **I've got the strategies to work.** You know if I never went to a conference, I never listened to anyone else, those strategies would be there. What I'm **thinking and listening about is to refine those strategies**.*

*So they're strategies which - I had to talk to the head of special education, I had to talk to the staff, had to develop strategies there, okay, in that area whereas dealing with families, dealing with teachers I have most of those strategies, so what am **I internalising** is - taking special education aside because that's something I had to **learn new about** - but what I'm doing with the other ones is probably thinking well I know the steps to work with these people to deal with issues, what I'm thinking about is **making sure that I work through those steps** and I also think about - as I said before - about picking up the good lines or **picking up the good** - there may be a resource out there which I can share with them about which I haven't been aware of.*

*Then if you've gone through the steps and that's - I was talking about the **gut feeling that yeah I know I did that right** - if I didn't, which is some of those moments, the most - if I didn't do it right, I don't feel comfortable - I don't think I ever do it wrong, but **it didn't work** - it's then - **it's seeking out a conversation***

240

*with someone else about do you know this family, how did you work with this family, it didn't work, this is what happened. But that's - my thinking is probably more about who do I go to because this isn't working. Because I know that **I've gone through the usual things that work. I'm going to have to find out** - and it's usually finding out a bit more information.*

The data reveals that the engagement of this process also links to a deep self-awareness as mentioned by Ewan:

> *I wonder whether sometimes that distracts from my just focussing on personalising and being there and doing the emotive type/sympathy type things which isn't me. I wasn't unsympathetic and I wasn't sort of just rushing out to organise a supply teacher, but I sometimes - and this is one of the things that's work on this - one of the things I am going to - as part of my response to this coaching session - was to actually start googling, **start looking up empathy in leadership and is it something that I need to develop** that or at least show it? Is it only fair that I - to staff that I show it and do a bit more or just keep on being what **I feel comfortable with in my more introverted type** approach? So that's just something **I'm working on myself** at the moment.*

It appears that principals are utilising ways of working and processes to maintain their SWB but seem to be unaware of exactly what they are doing. When principals were asked to explain how they learnt to use different processes, they similarly articulated the response *"It is just the way I work"*. Throughout the interviews ten of the eleven principals indicated that they were seemingly unaware of what they were doing until they had been asked probing questions. Kirk, Emma Lawrence and Amber's remarks highlighted this lack of awareness. Kirk said:

> *I would almost think that I at times **subconsciously look after myself**. Because **I don't know** - and I've just been trying to think.*

Emma remarked:

> *I don't really know about it. **You made me really think about the processes that go inside my head** when I'm working through something.*

Lawrence explained:

> It's just **a gut feeling. It's intuition**.

Amber said:

> **I don't know**, *I really have to think about that one because to me it's because* ***it's in my head***. *Sometimes it's verbalised but mainly* ***it's in my head and it's like me thinking*** *aloud and writing; that type of stuff.*

Nine of the eleven principals also made reference to how competency was improved through the utilisation of predictive forethought and behaviour to explicitly control or influence an outcome or not using multiple voices and deep reflection that also occurred at times when the participant was already engaged in a current context with another person or people. Comments about competency were typified in Ewan's response:

> *I think 90 per cent of the time* ***it's evaluating am I a successful principal? Am I doing a good job?*** *So I would think most - and I think that's also because of the world that we live in now and schools where we are data-driven and school performance-driven. We basically have a set of norms and* ***you're either at the benchmark or you're not at the benchmark***. *Which doesn't cater a lot for all the other factors.*

Researcher memo:

Mmm… This process seems to have more complexity. It appears to be used by principals to increase their competency in the role and then they feel good (i.e. positive affect) and if they have performed well in their role as principal they are satisfied that they have done a good job, been successful (i.e. life satisfaction). Mmm…

Six principals also made reference to their mentor, someone they perceived as competent as being one of the voices they engaged when enacting dialogue with multiple voices. Amber explicitly remarked that her dialogical self deliberately engages competent voices:

Yep. Though at the same time, you're the one in that situation. So yes, there **might be competent little voices out here saying have you tried this, have you thought about that.** *You're still in that situation, and at times you have a* **very good understanding of that person** *that you may be in that conversation with. So you may need to* **take snapshots of each of those conversations in your head**, *and turn them into what you want to achieve from the conversation.*

Principals did not appear to be overtly aware that they were engaging this third process to manage their SWB as typified by Merv's comment:

> **It just starts for itself** *I suppose.* **I've never really had to sit back and analyse it and think** *at what point does it start? I just do it, guess I make the decision to do it,* **just don't really think about it. I've learnt to do it and it works.**

The third process, MegaPositioning, emerged from the data and appeared to be very fluid involving agency with predictive forethought where the principals felt they could control or influence factors in a strategic manner, deep ongoing evaluation and reflection and the enactment of head talk or multiple voices. The process has been termed as MegaPositioning because principals described how they were endeavouring to solve or manage a very complex and challenging problem (i.e., Mega in complexity) acquiring multiple perspectives from varied sources, positioning and prioritising the information they obtained (i.e., positioning) to inform the complex and challenging problem. The principals who used MegaPositioning also linked to the utilisation of a variety of ways of working (see Table 4.3); ways which appeared to be largely context driven based upon their experiential learning. The principals using this process reported that this process allowed them to better maintain their SWB. The principals evaluated "the moments" or their actions against a 'standard of what a competent principal should do' and the evaluation was in a positive manner. The evaluation enabled their SWB as they: experienced positive affect (i.e., happy with a decision that they made); and /or experienced low level negative moods (i.e., like frustration and anger); and/ or felt satisfied with life. Principals saw themselves as doing a good job because of their actions (i.e., making a difference in the lives of students and others) and this enabled their positive SWB.

5.5.4. Summary of Multiple Processes

The data highlights that the principals are constructing professional repertoires of practice through a reflective critique of their own and others experiences and this knowledge is acquired through deep reflection and the embracement of the dialogic. Interestingly it does not seem that they had always personally experienced a situation but rather that they had acquired a variety of learnings as a result of their years in the principalship from other colleagues, mentors, and interactions in general. These learnings were used in varied contexts, in a way that allowed some influence over the outcomes and the learning was informed by experience.

Several themes emerged from the data around multiple processes: ways of working differ according to experience and length of time in the role of principal; principals are utilising cognitive evaluation with differing mindsets; cognitive evaluation and worthwhile work; tacit knowledge; and social comparison. These themes will now be explored in the following sections.

> **Researcher memo:**
>
> Mmm… Links appear to be emerging between experiential knowledge and shared learning with and from others. Mmm…

5.5.5. Ways of Working Differ According to Experience and Length in the Role of Principal

In talking about the different processes that they used principals revealed that they developed ways of knowing what to do based upon experience. Ella and Emma reflected upon the ways of working and processes that they use to maintain their SWB remarking that perhaps they were different depending upon where they are in their career as shown by Ella's remark:

> *The mentor, to me, is that first level, like, you know, so that you've just got someone that you can actually just talk about just life or whatever. But then, I*

*think, **for some principals, they really don't know what they should be doing** to be able to get better at their job, **experience over time helps you learn this**, so the next level of the coaching, where you're actually learning about how to be able to be a good critical friend, and being able to coach them through some of those issues they're having, is good. **This happens when you are a bit more of an experienced principal**. So, I'm all for that coaching, and they're doing that, and I applaud that. I think that's really good, and then to initiate those visits there, and through the course and to be able to - that wellbeing group that they've got there.*

While Emma remarked:

*Maybe **earlier in my career**, I may have had a few tears and when I've rung, perhaps a regional director, or district director, or somebody, who I felt wouldn't matter, if they knew that I was at that state then things must be pretty bad sort of thing. But, that was very early on, I think. I **haven't done that recently**. I don't know that I've ever cried in front of a colleague, which is interesting. I don't know that I've actually cried here at school for a while, so I don't know what that means. I may have cried in the car going home and thought, to me, well, is that because we feel that a show of emotion is a show of weakness? Which is most probably where a relationship exists there. I think it's been **some excellent mentoring earlier in my career**, with some very influential females who - not that they're saying you can't cry or anything, but actually having someone saying it's okay to feel that way. Things change when you get **more experienced**, you have **different needs, different strategies and a better understanding of what works.***

Merv outlined how he used his experiential learning and relational knowledge that had developed over time:

*I always look at as **you get older and wiser,** and **more at ease with who you are that it would give more depth to those voices,** so that you're in a **different time and different space of your life** - your personal and your professional life as you go through. So yes, they would be different sorts of [confrontations], **different depths** because you're actually then with you voices, calling on **much***

> *more experiences* that you've gone through in personal and professional life, *to be able to draw on*.

Principals revealed a way of working that drew on tacit knowledge. The term "ways of working" arose from the data and it describes the strategies and knowledge that principals used. In explaining what that did all principals used terms like "*it is just the way I do it*", "*it is the way I work*", "*not really sure I can explain it, I just know and work this way*". They articulated that ways of working and knowing are different depending upon where they are in their career, and that experiential learning and relational knowledge had developed over time. Perhaps at different points in a principal's career some ways of working and processes are more applicable than others. This is however beyond the scope of this study but may well be worth further investigation.

5.5.6. Cognitive Evaluation with Differing Mindsets

All principals in the study revealed that as they were making evaluations about their concept of their work and these evaluations determined the processes they used to maintain their SWB. Emerging from the data were that all principals used wisdom to inform their evaluation and making positive evaluations of their performance helped to maintenance their SWB. The data also revealed that there were two differing mindsets or mental attitudes evidenced with the evaluations: (a) a management mindset; and (b) a control and influence mindset.

5.5.6.1.   Drawing on Wisdom When Making an Evaluation

All principals also made reference to wisdom, when they were discussing evaluation. Numerous principals in the study referenced to wisdom, which from the principals' perspective, was seen to be knowing when to engage whom in what conversations. Wisdom helped the principals when complex situations arose. Two of the principals used what they termed as collective wisdom, working externally with others. The majority of the principals who used a control and influence mindset drew on wisdom in a more internal manner as demonstrated by Steve:

*I try and listen to all of the voices, **the voice of caution** which is one of my colleagues who always **asks the right question to engage you deeply in analytical self-reflection.** This is the voice **I engage at times when the situation is going well**, perhaps too well and **I am questioning myself**. When the conversation turns you need to know how to "ride the tide" and move with the conversation to try and obtain a better outcome. I have **one mentor whose voice comes to me** at this time, **an assertive voice** reminding me when to step forward and be assertive. Stop the crap from coming, intercede with a question to make the other person or people stop and think about what they are doing. At this time I say to myself "What do I need to do next? How will I get them to buy into the outcome I want?". Then **I will seem to be able to ask the right question of the other person.** It is not straight forward, often there are lots of voices with differing opinions in my head and I work through which advice is the best while I am talking to the other person.*

5.5.6.2. Management Mindset

The data reflected that two principals dealt with managing complexity and maintaining their SWB in a different way to the other principals. Sam and Lawrence appeared to not use predictive forethought and behaviours to explicitly control or influence an outcome, rather they utilised a "managing the situation" mindset as opposed to "how can I influence this outcome and achieve the outcome by shaping factors".

Sam exemplified this sharing:

*When I have to persistently fight and persistently defend - I very rarely attack - but **it's about managing that conflict** - those conflicts and that confrontation situation, but that's my disruptive force that takes my energy away.*

This same participant also articulated that they did not use their words to try and control or engineer an outcome but that rather they were aware that they might say the wrong thing so it was better to carefully choose words. Lawrence articulated:

*I've always believed that if you keep your mouth shut when you're in trouble or making trouble, you'll have less to regret. Choose your words and what you have to do very carefully…. Helps to **manage the situation**.*

Lawrence articulated that he often had a lack of control in situations he could not predefine. Lawrence shared:

*__Sometimes you feel no control__. I think if there's been a significant event where you analyse it and we risk **manage it** for want of a better term, of some things, as you know being a principal in the past, **you can't anticipate other people's behaviours**. Sometimes it's **very difficult to predict the unpredictable**. You **manage** what you can. But at all points in time, I endeavour to make sure the **workplace is a safe place**, not only for the kids, but I have a duty of care to my staff to make sure that they're safe as well.*

Lawrence also outlined forward planning but in a very different manner to what the other nine principals discussed. Sam outlined that he would *"try and use it as a learning experience"* as opposed to actually using it as a learning experience fully believing that he can achieved the future outcome. Lawrence seemed to focus on being reactive rather than futuristic. Lawrence shared:

*So if there is anything ever happening in our school that's untoward we try to use that as a learning experience and do things differently in the future. So **we manage that risk** whether it be an aggressive parent with a lockdown situation, we haven't had too many of those in our time or whatever. So we put in place things to - I mean, primarily, make sure the school is a safe workplace….. What I normally do - well, clearly we need to **be reactive**. But I also like to try and be **cognitive about my response**, because the worse decisions that you ever make, I personally, from the ones that I make just like that [clicks fingers]. So if it hits the fan, I'll normally get the ladies in, the DPs and talk to them about it. Or the BSM or whoever and **we'll brainstorm a solution. I won't work on - I don't work in isolation from people**.*

> **Researcher memo:**
>
> Mmm… Lawrence seems to focus on shared responsibility.

Both principals also outlined having some individual think time but with seemingly more emphasis on external feedback (i.e., form others that they approach) rather than internal (i.e., self-evaluative) feedback. Both principals responded in a similar method as exemplified by Sam:

> *What I often do is **I bounce it off other people** around me. I might **think about it a little bit myself** but I'm a bit of a visual learner as you might have noticed from the whiteboard over there. So I'll draw things with the two DPs I'll have a few people in here and I'll just spit ball or brainstorm things. I might **have a bit of a concept in my head** of how it might work.*

Both Sam and Lawrence appeared to rely more on the external perspectives of others in order to see what sort of course of action they should take. Both principals made more than ten explicit and similar references to this. Lawrence shared:

> *Sometimes it's around something being a little problematic but I rather like to act in a more pro-active mode rather than go putting out all those spot fires that may turn into bushfires if you don't. So what I actually find is great about that is I might have thought about one thing and **then the four other people in the room go, well that might work but what about this?** The **other people feed into it** and then what you get is a much better outcome because you've got **the creativity and the practicality of the collective wisdom** of the group. I like to try and tap into the **collective wisdom** of the group as much as I can because there are some very clever, creative folk on staff. They have **good lateral solutions**.*

Lawrence mentioned that he did not have a current mentor and Sam made no reference to a mentor or to recalling mental advice from someone perceived to be competent. Lawrence made reference to using a mentor early in his career when he was inexperienced in the organisation. Lawrence said:

> *Well currently though I actually **don't have a mentor** which is interesting. I accessed **mentors a lot earlier in my career** and I was basically using them as a sounding board - sourcing their support as sounding boards **because they had a depth of experience in the organisation that I didn't**.*

Both Sam and Lawrence did however evidence the use of reflective practice. They used self-reflection after a situation had occurred and then debriefed with their leadership team. Sam shared:

> There's a natural instinct of people when they're under attack, to team and put up defensive positions and often that's pretty negative response to whatever stimuli is causing you discomfort. There is **a responsibility to learn from things** like that, and I think that's part of the game, and it's - that doesn't come naturally individually.

Both Sam and Lawrence who appeared to not be using predictive forethought, and the dialogical self also made some notable disclosures about their SWB. The object of this study is not to measure anyone's SWB but rather to focus on what school principals are actually doing to maintain their SWB. Lawrence articulated that his SWB was very dependent on his wife's support, love and understanding and she helped him to get through tough things at work, encouraging a very good work life balance. Outside of this Lawrence had mentioned on two occasions "*you just need to work harder when it gets tough*". Sam made little mention of significant others who could be of support and mentioned more that feelings of low SWB were simply internalised.

Sam remarked:

> Why do we come to work every day and why do we do our work? **Most days there isn't a great deal of satisfaction**. Yes, this is brilliant - you've had this great reward or whatever. **Most days you go home feeling like how did we get in that place again** - why are we dealing with this again - how come I've got this naughty kid or staff member, can't do and live up to our values - work so hard to get that. ……..**There's a lot of negative baggage each day**, and **why do I keep coming back?** I have some underlying beliefs about what we're doing here, and why I work and why education's important; **I want to make a difference for kids**. It's really quite interesting, because there are quite a number of times in the last nine or 10 years I could have walked out of here any given day, year, time, **an absolute failure**.

The data reveals the two principals appear to have a mindset that they must best manage the events and situations as they occur, actively seeking input and support

from their colleagues. Both articulate that they try and view things positively and engage in internal reflection. They both also revealed that at times they struggled with their SWB; however the processes they used did help them to maintain their SWB.

5.5.6.1. Control and Influence Mindset

The other principals seemed to have a different mindset, one which involved influencing or controlling situations in order to obtain their desired outcomes. This was evidenced in numerous participant comments as shown by as Merv:

> *Yes. ... trying to influence the direction... To do this you need to firstly* **understand the position**, *see* **the where to** *and* **the possible how** *to. No point just managing it and thinking you will get the outcome needed. You need to* **be strategic, proactive, and influential**. **Planning** *is important and* **assessing** *how you are going and* **what needs to be done differently**.

Evan explained:

> *You do seek to manage situations but really your work goes well beyond this. You approach it like chess,* **evaluating** *the opposition or other players. You* **get your head around the situation and the possibilities** *for how it could play out and how you want it to play out. Then you* **plan** *on how best to make it play out the way you want, probably use your* **wisdom**. *What pieces can I move to* **influence play and steer others toward the outcome that is needed** *in this situation? It is not really a win lose situation though, it is more like* **how can I influence others to see this position** *would be of* **benefit to others,** *to children.* **You influence certain future directions, plant seeds of thought that you can grow**. *I guess there is an* **element of control**. **You control yourself** *and your emotions so you can be analytical and thoughtful. You* **evaluate how you are going** *and* **adjust strategy as required**.

> **Researcher memo:**
> Mmm… There appears to be emerging a shared motivation about making a difference for students.

251

It is the deep thinking about how a particular group of principals utilised an evaluative mindset of influence and control to help them maintain their SWB, that this thesis focuses upon. However irrespective of which mindset was used when principals evaluated situations or moments, everyone identified evaluation in regards to their subjective judgement about worthwhile work as being linked to their SWB.

Further analysis of the data revealed deeper levels of knowing where tacit knowledge was used to make evaluations.

5.6. Interplay Between Role, Work and SWB

When principals were asked about how they conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB, six themes arose: experience; personal responsibility and agency; strategic planning and action; role knowledge; tacit knowledge; and social comparison.

5.6.1. Experience

All principals in this study have made reference to their experiences and the importance of these experiences in helping them to select and refine effectual ways of working that allowed them to perform their role and maintain their SWB. All of the principals referred to both life experiences as well as work related experiences as typified by Ella and Merv. Ella explained:

> After **years in the job** I was accepting of who I was. I think that's the most important part. Like you are **happy with the skin - who you were**, you know? Before that you were trying lots of different things, and you'd **experience lots of things, just trying to cope**, where you were still thinking well, I've got lots of time ahead, you know, to learn this stuff? **Experience teaches you things if you are open to learning.** You learn a lot as a principal your **experience in the role teaches you that yes you can cope with a difficult situation**, you can make it through and your general life experiences help you with this as well.

Merv articulated:

> *But then if you're dealing with someone that you don't know at all, then it's a different matter because you don't have those tools to draw on,* **the prior knowledge** *of their personality.* **The prior experience** *of their reactions in similar situations to draw on, so it's a lot more difficult to do that,* **to deal with the unknown***, so you call upon all of your* **past experiences** *to help in the current situation, mostly it is* **your past experiences as a principal that you draw on.**

5.6.2. Personal Responsibility and Agency

All principals articulated that how they conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB directly linked to being proactive and taking personal responsibility for their own SWB as typified by Kirk's comment:

> *It's doing something, it's* **being proactive** *anyway.* **This makes you feel good.** *You know your role, your job inside out but* **maintaining well-being at the same time, you've got to be proactive***. It's a personal thing,* **your own responsibility to manage it** *whilst you do what you do.* **Control what you can control***, know what you can't control and try and* **influence the rest, including your own positive attitude.**

Six principals (Ewan, Merv, Nev, Steve, Ella, and Amber) similarly described the interplay more in terms of both control and agency as being important in how they saw themselves as a principal and in the work they performed, as exemplified by Amber stating:

> *I can step back and say, that's wrong in my life and that's wrong in my life, and* **I'm going to act on that***.* **Take control** *of that. Like I need to ensure I have a lunch break and look after my physical health, people will just have to wait. How will I explain this?* **What will I do differently***?*

5.6.3.   Strategic Planning and Action

Five principals (Steve, Ewan, Kirk, Merv, and Amber) articulated that their work and their role in relation to their SWB is about mentally and strategically planning, committing to action, and enacting the plan with on-going review as typified by Steve's comment:

> **Mentally positioning** *yourself. Saying, this is not normal. This is not how I want to be and what can I do about it? Detail a **well thought out plan**, a **considered view** that others may even have inputted into. **Strategically align** whatever **resources** are needed (often this is just time alone, time to think). Actually **committing to action and then consistently review and refine action** if need be. Am I doing what I committed to?*

> **Researcher memo:**
>
> Mmm…Taking action to have some control over an outcome seems to be emerging here. Perhaps it is the concept of Agency.
>
> Mmm…There also appears to be some need for coaching and mentoring to help principals at different times in their career, develop the skills they need to cope with the cognitive complexity and feel supported in their role.

5.6.4. Role Knowledge

The concept of competency in the role of principal was noted when three principals (Evan Kirk and Merv) mentioned the importance of having a feeling of control over what they do each day, and how they perceive themselves. This is typified by Merv when he remarked:

> *Another factor, I think, that contributes to it is having a very **tangible sense of control** over your day. **Knowing your role, what you have to do, how do it and then if you control this it feels good.***

The data regarding the interplay between role, work and SWB revealed some commonality in participant responses in relation to: principals not really being

254

consciously aware of what they were thinking and doing at times, which in the literature is tacit knowledge ((Polany1966; Grant 2007); and in this research also involved social comparison.

5.6.5. Tacit Knowledge

Principals repeatedly mentioned that they were not conscious of things that they were doing and thinking to maintain their SWB until I questioned them about it. While performing their role, and completing their work tasks they said they *"just do things that help them maintain their SWB"*. There were twenty-six references made by principals to being primarily unaware of what strategy or process they had initiated. Generating conceptually enlightening responses from principals was problematic as it relied heavily upon questioning – asking questions in a way that allowed for an open ended response whilst then utilising specific questions to drill down. This is exemplified by Ella. Several principals talked about their gut instinct (Merv, Evan, Kirk. Amber and Ella) with Ella remarking:

> *My **gut instinct** tells me. It's purely a **personal instinct** about well, I think that's the right thing to do in this situation*

All of the principals made comments about not being aware of using ways of working like self-talk or hearing different voices in self-dialogue, until I asked them very probing questions regarding what they were doing. The probing questions helped principals to begin to articulate their ways of knowing and working. There were twenty-seven similar references to tacit knowledge as exemplified by Steve.
Steve remarked:

> *I **don't know either**. I haven't been thinking about that enough. I think. I don't know. **I've never done it any other way**. **It's just who I am**. **I think you learn it, I think it's just a part of you**.*

Ella explained:

> *I **don't know**, I really have to think about that one because to me, it's because, well because **it is in my head**.*

Ewan espoused a very similar view:

> *I don't know, I have to have time to think about that. **I just hear it, it's in my head**. Sometimes it's verbalised but mainly it's in my head and it's like me thinking aloud and writing; that type of stuff.*

Principals also referred to tacit knowledge in connection with experience, not really knowing but basing their decisions on experience, as evidenced by Emma is her remark:

> *I guess **experience tells you** how to do that over time. Back to when your earlier start when you then come across things that you haven't had the experience in, it's what references you've got to draw to, whether they be the **mentors** or whether they be what your readings are or **things that have happened to you** that help you to then make some decisions about how you want to approach that.*

What is emerging in this study is knowledge embedded in practice which from the literature is seen to be tacit knowledge ((Polany1966; Grant 2007).

5.6.6. Social Comparison

In this study many principals also thought and reflected using comparison standards as a trigger to change their thinking and positively reignite their SWB. Evan, told the story of how he had had a particularly bad day and on the drive home he saw an adult male with a disability, dressed up in a tracksuit wearing a pretend medal, waving at all the cars that went by. This male looked very happy. The participant in the study looked at this male and compared him with himself and thought I have a lot to be happy with in my life. The participant in my study then drove home feeling much better.

Five principals, Ewan, Ella, Emma, Nev and Kirk, frequently referred to feeling low but then comparing themselves with a school down the road where things were not going well and this changed their thinking from "*woe is me*" to "*I am not going too bad*".

How these principals conceptualised their role impacted on the work that was done. All principals articulated that their role was to help others or make a positive difference in the lives of their students. This role conceptualisation may have influenced how principals have sought to maintain their SWB. In this study the principals appeared content with what they were paid. They did not articulate that money impacted on their SWB, whereas the concept of worthwhile work and having control over their actions so that they could be of benefit to others, seemed to link much closer to their SWB.

5.7. Summary

Chapter Five presented data in relation to the fourth research question: what are the dynamics of interplay between role, work and SWB? In answering this question principals made reference to a fairly standardised view of their role (i.e., make a positive difference in the lives of their students) and work (i.e., the smooth or competent running of the school), and the maintenance of SWB. In maintaining their SWB in their complex work environment principals utilised evaluation to make subjective judgements and then enacted one of three processes depending upon the complexity of the moment and their mindset.

Many principals talked about thought processes which occurred at both a level of conscious thought and below the level of conscious thought (tacit knowledge). The construct of tacit knowledge emerged strongly with data highlighting that principals are actively engaged in utilising processes to maintain their own SWB even at times if they are seemingly unaware of what they are doing. All eleven principals held a shared view that they needed to be competent at their worthwhile work which was about making a positive difference in the lives of their students. The drive to be competent at their worthwhile work also positively influenced their SWB when they evaluated that they had been successful at their worthwhile work.

As I again reflected on the data depicted in Chapters Four and Five I realised that when principals were talking about their worthwhile work they were referring to the core motivation (major reason for coming to work and acting in a particular way) which for the principals in this study, appeared to be ensuring that the school was run in a way

that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community. Upon further analysis the data revealed that there were two forms of core motivators that underpinned their way of working:

1. Primary Core Motivator – the school is run in a way that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community (competency based motivator) leading to the reflection *"My work is worthwhile"*; and

2. Self Core Motivator - maintain the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (involves emotional regulation) leading to the reflection *"I am worthwhile in this role"*.

If the principals evaluated their actions as being consistent with what a good principal would do they then believed that they were competent and this contributed to the maintenance of their SWB.

5.8.   Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research findings organised under sections addressing the fourth research questions which explored the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualised their role, performed their work and maintained their SWB. The chapter explored: SWB and socio-economic status; multiple processes (FIT; ATER; MegaPositioning) used by principals to maintain their SWB; ways of working differ according to experience and length in the career; cognitive evaluation with differing mindsets; cognitive evaluation and worthwhile work; tacit knowledge; social comparison.

In Chapter Six these findings will be viewed through a theoretical lens.

CHAPTER SIX –THEORISING AND EXPLANATORY FRAMEWORK

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter of the thesis presented the results of the study grouped around the research questions and introduced the emerging processes. This Chapter presents the theorising in relation to the overarching research question of: how do principals maintain their SWB?

This chapter has been organised into the following sections. The first section revisits the principals involved in this study, the moments they experience, and the processes they use to maintain SWB. Their definition of SWB and the negative and positive impactors to SWB (see Chapter Four) and core motivators (see Chapter Five) are then detailed. Section two presents themes emerging from the data including: ways of working, influential attributes; Self-talk; the Dialogical Self and dialogic culture; personal agency; and agentism. Section three presents the processes that principals are using to maintain their SWB and these include: FIT Process; ATER Process; and MegaPositioning, in Multiple Networked Realities (MNR). Section four provides a summary for the chapter.

6.2. Moments, Processes and SWB

The principals in this study were experienced in their work (i.e., had more than eight years in the role of principal, in at least two different contexts) and they were seen as being competent in their role. These principals also knew what SWB was and described it similarly to the theoretical definition that Diener (2009) proposed. The principals all believed that SWB was important to them.

The principals in this study had certain attributes that were important to the maintenance of SWB. These are: resilience, wisdom and self-knowledge.

These principals all shared a worldview where they saw their work as having four key elements: goal orientated ethical stance focusing on core motivators (i.e. making a positive difference in the lives of students); mitigation of negative happenings (i.e. competently dealing with multiple issues simultaneously whilst still remaining focused on the core business); descriptors focused on achieving the goal (i.e. coordination, delegation, decision-making, supervision, direction, problem solving, crisis management, guiding, prompting, supporting, steering decision-making); and self-reflection.

All of these principals work in a complex environment with the motivation of maintaining their SWB. In the complex environment principals come across moments that impact their SWB. Moments vary in their complexity which is determined by the principal's subjective evaluation (i.e., each principal may evaluate a moment differently). When this evaluation results in a lowering of SWB, processes are enacted to rebalance SWB. I developed Figure 6.1 to explain my understanding of how principals who experience a moment containing a problem, enact a process based upon their evaluation of the complexity of the moment, so that they can maintain their SWB.
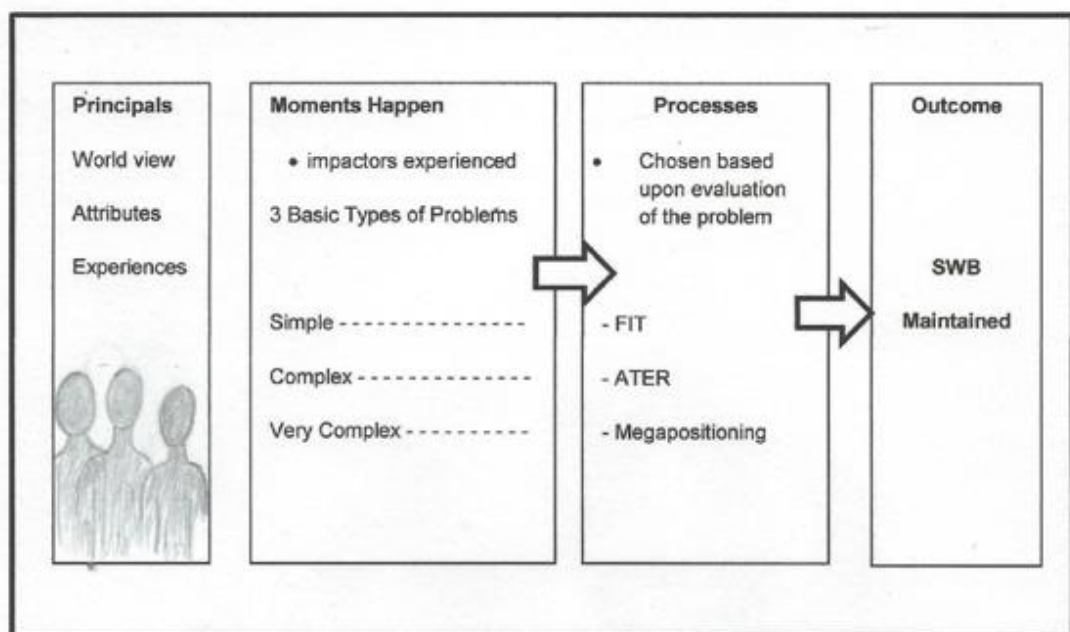

Figure 6.1: Principals, Moments, Process and SWB

The impactor triggers the evaluation (i.e., What is the problem? Is it simple, complex or very complex?) and the principal then decides on which process they use: FIT,

ATER or MegaPosition, depending upon the evaluation of the moment. If the principal feels that their SWB is a little low or unbalanced they use knowledge gained through experience (i.e., tacit knowledge) and ways of working (i.e., tactic knowing) to put themselves into a position where there SWB can be balanced again (i.e., they can feel good again). They rebalance their SWB by drawing upon three processes: FIT process for day to day balancing of SWB; ATER process for more complex situations and MegaPositioning for very complex situations.

MegaPositioning is about the capacity to problem-solve. Principals tend to use this as it works in very complex situations, and because it has been deemed to work there they then apply it to more common problems as it is seen as an effectual way of working.

6.2.1. Definition of Subjective Well-Being (SWB)

Interestingly all principals viewpoints showed alignment with Diener's (2009) definition of SWB as comprising of: life satisfaction; positive affect; and low level negative moods. Several principals outlined their understanding of SWB as also being linked to mental, physical and spiritual health with a strong focus on the importance of the right amount of sleep for clear thinking. Principals in the study also outlined numerous factors that impacted upon SWB.

6.2.2. Impactors, Positive Impactors and Core Motivators

Principals outlined factors that impacted upon their SWB, describing the impactors as positive or negative.

An **impactor** is defined as what a participant reported as having an impact upon their SWB. The principals talked about these factors in terms of both positive and negative impacts as a consequence of an evaluation of a moment. If the moment is evaluated in a negative manner, it is considered a negative impactor. For the purposes of this study a **negative impactor** is defined as that which detracts from a person's SWB as a consequence of a negative evaluation of a moment. The evaluation seems to be referred

against a standard of self-defined competency underpinned by the core motivation. Therefore an impactor becomes an impactor when the individual concludes that the outcome is going to have an effect upon:

1. their competency; and or
2. the lives of students; and or
3. positive relationships with staff and parents
4. their decision making and health.

As a consequence of a negative evaluation of a moment (i.e., impactor) principals take action (using specific ways of working), in an attempt to resolve the situation consistent with their core motivation (major reason for acting in a particular way).

For the purposes of this study a **positive impactor** is defined as that which enhances a person's SWB as a consequence of a positive evaluation of a moment. A positive impactor was linked to a way of working intended to achieve the core motivator and enable the person to make a positive evaluation of their competency and therefore feel satisfied with life or feel positive affect. This may involve relatively minor action such as re-thinking through a situation or it may require substantial strategising and on-going action. Importantly the principals utilised specific ways of working to mitigate or lessen negative impactors. If a negative impactor was experienced the principals endeavoured to use their ways of working to change the situation in order to actualise the core motivator and achieve a positive evaluation referenced against a standard of self-defined competency.

The data in this study revealed that there were two **core motivators** for the principals:

1. Primary Core Motivator – the school is run in a way that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community; and
2. Self-Core Motivator – maintain the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent, as per the individual's subjective standard of competency.

With respect to SWB the principal seemingly evaluates their 'moments' (which appear to be times involving decisions and actions) against 'Am I successful or not successful in achieving my core motivation (reason for acting in a particular way)?' Therefore if

principals evaluate their actions as being consistent with what a good principal would do (i.e., school is run in a way that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students) they then believe that they are competent and this maintains their SWB.

6.3. Themes Emerging From The Data

Although the idiosyncratic nature of each participant's experiences are unique in many ways, there were a number of key themes that emerged. The key themes included: ways of working; influential attributes; Self-talk, the Dialogical Self and dialogic culture; personal agency; and agentism.

6.3.1. Ways of Working

The term **ways of working** arose from the data and it describes an activity based pattern that encapsulates how actions are conceptualised, prioritised, and performed on the basis of personal and socio-cultural contextual knowledge acquired through experiential learning. Principals in this study had learn this by working in specific ways that helped generate positive impacts to their SWB.

The school principals are constructing professional repertoires of practice through reflective critique of their own and others' experiences and this knowledge is refined and verified through deep reflection. In sharing their experiences most principals linked to three attributes which were influential to their SWB: resilience; wisdom; and self-knowledge. The majority of the principals also embraced what is termed within the literature as the dialogical self (Hermans 1996a), as a way of working.

The data presented in Chapters Four and Five, also revealed some very complex ways of working where principals utilised ways of working best suited to their individual context and their expertise. In this study processes are defined as a series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end. Ways of working involve the application of tacit knowledge and communication skills in order to achieve a desired outcome. Ways of working are dynamic depending upon the circumstances (i.e., moments) of a given

situation. As an integral part of their way of working, and depending upon the moment, the principals in this study commonly utilised one or more of three delineated processes: FIT (Fuel It) process; ATER (Awakening, Thinking, Enacting, Reflecting) process; and MegaPositioning. In two of these processes; FIT process and MegaPositioning, tacit knowledge was strongly evidenced.

It was found in this study that tacit knowledge was goal focused, and appeared to be developed by the individual over time in an action orientated manner, informed by experience, and personally perceived as having value (Grant, 2007). In this study tacit knowledge seemed to be: (a) procedural; and (b) relevant to the attainment of the participant's primary and core motivator. In this study principals have repeatedly demonstrated the use of tacit knowledge, knowledge that they appear to have deepened over time through experiential learning and are almost unaware of having. Neither tacit knowledge nor tacit knowing appear as a focus in the SWB literature but in this study tacit knowledge is shown as integral in maintaining SWB.

The appropriate application of tacit knowledge within individual contexts (i.e., tacit knowing) was what participants in this study referred to as wisdom. Sternberg (1998) presents the view that wisdom has at its core the notion of tacit knowledge, tacit knowledge about oneself, others, and situational contexts (Polanyi, 1976). Seemingly, the principals through a level of wisdom had learnt a process that was effectual in situations often shared by a specific role group (i.e., school principals).

6.3.2. Influential Attributes

All principals outlined three strongly influential attributes that they drew on in order to maintain their SWB: resilience, wisdom and self-knowledge.

6.3.2.1. Resilience

This study did not extend to deeply investigating resilience however principals did put forward a meaning of it in terms of the 'ability to cope in complex situations'. In the data the concept arose in relation to principals' personal attributes. I therefore looked

to the literature for a concise definition. In terms of providing a definition of resilience the literature presents alternate viewpoints with noted controversy around whether resilience is a: characteristic or personal quality; a process; or an outcome (Ahern, Ark & Byers, 2008). There is however consensus that resilience consists of two components: a high-risk situation; and successful adaptation (Masten, 2001; Schilling, 2008). In this study resilience is seen to be "the success (positive developmental outcomes) of the (coping) process involved (given the circumstances)" (Leipold & Greve, 2009, p. 41).

6.3.2.2. Wisdom

The concept of wisdom also arose from the data in conjunction to principals' description of personal attributes. The data depicted that principals defined wisdom in relation to the ability of 'judging rightly' and following the soundest course of action possible at the time, based on knowledge, experience, and understanding. Wisdom also seems to be evidenced in this study in the way that principals utilised reflection and knowledge of the Self, both of which will be discussed later outlined in this chapter. The finding in this study highlighted the importance of wisdom in maintaining SWB, in particular the different types of wisdom; collective wisdom (i.e., externally drawn from others) and internal wisdom (i.e., internally drawn from the Self).

Juni and Eckstein (2015), found that human beings formulate inferences around how information is disseminated across individuals and time, and dynamically change their joint decision-making algorithms (both perceptual and cognitive) resulting in enhanced benefits of collective wisdom. They termed this as flexible human wisdom and this aligned with this study finding in that, participants made reference to perceptual and cognitive wisdom and there was an evident level of flexibility in how they enacted decision-making in complex information environments where constructs like personal confidence, discussion and group confidence were taken into account. This study also surfaced a strong focus on self-reflection which took into account collective feedback or discussion in the affirmation of decisions reached. This did not mean that group consensus always informed the outcome but rather that the viewpoint of the group was acknowledged and taken into account in the decision making process.

The definition of wisdom that arose in this study appeared to align with Sternberg's (1998) research in the area. Sternberg (1998) advocated that the development of wisdom linked to six antecedent components: (a) knowledge, including an understanding of its presuppositions and meaning as well as its limitations; (b) processes, including an understanding of what problems should be solved automatically and what problems should not be so solved; (c) a judicial thinking style, characterised by the desire to judge and evaluate things in an in-depth way; (d) personality, including tolerance of ambiguity and of the role of obstacles in life; (e) motivation, especially the motivation to understand what is known and what it means; and (f) environmental context, involving an appreciation of the contextual factors in the environment that lead to various kinds of thoughts and actions. Sternberg's (1998) articulation of the development of wisdom aligned with the findings in this study as participants explained wisdom in terms of tacit knowing. Participants talked about the components of wisdom in a similar way to Sternberg: linking the construct to knowledge; utilising problem-solving and decision making processes which were judicial in an effort to judge and evaluate things in an in-depth way to achieve the best possible outcome for multiple people in given scenarios; choosing to use communication strategies that included a tolerance of ambiguity; acting in accordance with their primary core motivator (competency based) and their Self-core motivator (involving emotional regulation) ; and taking into account contextual factors of their environment. Types of motivators which surfaced in this study are explained in more depth in section 7.2.1.

6.3.2.3.   Self-knowledge

All principals in this study made reference to the Self. They talked about the importance of getting to know the Self as you would get to know a person over time. This study did not seek to explore the concept of the Self but it arose from the data. Participants made reference to self-knowledge with the general meaning of what one knows about oneself, especially developing an understanding of how one thinks and acts in complex situations and how one copes under pressure. This study takes a philosophical view of self-knowledge adopting Gertler's definition where self-

knowledge is deemed to be "knowledge of one's particular mental states, including one's beliefs, desires and sensations" (Gertler, 2011, p. 1).

In current research in relation to SWB, resilience, wisdom and Self-knowledge have been viewed through many lenses especially in relation to personality types (Headey & Wearing, 1989; Diener, 2009). It is beyond the scope of this research to investigate whether resilience, wisdom and self-knowledge can be or should be conceptualised in this way. It is however worth noting that principals in this study directly attributed resilience, wisdom and self-knowledge to the maintenance of their SWB as evidenced in the number of references to these in the data set (this is discussed later in this chapter). Research by Ryan and Deci (2000) and Diener (2009) also link to resilience, wisdom and self-knowledge to SWB.

6.3.3. Self-talk, the Dialogical Self and Dialogic Culture

In this study all principals made reference to Self-talk (also referred to in the data as head talk), which was predominately motivational ("You can do this") and involved one voice in their head. The majority of principals engaged in some dialogue with the Self where there were two or more voices present in their Self talk.

6.3.3.1. Self-talk

Whilst head talk, Self-talk and voices appeared to be the same process, further analysis showed that the Self talk with one voice appeared to be strongly motivational "*Come on pick yourself up*" and at times cautionary "*I don't think that's a good idea. If you do that you know what will happen*". Self-talk with two voices seemed to be used more for forward planning, reflection and problem solving and this is referred to as "Dialogical Self".

6.3.3.2. The Dialogic Self

Principals in this study made many references to having internal dialogue with themselves. The data revealed that principals specifically explored dialogic encounters with Self and others, as pedagogical moments actioned serendipitously. In this study the internal dialogue with the Self is termed as the Dialogical Self.

The theory of the Dialogical Self has been written about extensively by Hermans 1996a, 1996b, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2006) and colleagues (Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992). It has its theoretical foundations in contextualist and constructionist psychology (McIlveen & Patton, 2007).

The enactment of more than two voices, was more dialogical, and used for deeper internal reflection, and multiple scenario forward planning from multiple perspectives. The scenarios were then played out in dialogue to help with the selection of the most appropriate scenario for application to the context. In developing the scenarios principals used self-reflection (informed by feedback gathered in an on-going manner from multiple sources) and critical analysis to problem solve from multiple perspectives. The principals also appeared to draw upon knowledge gathered from experiential or vicarious learning (learnt from observing or listening to others) and link this with deep reflection and a sense of personal agency where the user believed they had some control over the outcome (i.e., tacit knowing).

McIlveen and Patton (2007) cleverly utilise the metaphor of the internet to explain the Dialogical Self. The internet exists but we cannot touch the cyberspace. The cyberspace is there and can be manipulated through the use of computers and mobile devices. This is similar to the Dialogical Self. It cannot be seen but it can be used. The brain and the body are the vehicle for the Self. "The Dialogical Self is conceived of as socialised, historical, cultural embodied and decentralised" (Hermans, 2003, p. 89). This conceptualisation of the Dialogical Self was evidenced in this study where participants enacted it as a vehicle for the Self

6.3.3.3. Dialogic Culture

Evidenced in this data, was a majority of the principals talking about having internal dialogue in order to problem solve so frequently that it became part of the way they experienced the world. The internal dialogue seemed to grow into a part of who they were, what they were doing, and how they were thinking. This behaviour of constant internal dialogue was shared by the majority of principals in this study and is referred to as 'dialogic culture' as it manifested as a collective group of voices.

Data evidenced that for most principals talking to the Self and simultaneously talking with external others was an integral part of each day, part of the daily routine and characteristic of themselves as they participated in their world of work and engaged in varying social contexts. In this study the term 'dialogic culture' is then seen to include all the characteristic activities of the talking Self.

McAlpine and Amundsen (2009) recognise the role of dialogue for the Self as individuals shaping an understanding of the Self, and this understanding is based on a constant dialogue with the communities with which they wish to become identified and with which they may find themselves in tension. They also aver that "identity talk" is used as the "means to both express these [personal goals] and negotiate them with others" (p. 112).

6.3.4. Agentism

In this study agentism is a term used to explain the behaviour of taking action to primarily manage situations, in a way that involves utilising knowledge of the self and knowledge of others. Whilst some participants only seemed to use agentism to manage situations, others appeared to go beyond this and strive to influence and control situations. Whilst others looked to not only influence and control factors but to do so in a way that engineered desired short term and long term outcome, termed in this study as 'strategic agentism'.

One example of agentism is where principals recognised that their SWB was low and they sought to better manage it and in so doing they were aware that they needed to

manage it in order to work competently (as determined by the individual) in their role as principal of their school community.

A clear message that came through the analysis of the data were that principals used agentism in relation to their colleagues. Principals showed concern for each other, even when the other principal was not really part of their social or closer professional network they still offered support, sometimes indirectly by getting someone better known to the person to make contact with them. The findings from this study are also consistent with long standing research findings about collegial support (Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Odden & Sias, 1997; Andrews & Lewis, 2007).

Agentic is a broad term that is comprised of varying forms of being agentism, having personal agency, through to strategic agentism. The delineation of each is not always clear so there is some overlap. The data did show a specific difference between agentism and strategic agentism. Strategic agentism was clearly a drive to influence or control outcomes that are deemed to maintain SWB through deliberate and strategic forethought and engineering to achieve the desired outcome. Strategic agentism was clearly evidenced when participants utilised MegaPositioning as a process and it will therefore be explored in association with that process later in this chapter.

6.3.5.   Personal Agency

Throughout the data set the concept of personal agency arose. Personal agency in this study could be seen to be the sense of a person utilising their actions to manage, control or influence situational outcomes. There is a large amount of literature on agency with many theorists linking to Bandura (2001) who is seen as a leader in the field. Bandura asserts that agency refers to an individual's capacity to exert control over the human ability to make and enact choices to influence the quality and nature of their life. Personal agency refers to making attempts to take personal actions to influence one's environment (Bandura, 2001).

In utilising personal agency principals made reference to internal dialogue and a dialogic culture as a way of increasing their capacity to manage or influence and exert

control over situations in order to obtain their core motivator. In doing so the principal could improve the quality of their life and the lives of others. Personal agency in this research is seen to explain leaders "behaviours as a function of individual capacities, motivations, and traits" (Seashore et al., 2010, p. 13). Based on their evaluation of a situation the principals in this study made a decision to work in particular ways in order to enact outcomes that they felt were more desirable according to their core motivators

6.4. Processes Used to Maintain SWB

To exhibit agentism in relation to SWB an individual must firstly recognise their SWB balance and then secondly perceive the significance of SWB in relation to the maintenance of SWB. The individual then decides either consciously or tacitly, to do something about endeavouring to maintain their SWB.

Every principal made a choice to try and rebalance their SWB because it was important for how well they did their job, delivering a feeling of competency. All principals also made remarks to the effect that SWB was important as it impacted upon how they felt as a person which reciprocally impacted their personal and professional relationships. There were three distinct yet related processes that the principals enacted to maintain their SWB. The first process will be termed the FIT process; the second the ATER process and the third process will be termed MegaPositioning.

6.4.1. Fuel It (FIT) Process

Principals in this study all demonstrated that they regularly engaged in activities that helped to maintain their SWB. Principals utilised a wide variety of ways of working with both a tacit and cognisant knowledge that they were doing so in order to maintain their SWB (refer to Figure 6.2 which depicts how SWB generally stays in the maintained area).
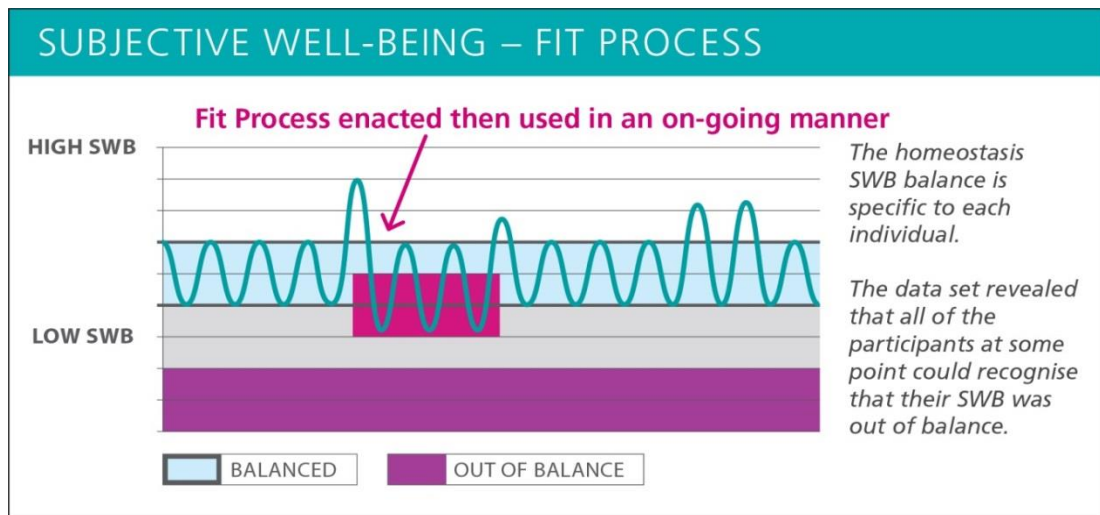
Figure 6.2: SWB – FIT Process

All principals also made reference to "feeling better", or "thinking better" or "with more energy" as a result of engaging in ways of working to maintain SWB as a way of working (i.e., SWB in the balanced area as shown in Figure 6.2).

Principals shared a variety of ways of working that they utilised to maintain their SWB, sometimes terming them as '*maintenance strategies',* hence my adopting the term maintenance strategies. The principals either consciously or tacitly, chose a maintenance strategy in order to make themselves feel better or positively influence the evaluations they were making about their life. The maintenance strategies were eclectic (e.g., going in search of and obtaining positive feedback from others; not taking work home; and remaining calm with techniques like deep breathing)

The principals clearly articulated that they tended to use these ways of working very flexibly, sometimes making conscious choices to do so but also, depending on the context and situation, without cognisantly knowing that they were doing so. It was only with probing questions from me as a researcher that at times the principals endeavoured to explain what they had been doing, in essence providing an insight into their tacit knowledge. The enactment of the maintenance strategies seemed to be a part of their regular practice where they used this way of working because it fulfilled the need of feeling good and maintaining their SWB as depicted in Figure 6.2. When principals felt a little bit out of balance with their SWB they generally increased the

number of maintenance strategies so could rebalance their SWB and maintain it at a level that they subjectively and subconsciously were happy with.

6.4.1.1. Basic Needs

The utilisation of the FIT process appears to be underpinned by the need to feel "good" as a person and within the work environment. Principals said they felt good and this was defined differently and subjectively in terms with satisfaction with life. All principals reported that they worked in particular ways in order to maintain their SWB so that they could competently perform their work and feel good about what they had achieved. This need to feel good can be viewed in different ways from within the literature such as self regulation (Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000) but for this study it is viewed from the frame of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 6.3) and aligned with the data from this study .

Maslow determines that people are motivated to achieve certain needs that he presents in a five stage model that can be divided into basic needs or deficiency needs (e.g. physiological, safety, love, and esteem) and growth needs (and self-actualisation). Throughout the data it appears that principals using the FIT process are making reference to what can be referred to as basic needs: physiological. It is beyond the scope of this study to explicitly explore the needs that principals are endeavouring to satisfying but it is important to have a frame of awareness of human needs as needs were evidenced within the data set.
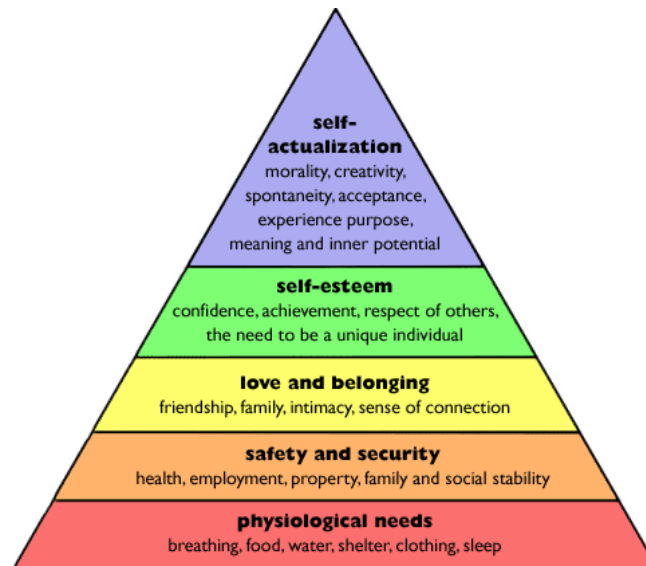
Figure 6.3: An interpretation of Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs

According to Maslow (1943) one must satisfy lower level basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs. Once these needs have been reasonably satisfied, one may be able to reach the highest level called self-actualisation (Simons, Irwin, & Drinnien, 1987). Maslow avers that every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualisation, as depicted in Figure 6.3.

Principals in this study appeared to have a clear understanding of their needs, and used this knowledge to know when their need, should be satisfied and when the needs of others were more important than their own.

6.4.1.2. Key Components of the FIT Process

The FIT process consists of four key components: agentism; commitment to Worthwhile Work; positive thinking; and self-knowledge.

6.4.1.2.1. Agentism with the FIT Process

Once the individual has realised their SWB is low they then think about what needs to be done in order to improve the SWB levels. This is often done in a tacit manner where recognition of low SWB and the engagement of ways of working to maintain SWB

274

are part of everyday life. This was evidenced in repeated comments like "It's just part of what I do. I don't really think about it". In doing this, principals engage in a deliberate process, that of agentism, using their capacity to improve their SWB levels.

6.4.1.2.2.   Commitment to Worthwhile Work

The individuals are also committed to their work which they perceive as worthwhile. A broad definition of Worthwhile Work was developed from principals' statements.

> Worthwhile Work is taken to mean: that perception which drives the individual engaged in their work as they believe their work to be important with moral imperative driving the ability to make the choice to act.

All principals commented on their Worthwhile Work making a positive difference in the lives of children and this commitment to Worthwhile Work made them feel important and valued and provided them the drive to action. This Worthwhile Work appeared as a major driver for their decision making in relation to not only prioritising, performing and reflecting upon tasks but also for their resilience. The individuals also engage in positive thinking to deliberately convince themselves that they 'can do it' and plans their actions accordingly. The individuals then enact the plan with a feeling of hope, a belief that they will feel better and things will improve.

Within the psychology literature Worthwhile Work shows some alignment with what Dik and Duffy term as Calling (2009). In this study Worthwhile Work was also linked by principals to the concepts of self-knowledge and positive thinking. The concept of positive thinking is strongly evident in the literature (see the work of Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). The principals knew their strengths and weaknesses and believed that specific skills could be utilised to achieve the outcome they desired. They also externally sought input into the decision making and strategising process so they could obtain the best possible outcome for their students.

6.4.1.2.3.   Positive Thinking

In this study principals put forward that positive thinking was the result of the individual thinking positively and choosing to adopt an attitude that fostered optimism. The data depicted that this positive thinking (i.e., choosing an attitude of optimism) was a mindset that individuals used to interpret situations and events as being best or in an optimum state (Seligman, 2002). In this study positive thinking was eluded to by principals as having the element of motivation "Come on you can do this" and motivational comparison "look at that guy with only one leg, he can still get around and here I am whinging, toughen up and get on with it". Principals adopted positive thinking as a deliberate way of maintaining their SWB.

Positive thinking is strongly linked to the discipline of positive psychology where psychologists such as Seligman (2002) have focused on optimism and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) introduced the notion of flow and Maslow talked about "peak experiences" (1970 p. 48). During peak experiences individuals think, act and feel in a more clear and accurate manner, they are the "transient moments of self-actualisation" (Maslow, 1970 p. 48). Self-actualisation is highest on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and it refers to a continual process of developing one's potentialities (Frager & Fadiman, 2005).

Taylor and Brown (1988) suggest that people are actually healthier mentally if their sense of reality is biased in a positive direction. They pose that healthier people tend to overestimate the degree of control they have on the environment, tend to see themselves in an overly positive light, and tend to be unrealistically optimistic about the future. Exactly what constitutes optimise and its relationship with reality is still up for some debate.

6.4.1.2.4.   Self-knowledge

The principals clearly demonstrated the importance of self-knowledge in relation to the maintenance of their SWB, with continual reference to self-knowledge. What exactly is self-knowledge? There are considerable and varying views regarding self-knowledge. Arising from this data self-knowledge is seen to be what the individual

person knows about them self. Self-knowledge appeared to be overtly expressed to the individual principals in the form of their self-talk and head talk, where they became aware of their thinking. I had not set out specifically to research self-knowledge so when it came up strongly in the data set I looked to the literature to see whether the principals' concept aligned with that presented in the literature.

Self-knowledge can be seen as epistemologically special for two reasons; firstly in that it is especially certain or secure; and secondly from the perspective that one uses a unique method to determine one's own mental states (Gertler, 2011). The inner person, the unconscious mind, the alternate personality, they are not real entities but features of the conceptual self (Neisse, 1988) and self-concept is but one form of self-knowledge.

Neisse (1988) avers that there are five different types of self-knowledge.

> The ecological self is the Self as directly perceived with respect to the immediate physical environment; the interpersonal self, also directly perceived, is established by species-specific signals of emotional rapport and communication; the extended self is based on memory and anticipation; the private self appears when we discover that our conscious experiences are exclusively our own; the conceptual self or "self-concept" draws its meaning from a network of socially-based assumptions and theories about human nature in general and ourselves in particular. (p. 35)

These selves are held together by specific forms of stimulus information and seldom experienced as distinct or separate. They vary in their developmental histories, in the pathologies to which they are subject, in the accuracy with which we become acquainted with them and generally in what they add to human experience (Neisse, 1988).

Self-knowledge encapsulates introspection as a method of knowing, literally 'looking within' to conceptualise how we grasp our own mental states, one that differs from how the 'outer' world is grasped, namely through perception (Gertler, 2011). Other researchers such as Dretske (1994) assert that we ascertain our thoughts by looking outwards, to the state of world that our thoughts represent. Whereas Neisse (1988)

articulates that each different type of self-knowledge adds to the entire experience of the continuity of self and it is the whole individual who acts in the real environment.

Anscombe (1981) emphasises the significance of self-awareness averring that action requires awareness of intentions to act and awareness of one's self. This self-understanding underpins responsible agency as we strongly desire to understand ourselves and our reasons for acting (Velleman, 1989). Neisse (1988) contends that "We know ourselves not only as objects of thought and experience but also as objects of perception, genuinely engaged with our fellow human beings and our shared environment" (p. 56).

The concept of self-knowledge arising from the data aligned to that presented in the literature (Gertler, 2011).

6.4.1.3. Summary

The four key components of agentism: commitment to worthwhile work; positive thinking; and self-knowledge were used in an on-going manner in the FIT process. However when the principals came under more pressure and were focused on their work they appeared to lose some connect with their SWB levels and when this occurred another distinct process was used; the ATER process.

6.4.2. ATER Process

The data revealed that all principals made inferences to a process that they were utilising to maintain their SWB when they became aware that it needed maintenance. This process involved four key actions: Awakening, Thinking, Enacting and Reflecting, hence the name ATER process.

The awakening occurs as a result of a trigger event or situation that was evaluated as negative and the individual suddenly becomes aware that SWB is low. Sometimes the awareness comes with a moment of personal epiphany or it is brought about by a

conversation with a significant other where the individual is lead to think about how they actually feel and how they are behaving. The low level of SWB is acknowledged by the individual and the individual then evaluates and plans what needs to be done to lift SWB levels and selects 'intervention strategies' as a way of working in order to maintain their SWB (depicted in Figure 6.4).
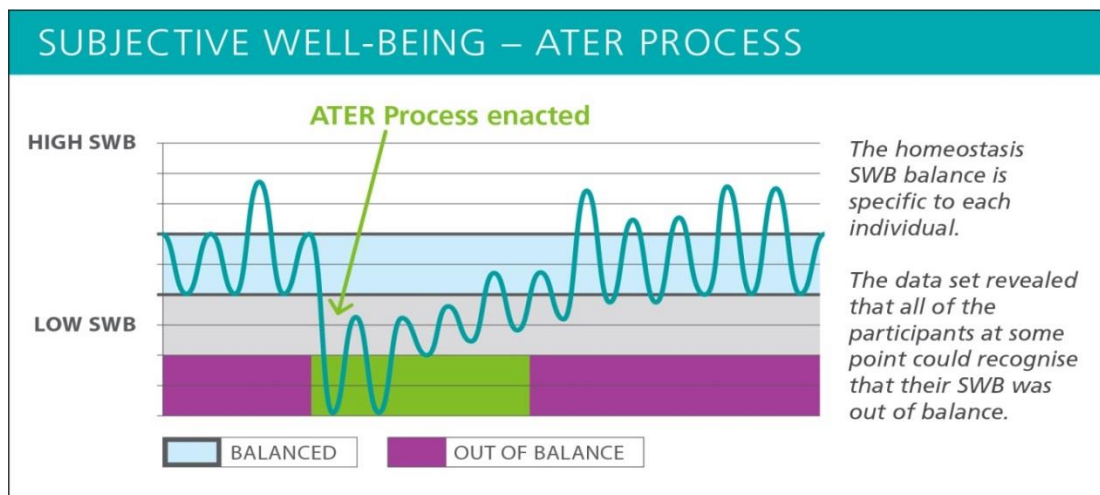
Figure 6.4: SWB – ATER Process

The term intervention strategies arose from the data where several principals outlined how they self-intervened in order to change their thinking and maintain their SWB (see Chapter Four). Once plans to maintain SWB have been actioned the individual then internally reflects about their SWB level, monitoring to see if enough has been done to improve their SWB as shown in Figure 6.4.

This can involve some external checking with a significant other to obtain feedback on their external behaviours (some principals did this, some did not). The data did not reveal why some principals utilised externalised feedback in relation to their SWB. In this thoughtful and planned manner the individual then improves the level of their SWB.

6.4.2.1. Basic Needs

The term 'basic need' was introduced earlier in the chapter in relation to the FIT process and will now be extended upon, for its connect with the ATER process.

The utilisation of ATER Process appears to be underpinned by specific needs: the need to have an element of control in all situations so that positive outcomes for students can be obtained; the need to feel competent in rebalancing SWB and the need for relatedness and connection with others. These needs could be linked to what Maslow (1943) described as 'higher', inclusive of love and belonging, esteem and self actualisation.

Once it is recognised that SWB is low (the awakening) the individual has a need to take control over how they are feeling and acting. They recognise the possibility that others may also perceive they have low SWB and this may impact on how others perceive them in terms of competency. The individual then strives to feel competent by working in particular ways that maintain their SWB. The individual also has a need to be connected to others realising that behaviours that they may have enacted whilst their SWB was low have possibly impacted negatively on others. This is particularly the case with 'significant others', people that they have trusting and close relationships with. Individuals then engage in endeavouring to repair the impacts of negative behaviour on others.

6.4.2.2. Key Components of the ATER Process

The ATER process (Awakening; Thinking; Enacting; and Reflecting) also consisted of the same four components that were attributed to the FIT process (as outlined in section 6.3.1.2): agentism and for some principals strategic agentism (see last paragraph 6.4.3.2.2); commitment to worthwhile work; positive thinking; and self-knowledge. How and when these components were used (tacit knowledge in relation to the best time for their practical implementation) differentiated the process from the FIT process and linked with the ATER process (see Figure 6.5).

ATER Process

Unbalanced
SWB

Balanced
SWB

Awakening

Reflecting
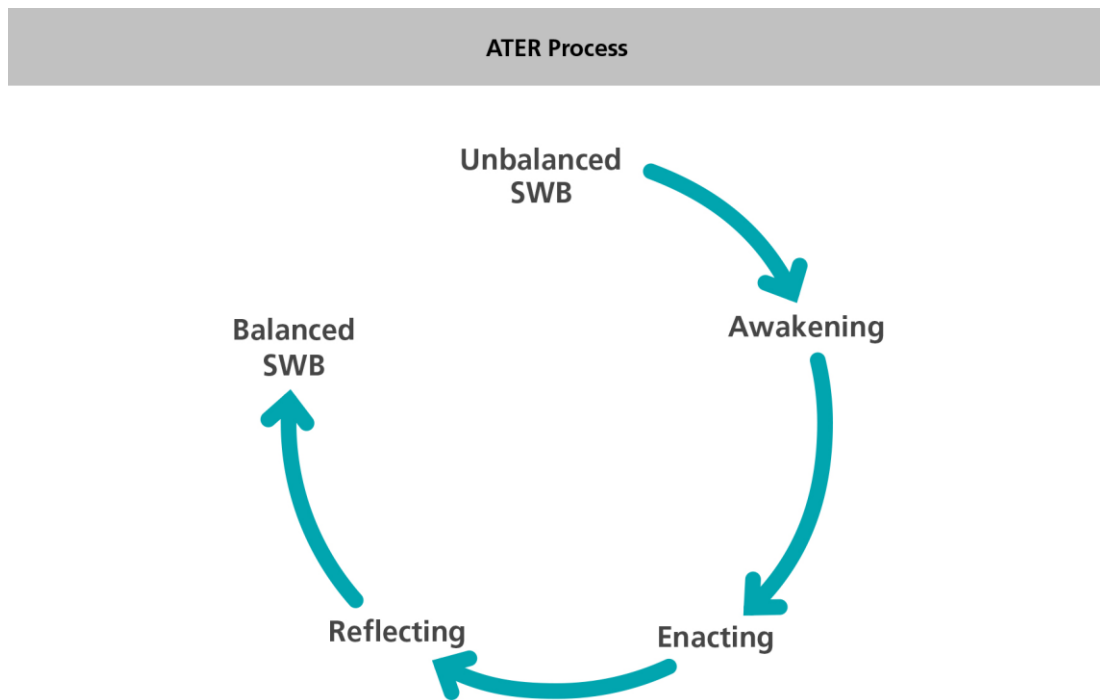
Enacting

Figure 6.5: *The ATER Process.*

The ATER process shown in Figure 6.5 was developed by me to capture how the individual moves from unacknowledged unbalanced SWB, to acknowledged unbalanced SWB (Awakening), and then onto taking personal action (Enacting) to rebalance SWB and undertaking reflection of how effective actions are, and whether a conscious prolonged effort is needed with using strategies (Reflecting), until SWB is maintained (Balanced SWB).

The data provides some insight into the busyness of a principal's work life with continual human interaction. The principals describe a focus on making a difference in the lives of others and this occurs often to the point that they put the needs of others first (i.e., they seem unaware of their unbalanced SWB) even when their SWB appears to become unbalanced. This busyness has been documented (Lacey, 2007; Mulford, 2003) and it appears to act as a barrier between the school principal and their own Self-awareness that their SWB is being depleted. It is only when the awareness comes through some sort of personal **awakening** that the principal appears to realise that their SWB is low so something needs to be done to change this.

Once the principal became aware of the SWB level, they then decided to **enact** strategies to balance their SWB. The recognition and desire for positive change that enables the maintenance of SWB fits in with Bandura's (2001) theory of personal agency. *Personal* agency is the process by which an individual affects what she or he can directly control. Bandura also states that in some cases, the person uses indirect influence exerted on circumstances beyond their direct control, vicariously through others.

6.4.3. MegaPositioning

All of the principals involved in this study engaged in reflection to deepen their understanding of themselves. Most principals did this with a view to further positively influencing or shaping future outcomes, recognising the elements that they believed they could personally control or exercise more influence over. These principals utilised what I am referring to as 'MegaPositioning'.

> MegaPositioning is the purposeful engagement of a process involving the dialogical self and complex problem solving to engineer a desired outcome. It is an internal way of working that enables the user to "best select how to discuss, engage with and handle complex issues with others" so they are in the best position to be competent in the given situation.

MegaPositioning involves drawing on knowledge from past personal and vicarious experiences and taking this knowledge to the current situation in the form of a dialogic culture in an endeavour to engineer a desired outcome.
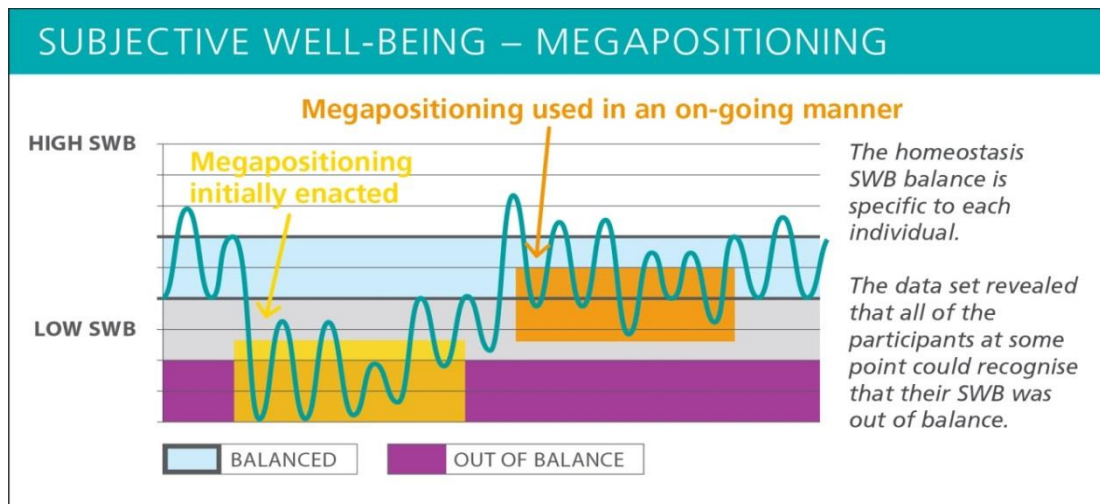
Figure 6.6: SWB –MegaPositioning

MegaPositioning initially appears to be triggered after the ATER process has been utilised and where an event or situation is perceived as extremely complex and negatively stressful (as shown in Figure 6.6). The individual has a strong desire to influence or control the outcome and also a belief that such control is possible if the situation can be cognitively dissected with pieces engineered to create a different outcome. MegaPositioning then becomes the tool for that engineering, allowing the user to construct a more desirable outcome, thereby helping the user to maintain SWB (see Figure 6.6).

The user congers up a person or people from their past (someone deemed as having expertise) and then talks to them internally in their head. They use tacit knowing engaging "in head" discussion to obtain knowledge, wisdom and guidance (e.g., picturing a mentor and also hearing their voice, like replaying a movie snippet but the movie is interactive where the user can debate with the person they have conjured up to refine an idea). This is being done simultaneously whilst interacting with a real person or people in the current situation.

Tacit knowing guides the principals to engage the process of MegaPositioning. Richly nuanced knowledge is constructed where reflection and action are balanced by the principals, poised upon the threshold of debate of what is in the best interests of the Self and what is in the best interests of all others known to be connected to the situation. The main driver is two-fold: a desire to control the situation combined with

a belief that they can have some control over the situation if they direct forethought towards it and expertly utilise their skillset. The possibility of constructive change to an outcome is also embraced. Beyond the feeling of hope of improvement, it involves ownership, drive and commitment to actual improvement of both the Self, and the situation and overall SWB.

Principals utilising MegaPositioning seemingly embrace deep reflection, the Dialogical Self and other dialogic encounters to mediate negative moods, enhance positive effect and life satisfaction which in turn enhances their own self-knowledge generation. The more competently principals are at performing their job, the more positively they impact a school community in which they work. The essence of this ontological principle for forming, informing and transforming networked knowledge of the school principal is its fusion of being and becoming – a fusionist ontology (Blasch & Plano, 2003) that operates across generational, sectoral, systemic, and professional borders.

MegaPositioning (see figure 6.7) allows the user to have more control over situational outcomes, thereby potentially mitigating negative outcomes and increasing in the user a feeling of competency where the users SWB is improved because they are more satisfied with life, experience higher levels of positive affect and low level negative moods (Diener, 2009).
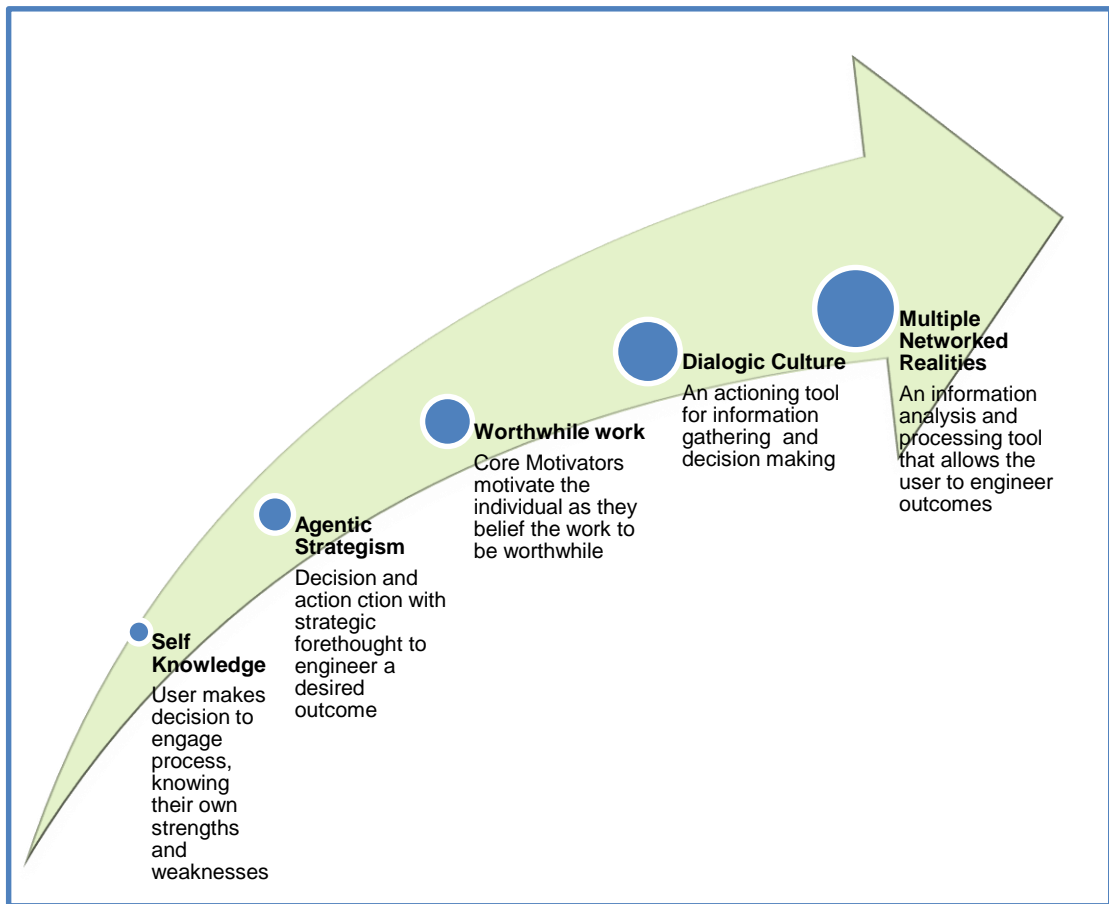
Figure 6.7: The Components of MegaPositioning

In engaging MegaPositioning the users were satisfying several basic needs, the most evident of these was control, competency and relatedness.

6.4.3.1. Basic Needs Underpinning MegaPositioning

The utilisation of MegaPositioning appears to be underpinned by three basic needs: the need to have an element of control in all situations; the need to feel competent and the need for relatedness.

Individuals strive for an element of control, by continually reviewing, and reflecting in the aim of choosing ways of working (inclusive of strategies, processes and behaviours) that will potentially mitigate a negative outcome. Users of MegaPositioning strive to obtain what they perceive to be better outcomes and their desire to be seen as competent. In order to feel more competent they also deliberately engage dialogic voices that they distinguish as competent or expert in a mentor or

experienced others and the competent mentor and experienced others may well have differing dialogical viewpoints. Users of MegaPositioning also seek relatedness, needing to form multiple connections and networks to gain multiple external viewpoints and maximise knowledge acquisition. This then links back to control and competency, as the more informed the user is the more control they have over the situation and the more competent they feel. Begley (2006) asserts that "in order to lead effectively, individuals in any leadership role need to understand human nature and the motivations of individuals in particular" (p. 571). This level of deep understanding was evidenced in this study when participants utilised the MegaPositioning Process.

6.4.3.2. Components of MegaPositioning

There are five key components in MegaPositioning: self-knowledge; strategic agentism; commitment to Worthwhile Work; a dialogic culture and Multiple Networked Realities (MNR). Self-knowledge equips the user with what could be deemed as responsive instruction manual equipping the user with a plethora of ways of working that can be used in the situation that has arisen based upon how best to maximise their own strengths and mitigate their weaknesses. Agentic Strategism basically refers to a desire to influence or control the outcome through deliberate forethought and strategic engineering. A commitment to Worthwhile Work acts as a driver keeping the individual engaged in their work as they believe their work to be important with moral imperative. MNR is primarily about strategically controlling outcomes so that the most desirable outcome from the perspective of the user is more likely achieved. Whilst many of these components were also part of both the FIT and the ATER process how and when these components were used (i.e. tacit knowledge) differentiated the process and saw them linked with the MegaPositioning.

6.4.3.2.1. Self-knowledge Used for MegaPositioning

The principals utilising MegaPositioning in the study appeared to spend a great deal of Self think time pulling apart the events and interactions, focusing on each individual action from multiple perspectives questioning "what if" this was applied next time or now, how would or could the outcome be changed. They then seemed to flit in and out

of Self think time over the course of the work day, acquiring information suitable to the situation for problem solving, accessing remembered advice, replaying the words of mentors in their head, and engaging the Dialogical Self before seeking external multiple pieces of feedback from a variety of perceived skilled and trusted people that were part of their network.

After seeking the feedback or input from external others they also then used this again with the Dialogical Self in a way that involves deep self-awareness and internal dialogue. This shows some alignment to what McCrae and Costa (1991) theorised in relation to measures of SWB - Openness and Experience. According to this theory, "open" individuals are characterised by "both a broader and deeper scope of awareness and by a need to enlarge and examine experience. . . [such that Openness to Experience is] positively correlated with both positive and negative affect" (McCrae & Costa, 1991, p. 228). Openness to Experience was then predicted to act as a "double-edged sword" that predisposes individuals to feel both the good and the bad more deeply (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). Whilst this study did not explore the "double-edged sword" it is worth noting that individuals in this study reported feeling depths of despair as evidenced in situations they disclosed where students were harmed or died and when they had made a particularly poor decision which negatively impacted on others. Individuals also shared situations where they felt very high feelings of SWB and these were predominately linked to peer or supervisor recognition.

MegaPositioning involves deep honest reflection which may at times be painful as the user is confronted with their weaknesses and spends time exploring them. It is firstly introspective and then externally focused where critical feedback of perceived people with expertise is actively sought. This feedback is then deeply reflected upon again, and pulled apart and evaluated allowing the user to more in-depthly become acquainted with their weakness. Strategically the user then thinks through and plans how best to mitigate their weaknesses with what may now be deemed more effectual ways of working.

6.4.3.2.2. Strategic Agentism

Strategic agentism is a belief that situations can be controlled or influenced, through the engagement of strategic thinking and planning and the enactment of specifically selected ways of working so that a more desirable outcome can be engineered. This engineering takes into account the shared intentions and goals of those involved with the users' personal Self-interests and moral code to shape a common goal that others can share or be influenced to share. Most principals demonstrated that they were utilising strategic agentism.

Strategic agentism is inclusive of what Bandura (2001) termed as forethought where the temporal extension of thinking moves past forward-directed planning. Goals are set, and users engage forethought by anticipating the likely consequences of prospective actions, and select and create courses of action liable to produce desired outcomes and mitigate detrimental ones (Bandura, 2001, 1991; Feather, 1992; Locke & Latham, 1990). There also appears to be a shared belief by principals that the work that they do is worthwhile because it is seen in this way: there is a desire, perhaps an increased desire to influence and shape the outcome. Utilising forethought empowers the user to transcend the tenets of their immediate environment shaping and regulating the present fit to a desired future (Bandura, 2001) thereby increasing satisfaction with life, a component of SWB.

6.4.3.2.3. Commitment to Worthwhile Work

The concept of worthwhile work is a component of MegaPositioning. It appears to function as a buoy lifting up each individual's SWB level when principals are having a difficult time. Principals reflect upon what they term as their core and Worthwhile Work and if this is being achieved they appear better able to cope with what is not achieved even when they wanted to achieve it. It appears to help mitigate feelings and actions that impact on SWB.

6.4.3.2.4. Dialogic Culture

The principals in this study articulated that when they were aware of their SWB levels, they were informed through self-awareness and their utilisation of a dialogic culture helped them to maintain their SWB. As part of their dialogic culture most principals made reference to the action of information gathering which involved on-going analysis, reflection and evaluation. Freire (1972) claims that the 'essence of dialogue' is "the word" and within the word there are two dimensions: "reflection and action".

When principals enter into Self-internal dialogue it appears that they are demonstrating what Friere (1972) termed as the essence of dialogue but also within a conceptualised context to which Bakhtin (1986) refers:

> Contextual meaning is potentially infinite, but [and] it can only be actualized when accompanied by another (others) meaning, if only by a question in the inner speech of the one who understands. Each time it must be accompanied by another contextual meaning in order to reveal new aspects of its own infinite nature (just as the word reveals its meanings only in context).   (pp. 145–146)

In a Bakhtinian view, we are all in constant dialogue with our worlds (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986) and this he refers to as 'within-speaker' dialogue – the dialogic encounters with Self (1986 , 1984) . All of the principals in this study demonstrated their evidence of their internal dialogue with their perceived world. Interestingly there was a reported increase (i.e., rate, speed, number of voices) in the dialogue occurring when complex situation presented themselves and where the principal became the powerful agent in knowledge production, distribution and critique.

Engaging in conversations between the Self and others, as the principals involved in this study did, signals the development of what Hooks (2009) calls a "practical wisdom" of multidimensional democratic ways of knowing (p. 185). Numerous principals referred to stress and Self-doubt as examples of negative affect and numerous principals linked to joy, happiness and a sense of achieving as examples of positive affect. Principals in this study clearly identified high levels of negative effects as impacting the clarity of their thoughts and the ability to do their job well. The principals valued the maintenance of their SWB as they recognised it broadened and

clarified their thoughts and actions, and it contributed to their optimism. Several studies (Cummins, Gullone, & Lau, 2002; Diener & Seligman, 2002) have shown the important contribution of depression to SWB variables signifying that higher levels of SWB is an indicator of the absence of depression.

6.4.3.2.5. *Multiple Networked Realities (MRN)*

The user of MegaPositioning relies on the eclecticism of their self-knowledge whilst also co-constructing the intellectual resources offered by those deliberately drawn into the knowledge network, which can be seen to involve multiple realities. Multiple Networked Reality (MNR) is a term used in this study to capture the cognitive and temporal space where MegaPositioning occurs. It has an external element, an internal element and an intra-external element.

The external element involves a network of trusted others who are perceived by the user to have expertise in some area. The gathering of this network is linked to self-knowledge as the user has deliberately and with strategic agentism, acquired people into the network who have skills, knowledges and understandings that help buoy the users' weaknesses.

MNR was a tool that the principals in this study used in order to analyse and process data within a timeframe, making fluid decisions that allowed for the engineering and achievement of what each individual user considered the most optimal possible outcome in the situation. Figure 6.8 is representative of Multiple Networked Realities (MNR).

DEPICTS THE MEGAPOSITIONING ACTION OF MULTIPLE NETWORKED REALITIES
– PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE CAST IN A TEMPORAL SPACE

– Multiple Networked Reality "The Moment"

FUTURE

PAST

PRESENT
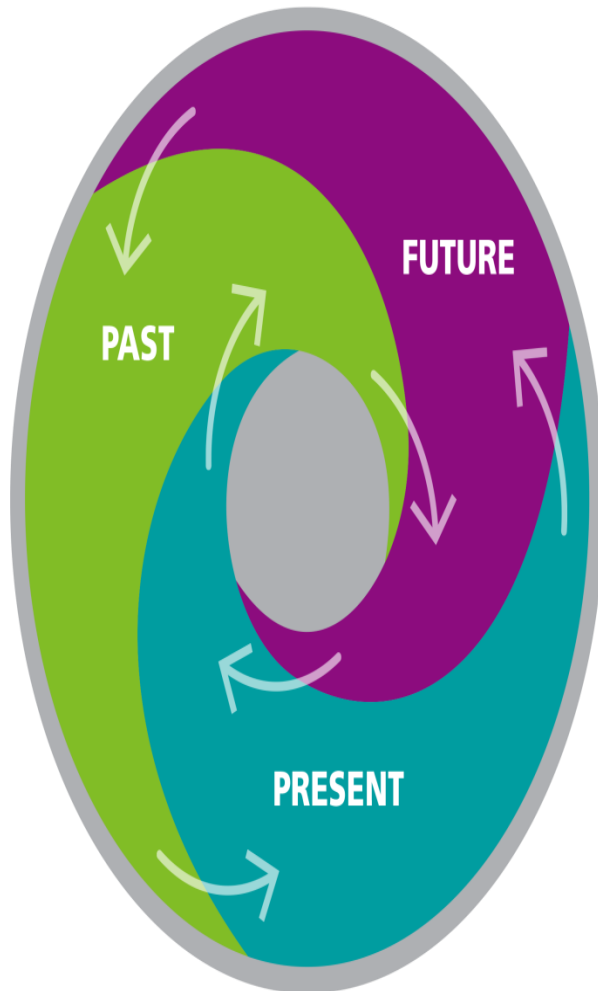
FUTURE

- Planning for future activities, events situations with input invited from real people in an external situation.
- Acquiring explicit feedback.
- Strategically saying and doing things because it is believed future outcomes can be influenced or engineered if certain choices (eg behaviours demonstrated, words said) are made now.
- Using a dialogic culture to inform future thinking, behaviour, decisions.
- Recording current snippets believing they will be useful for future situations.
- Preparing the future scenarios from multiple perspectives where both real and personified voices have been united into strategic planning and decision making.

PRESENT

- Current experience of an event, situation, moment (internalising and externalising).
- Current gathering of explicit feedback.
- Current internal thinking to construct a desirable reality.
- Current internal dialogue - a dialogic culture with the self.
- Engaging multiple voices, inviting in motivational cautionary and reflective, expert, nurturing, explanatory and visionary personas to engage in the current moment to provide input into decision making and engineer current situation so preferable outcomes can be created.
- Current external communication with a person, people.

PAST

- Drawing on personal and vicarious experiences relevant to the current situation.
- Drawing on tacit knowledge and understandings like snippets of filed events, interpretations, memories of expertise evidenced & personified into voices.

Figure 6.8: MegaPositioning Action of Multiple Network Realities

The two dimensional representation in Figure 6.8 is somewhat limited in depicting the multiple dimensions of MRN but still provides some illumination of the concept. Multiple Networked Realities (MRN) can involve external principals (real world), engaging the dialogical personified voices (virtual world). This helps to best plan and select ways of working so in the current context to best influence the outcome (real world) whilst at the same time almost moving outside both the real world and the

virtual world as an observer to reflect on the Self and the interaction, point in time, including filing interesting pieces of information for later use.

The outer circle (shown in Figure 6.8) represents the cognitive and temporal space of capturing "a moment" in which everything is occurring. The inner grey circle is representative of the Self, specifically specified self-awareness, where the Self is reflecting upon a specific aspect (such as appropriate body language usage) during "the moment". MRN will now be explained in more depth.

The internal element (shown in Figure 6.8 as a grey circle) involves MegaPositioning, the dialogic construction where the user becomes immersed in dialogic culture that has developed in its complexity over time and with the development of user expertise. As part of the dialogic culture there are multiple voices rich in divergent thinking and viewpoints. There appears to be personified voices that are:

1. **motivational** (often involves social comparison such as, *"You can do it!"*);
2. **cautionary and reflective** (drawn from past personal or vicarious experiences such as *"Do you think that is a good idea? If you do that you know what the result will be!"*);
3. **expert** (usually a snippet in replay often the mentor's voice);
4. **nurturing voices** (often consoling such as, "It's ok, that was a good effort in the situation.");
5. **seeking** (searching for alternatives, whole in logical thinking, such as *"What have you not considered? How will this impact? What learnings can be used out of this for the future so I can get better outcomes?"*);
6. **explanatory** (such as, *"What is happening here now? Why did they do that?"*);
7. **visionary** (*"What do I want for the future? What will this look like next month/ year? Where do I need this situation to go?"*); and
8. **strategic** (*"If I do this, they will do that so What do I need to do?"*).

Figure 6.8 highlights that MNR is multidimensional, with Past, Present and Future dimensions and with a Self-Awareness dimension, all of which occur in temporal space. These dimensions will now be discussed in more detail.

6.3.3.2.5.1 MRN is Multidimensional

MNR (Multiple Networked Realities) is multidimensional. The use of the term dimension has been deliberately chosen to show complexity and spatial depth whilst capturing the features of MNR. There are five notable dimensions: past; present; future; specified self-awareness and temporal space (shown in Figure 6.8).

6.4.3.2.5.1. Past Dimension Infused With Tacit Knowledge

The Past dimension (shown in Figure 6.8) encapsulates tacit knowledge embedded in past personal acquired and vicarious experiences, as well as past knowledge and understandings that a person has developed. This tacit knowledge can then be draw on to inform the present dimension (e.g., recalling the words of wisdom from a mentor in a situation and using these words to inform an alternate situation so that the user can make a perceived better judgement).

6.4.3.2.5.2.   Present Dimension

The Present dimension (shown in Figure 6.8) appears like a complex network of both actual people and personified internal voices in a dialogic manner. The enacted dialogue does not always immediately involve actual people but at some point multiple external perspectives are invited into the discourse. When external perspectives are invited in this, they occur simultaneously with internal personified voices. The personified voices take on specific roles and complexity of the roles and number of different roles appears to be based on expertise and the number of complex stressful situations the user encounters. As the user strives to engineer outcomes during complex stressful events MRN is used more frequently and this use promotes further development and refinement leading to the creation of more and varied and controlled personified internal voices. This allows the user to pull apart aspects of issues for more diverse perceived perspectives, arguing through alternate scenarios that play through like a video snippet where the characters actions are pre-empted. The data reveals that very experienced users have a wider range of personified voices in their dialogic culture.

Snippets of filed events, interpretations, memories of where expertise is evidenced in obtaining a desired outcome are stored and recreated into questioning and guiding personified voices that are designed to strengthen the users Self-perceived weakness of which they are deeply Self –aware. The present stage is also guided by the futuristic dimension and the specific self-awareness dimensions.

6.4.3.2.5.3. Futuristic Dimension

The Futuristic Dimension (shown in Figure 6.8) is accessed when the users are thinking beyond the present and strategically working with information that will be useful beyond the current communication occurring in temporal space. The user strategically says and does things because it is believed future outcomes can be influenced or engineered if certain choices (e.g. behavioural selection, words, statements, and inferences) are made now. This may be seen to include examples like *"I need to try and introduce into the conversation… I just need to wait until they say ……..".* It also involves the user planning into the future events that are beyond the now the communication that is currently occurring (almost like inattention) such examples include *"I just noted the strategy that worked well here I will use if next month when I can influence them to work with ….at the meeting…."*. The experienced user of MNR then fits part of their thinking into planning this futurist exchange, whilst still having an active role in the current temporal space.

In this futuristic dimension the experienced user is recording and filing current snippets of the communication believing that they will be useful for future situations. They are preparing the future scenarios from multiple perspectives where both internal and external feedback is used in order to flexibly and strategically plan for use in later decision making. The planning for future activities and events includes input invited from internal personified voices that enact in a dialogical discussion and feedback dissected, analysed and reconstituted for use in predictive forethought.

6.4.3.2.5.4.   Specified Self-Awareness Dimension

Specified self-awareness (shown in Figure 6.8) is based on deep self-knowledge and an awareness of the individual's strengthens and weakness. The focus is more especially on weaknesses and specified self-awareness is an endeavour to mitigate the impact of the individual's weaknesses. The purpose is to obtain on-going immediate internal and external feedback so that more control can be exerted over what is happening in the temporal space, the actual communication event.

The Self metaphorically "hovers" above the communication to consider the external behaviour of the Self obtaining immediate feedback that can be used immediately to further shape the current situation, endeavouring to engineer a more desirable outcome. Several principals made reference to "*hovering over myself*"; "*looking down on myself*"; and "*using a helicopter view*". One participant (Steve) described it like this: "*I helicopter above myself to look down on what I am doing. I think: Am I sitting with open body language?*" The participant went on to explain: "*I chose what my focus weak area is such as closed body language, and I deliberately set out to improve it, focus on self-reflecting upon it*". For the purpose of this study I have termed this as "specified self-awareness". The Self seems to select the specified self-awareness target areas based upon deep self-knowledge of acknowledged strengths and weaknesses in an endeavour to have more control on engineering the outcome. The feedback is both internal and external feedback.

When specified self-awareness is competently being used (as tacitly determined by the user) the user seeks information about the Self's competent performance in the communication, for example "*What is working well? What needs to be done differently?*". This feedback is then transferred to the present dimension where it is dialogically analysed and assimilated so an alternate direction may be taken that is predicted to be more successful in obtaining the desired outcome. This feedback is immediate, and internally processed by the user in terms of what it might mean and how best that information can be utilised to help inform and further direct the current communication event so the desired outcome can be obtained.

The user of specified self-awareness also seeks this same information from external feedback. The external feedback is two-fold: based on Self or based on the Self and others. External feedback based on the Self is sought and utilised for future input into the communication for example: *My stance is too intense, uncross my arms lean back… talk more slowly.* In the instance of external feedback based on the Self and others the user is focusing the Self in a relationship with others for example: *She responded well when I said…. The body language shows she was…….. when I did…* This internal and external feedback from the specified self-awareness dimension is being assimilated in temporal space.

6.4.3.2.5.5.   *Temporal Space*

The temporal space (shown in Figure 6.7) encapsulates all of the other dimensions and for the user of MRN it may have been an electrified space with high energy flow and racing thoughts. This same temporal space may have been very differently perceived by those external others who shared it as they have only observed externally the actions that occurred in the space, at that time on that date.

6.4.3.3.   MegaPositioning and SWB

Initially when the process of MegaPositioning, of which MRN is a major component, is enacted it is done so to purposefully rebalance SWB and help the user cope with what they see as a very complex and negatively stressful situation. The participant data reveals that when the user becomes more skilled with the process, MegaPositioning then becomes a way of working and is utilised in an on-going manner to maintain SWB.

By engaging beyond deep reflection, to MegaPositioning principals appear to be doing what Sen (1999, 2010) describes as ever-evolving criticality. This criticality intertwines personal and professional nourishment that is essential for capability development (Sen, 1999, 2010). It appears that the principals are both individually and collectively constructing their input into criticality and as sites and sources of knowledge production.

6.5. Summary

This chapter revealed that the principals in this study were constantly evaluating their own performance alongside what they perceived a 'competent principal' would do (i.e., a standard of self-defined competency). Each individual had a unique viewpoint as to what instituted competency. When the principals in this study evaluated the moments against a 'standard of what a competent principal should do' and the evaluation was in a positive manner, it enabled their SWB as they: experienced positive affect (i.e., happy with a decision that they made); and /or experienced low level negative moods (i.e., like frustration and anger); and/ or felt satisfied with life. Principals saw themselves as doing a good job because of their actions (i.e., making a difference in the lives of students and others) and this maintained their positive SWB.

This chapter also outlined that the principals were utilising tacit knowledge and a way of knowing to maintain their SWB. Data depicted that this way of knowing involved three processes: FIT Process (on-going strategies to Fuel IT, like having a coffee with a friend); ATER Process (Awakening that their SWB is low, Thinking through alternate scenarios to either manage the situation or engineer a desired outcome, Enacting strategies to improve SWB, Reflecting upon what they have done and if more needs to be done); and MegaPositioning (purposeful engagement of a process involving the dialogical self and complex problem solving to engineer a desired outcome).

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter sought to theorise in relation to the overarching research question: how do principals maintain their SWB? The principals in this study had a particular worldview, attributes and experiences which they drew upon when issues arose (i.e., simple, complex or very complex) that impacted negatively upon their SWB. The principals evaluated the moment and then utilised a way of working which involved the FIT process, the ATER process or MegaPositioning in order to rebalances their SWB so they could competently perform their role.

The next chapter, Chapter Seven, sets out to provide a framework for how school principals maintain their SWB. The chapter also outlines the significance of the study, provides a series of recommendations and a summary of the thesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN: FRAMEWORK AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Introduction

This study set out to investigate the question: How do school principals maintain their SWB? In considering this question four sub-questions arose:

1. How do principals conceptualise SWB?
2. What were the factors that impact upon SWB?
3. What strategies or processes were currently being utilised to maintain SWB?
4. What were the dynamics of the interplay between how principals conceptualise their role, perform their work and maintain their SWB?

This thesis has presented findings in relation to each of the sub-questions which has helped to develop an understanding of how the principals in this study were maintaining their SWB. Chapter Six provided the theory which allows me to now explain in Chapter Seven, the Exploratory Framework (Figure 7.1) for how school principals are maintaining their SWB.

The chapter then outlines the unintended outcomes of the study, significance of the study, recommendations, the limitations, the implications, and areas for future research. This is followed by a brief researcher reflection, summary and conclusion.

7.2. Explanatory Framework

The Explanatory Framework (Figure 7.1) although linear in its presentation provides a framework for representing an evaluative process embedded within the moment with action choices that are non-linear. The overall process of maintaining SWB is very iterative and at its essence organic. There are processes within the overarching process of maintaining SWB. The processes utilised depend upon what the principals are experiencing but I have presented the diagram in a linear manner so that I can best explain how the principals were maintaining their SWB. The framework also

recognises that individuals bring specific and unique perspectives to the fluid and in the moment processes that are used by principals in this study to maintain their SWB.
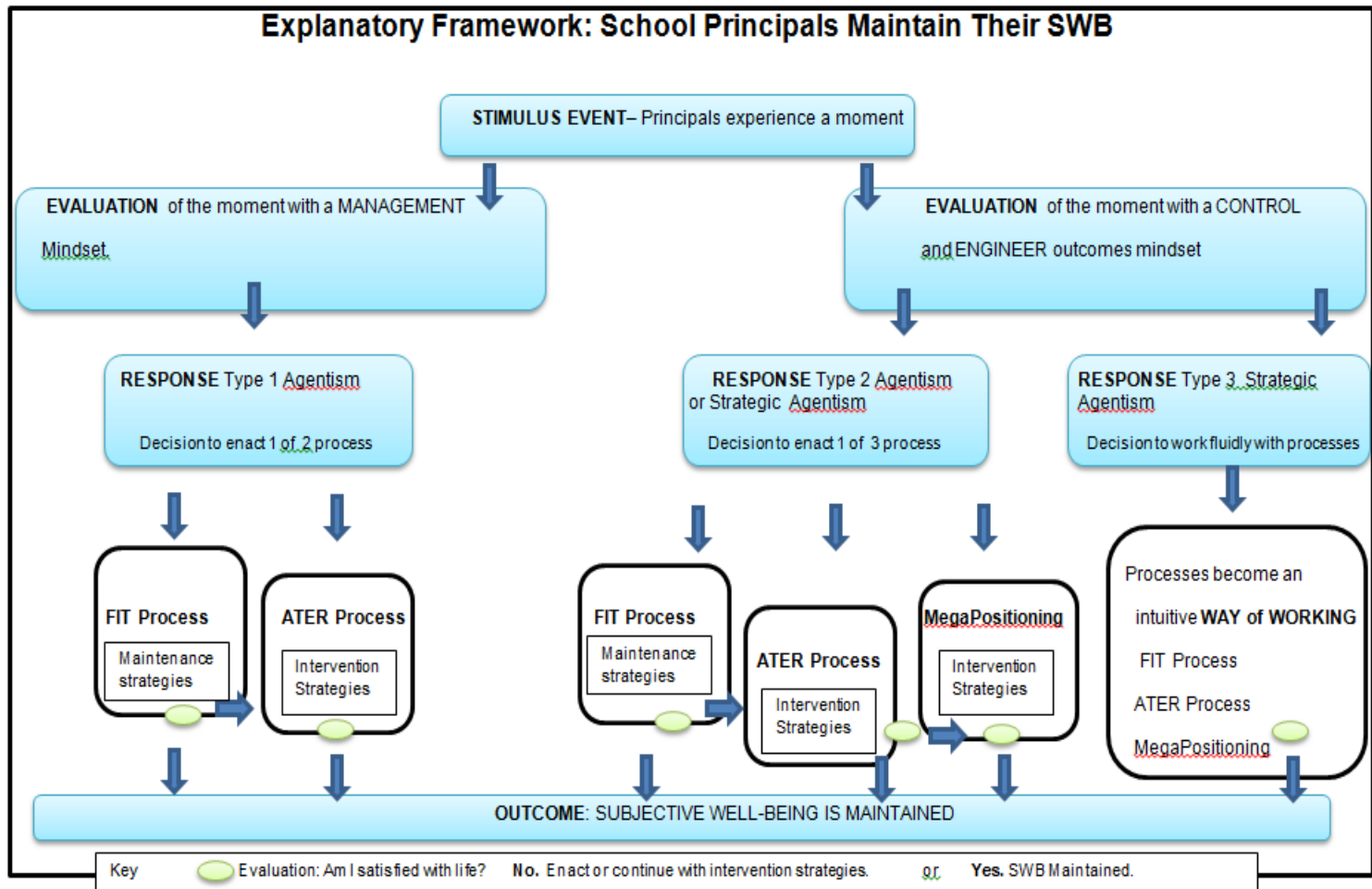
Figure 7.1: Explanatory Framework: School Principals Maintain their Subject Well-Being (SWB)

This Explanatory Framework was created to provide a visual explanation of how the principals in this study, maintained their SWB. Each section of Figure 7.1 will now be presented in a linear way to enable a representation of what is happening for them experientially: the principal; stimulus event – the moment; evaluation of the moment; response and processes; evaluation and motivators; and outcome – SWB maintained.

7.2.1. The Principal has a Way of Viewing the World

The principals in this study had a particular world view which was part of the essence of how the principal uses their experiences and knowledge to understand their world. Part of this world view involves core motivation for their work (i.e., their moral purpose) and this influenced their decision making. The decision making processes were reflective and informed by on-going evaluation based upon the principal's core motivators:

1. Primary Core Motivator – the school is run in a way that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community (competency based motivator) leading to the reflection; and
2. Self Core Motivator - maintain the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (involves emotional regulation) leading to the reflection

The process that is pivotal to maintaining SWB is evaluation and for the principals in this study that evaluation was underpinned by their world view. Hale (1986) explains that "the expression 'world view' has at least two senses …. In the first sense the expression refers to the primary logical principles upon which a philosophy is based … and secondly it consists of the analysis of phenomena" (p. 234). Redfield (1952, p. 30) utilises the term world view to describe "the outlook upon the universe that is characteristic of a people", in which there is order and there is reason. In this study I use the term worldview to describe the framework from which principals view reality and make sense of life and the world in which they live.

This study revealed that principals were utilising two different mindsets, both of which involved Core and Self Motivators. The principals relied on their own knowledge of themselves and others to maximise the elements in any moment to try and obtain what they perceived as being in the best interests of their students, staff and community (i.e., motivators). When they felt that they were achieving this, they felt satisfied with life in general and their SWB was maintained.

When the principals were evaluating moments they used either: a management mindset or a control and engineer mindset. The motivators acted as the principal's reflective frame in which they then engage a variety of problem – solving and decisional processes. How they progress this depends upon their mindset (i.e., management or control and engineer).

In a management mindset the perception is that 'the world is happening to me and I must best manage the situations as they occur'. In the control and engineer mindset the perception is that 'the world can be shaped by me and the level of expertise that I can use in a situation will help shape the multiple, possible outcomes'. Not everyone operates with a similar mindset but with experienced principals two separate mindsets were observed: management; and control and engineer. I do not know if they always make decisions in this way but in terms of maintaining their SWB this is what was revealed.

In developing the Explanatory Framework: School Principals Maintain their Subject Well-Being (SWB), I have been conceptually informed by mindset theory (Gollwitzer, 1990) which describes how people operate in the world. Gollwitzer highlights that there are two broad phases in the pursuit of goals: a predecisional phase (i.e., making a goal decision) and a postdecisional or implementation phase (i.e., implementing a goal) with people having a preference for a particular phase.

My findings do not conform with the phases: predecisional phase; and postdecisional. Rather the two types of mindsets that emerged from the data in this study were: a management mindset; and a control and engineer mindset. The principals in this study were all focused on obtaining optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community and maintaining the capacity to be emotionally capable and

professionally competent rather than on specific goal attainment. In planning simultaneously for multiple scenarios (each of which could have slightly different goals) principals in this study appeared to be simultaneously using the mindset phases outlined by Gollwitzer (1990) but with a preference for either managing the situation or controlling and influencing the situation.

7.2.2. Stimulus Event – the Moment

Principals encountered a stimulus event and experienced a "moment" as a result of the stimulus event. A moment depends upon how the person perceives an event or happening and mentally captures it in a time frame. The manner in which each principal experienced each moment depended upon the nature of the moment, and their previous knowledge and experience of complex (or stressful) type moments. For example, some moments might be seen as very stressful if it was the first time that type of situation occurred. The moment could be seen as less stressful or less complex if the principal had experienced a similar type of moment before and / or their previous learning provided insight that some moments could be effectually worked through in ways used in past complex situations. Principals used their experiential knowledge in perceiving and understanding the moment.

Principals found it difficult to explain what they knew through their experiential learnings with multiple references to 'gut feelings' [intuition]. The knowledge that the principals had difficulty in expressing is termed as tacit knowledge. As this knowledge is surfaced in the self it becomes tacit knowing, where the person knows more than they can tell (Polanyi, 1976). Tacit knowing is the the process of acquiring knowledge through perception, creating knowing how, creating understandings, insights, and expertise (Day, 2005; Polanyi, 1976).

My findings show that tacit knowing is strongly linked to the maintenance of SWB. By tacit knowing I am referring to storeroom of knowledge held by normal human beings, based on their insights, experiences, emotions, observations, intuitive perception about their own acts and their consequences, social knowing and internalised knowledge (Polanyi, 1966, 1976). This tacit knowing is largely acquired

through interactions with others where knowledge is shared from person to person (Polanyi, 1976).

Principals were using tacit knowing as a process of taking what they had learnt and applying it to similarly complex situations in a manner that helped them to maintain their SWB. They were creating knowledge that supported them in the management of their SWB. In tacit knowing principals were using elements of social knowledge and internalising their experiential knowledge to better inform the evaluation and action processes that they engaged.

Principals in this study used tacit knowing to maintain their SWB while still meeting the challenges arising from a complex and rapidly changing world. In experiencing a moment principals either consciously or unconsciously perceived impactors to their SWB. Principals defined impactors as that which impacted upon their SWB either negatively or positively (e.g., being yelled at by a parent; being commended by a colleague). While experiencing the moment either consciously or unconsciously, knowing that their SWB was unbalanced, principals were still simultaneously evaluating the moment.

Knowledge may be considered from different perspectives. One perspective is that knowledge is explicit and codifiable, where it can be easily passed on to other people (von Krogh, 1998). From another perspective knowledge can be viewed as an act of construction that can be both explicit and tacit (von Krogh, 1998). The principals in this study used explicit knowledge to inform their decision making and they clearly articulated this. It was however tacit knowing that the principals referred to for the maintenance of their SWB, a knowing that was frequently referenced as "I just know" and "it's a gut feeling". Because drawing on tacit knowledge is difficult to explain it needed specific probing type questions to draw it out and then discuss it. This knowledge was revealed to me as a researcher because the participants trusted me and we had a shared experiential knowledge of the principalship. Many of the principals also revealed that they used mentors to surface this knowledge within themselves.

The literature depicts that "tacit knowledge" was first posed by the Hungarian philosopher-chemist Michael Polanyi (1891-1976) who focused on the importance of

personal knowledge and the complexities involved in trying to investigate personal knowledge. Tacit knowledge encompasses all those things that we know how to do but perhaps do not know how to explain them (at least symbolically) (Polany1966).

To Polanyi, tacit knowledge/knowing is embedded in the interaction from person to person where using a word implies an acceptance of a meaning of that word to both speaker and listener (Grant 2007). There is an underlying tacit element of confidence that the word will be understood as it is occurs in that context. Polanyi framed this in terms of sign and process (Polanyi, 1966). He suggested that it is not words that have meaning (sign), but the speaker or listener who means something by them (process). Tacit knowing is therefore is personal, subjective and often unconscious (Polanyi, 1966).

Knowledge creation theorists like Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have recognised the importance of tacit knowledge and incorporated both explicit and tacit knowledge in their theorising. Tacit knowledge is personal knowledge involving tangible factors such as values and beliefs and is embedded in experience (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have posed a knowledge creation model that is one way of explaining how tacit knowledge can be shared and made explicit through the use of clearly articulated figurative language. The literature poses that mentoring enables tacit knowing to be shared (Mayfield, 2010; Faust, 2007). The quality and types of mentoring influence the shared comprehension of tacit knowing as shared meaning and sense making are embedded in the process of mentoring (Faust, 2007).

Whilst there is a great deal of literature pertaining to both SWB and tacit knowing, the two concepts have not been clearly linked in the literature. Experienced principals revealed that they were 'not falling over' (i.e., resigning due to stress) or 'dropping off the perch' (i.e., no longer capable of doing their job) because they had learnt to use tacit knowing as a way to maintain their SWB.

7.2.3. Evaluation of the Moment

The principals evaluated the moment, considering the complexities (e.g.., what possible courses of action could be taken and what would the consequences be?). In evaluating the moment the focus was on seeking to understand any inherent problems or complexities in the moment. The principals then responded to the moment with two types of mindsets: a management mindset (i.e., how can I best manage the situation and achieve my outcome?) or a control and engineer mindset (i.e., how can I influence and manipulate elements of the situation to engineer the outcome I want?). In both mindsets the outcome is seen to be that the school is run in a way that produced what they considered to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community (Primary Core Motivator) and that the principal maintains the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (Self Core Motivator).

7.2.4. Response and Processes

The principals made a decision to act, according to their chosen mindset and the evaluation that they had initially made of the moment, using either: type 1 agentism; type 2 strategic agentism; or type 3 strategic agentism with intuitive ways of working. Their mindset and their evaluation then determined what decision they made in terms of enacting a process to ensure that SWB was maintained. In exhibiting agentism in relation to SWB the principal firstly recognised their SWB balance and then secondly perceived the significance of SWB in relation to the maintenance of SWB. The individual then decided either consciously or tacitly, to do something about endeavouring to maintain their SWB. In enacting processes to maintain their SWB principals also utilised an organic process of continuous evaluation and reflection.

In Type 1: agentism the principals made a decision to enact one of two process. Type 1 agentism refers to the behaviour of taking action to best manage situations, in a way that involves utilising knowledge of the self and knowledge of others. Principals using agentism initially enacted the FIT (Fuel It) process which consisted of a variety of maintenance strategies to help them feel good (e.g., socialising with friends, laughing with colleagues).

Due to events there were times when principals had not implemented enough maintenance strategies and their SWB gradually declined until it reached a point where they became consciously aware that their SWB was quite low. After becoming consciously aware that SWB was low they deliberately enacted another process termed as the ATER process. This process involved an awakening (A), where principals realised suddenly that their SWB was low. The principals then began consciously thinking (T) about what they needed to do to improve their SWB. They then enacted (E) intervention strategies to improve their SWB level. Whilst implementing the intervention strategies they continually reflected (R), evaluating their progress with SWB levels to ensure that they had implemented adequate intervention strategies to maintain their SWB at a level where they could feel satisfied with life. They continued to use intervention strategies until they could make an evaluation that they were satisfied with life, that they felt good, and their SWB was maintained.

In Type 2: Strategic Agentism the principals made a decision to enact one of three process. Type 2 strategic agentism refers to the drive to influence or control outcomes that are deemed to maintain SWB through deliberate and strategic forethought and engineering to achieve the desired outcome. Principals who responded to moments with strategic agentism enacted one of three processes: FIT process; ATER process or MegaPositioning.

When moments appeared to be very complex and the principals evaluated that their SWB was low, and the intervention strategies from ATER were not working, the majority of principals re-evaluated their SWB levels and initiated a third process, that of MegaPositioning (purposeful engagement of a process involving the dialogical self and complex problem solving to engineer a desired outcome).

In Type 3: Strategic Agentism the principals were intuitively using a way of working. Once the principals gained some experienced using the three processes (FIT, ATER and MegaPositioning), the processes became a way of working and the principals were not fully conscious of what they had learned to do.

Principals who became skilled through practicing MegaPositioning, reported that it was the preferred process. Users of MegaPositioning engaged forethought by

anticipating the likely consequences of prospective actions in multiple scenarios, selecting and creating courses of action liable to produce desired outcomes thereby mitigating detrimental ones. They used their influence to steer other people's behaviour to a course of desired action thereby increasing the likelihood of preferred situational outcomes using Multiple Networked Realities (MNR) and their own overall satisfaction with life, a component of SWB.

Whilst the process of maintaining SWB may appear linear it is actually organic in nature, as principals were continually evaluating their decisions and personal capabilities around how they were operating in their world with the perceived complexities, and selecting different solutions (i.e., processes and strategies).

7.2.5. Further Evaluation and Motivators

Figure 7.1 depicts **evaluation of the moment** occurring just after the principal experiences the moment. There is however a second type of evaluation that the principals engaged in when implementing the processes. This second type of evaluation involved the principals' **evaluation of their personal role in the moment**. In making this second evaluation principals reflected upon their core motivators that underpinned their way of working.

Therefore even when moments where evaluated as particularly complex or stressful by the principals they could still maintain their SWB as they believed that what they were doing was in the best interests of their students, staff or their community. They evaluated that their work was worthwhile and or that they were worthwhile in the role of principal. In moments that the principals had evaluated as very complex and potentially stressful, MegaPositioning was the preferred process chosen for maintaining SWB.

7.2.5.1. Balance

When principals in this study refer to balance they are talking about self-regulatory processes where the person has an awareness of the equilibrium of their SWB. This

awareness is at times heightened as in the ATER process and at other times more tacit, as in the FIT process and MegaPositioning. When they refer to balance I infer that to be a point at which the individual recognises low SWB (unbalanced) and maintained SWB (in balance) and high SWB (referred to in much of the literature as flourishing). It appears that there are two self-regulatory processes similar to what Ryan and Deci (2000) outlined in their self-determination theory where they articulate that there is both autonomous regulation and controlled regulation. Goals such as growing and sustaining relational connectedness, personal development, or contributing to one's school and broader community are contributing to need satisfaction, and therefore enable SWB.

This study did not focus on flourishing SWB, rather it focused on the maintenance of SWB. There is certainly evidence in the data of moments of very high SWB, especially when people where recognised by peers for their achievements and competency. How the individual recognises the balance of their SWB is beyond the scope of this study but warrants further investigation.

7.2.6. Outcome – SWB Maintained

The process of maintaining SWB as understood from my research is a learnt process. This process, learnt through experience (i.e., tacit knowledge) was surfaced by the principals when they knew what to do to work in a moment so that they could rebalance their SWB (i.e., tacit knowing) and evaluate that they had achieved their Primary Core and Self Core motivators. SWB is facilitated by self-awareness driven by either cognisant or tacit knowing.

7.3.   Significance of the Study

There has been a plethora of research into understanding the leadership role of the school principal (Fullan, 2002b; Lacey, 2007; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999; Leithwood & Levin, 2005; Mulford, 2003; Riley, 2012). Little research has focused on the challenges of how the school principal performs the work role while maintaining their SWB.

Other researchers also perceive school principals' well-being to be a problem worthy of investigation with Phillips and Sen (2011, as cited in Riley, 2012) reporting that "work related stress was higher in education than across all other industries … with work-related mental ill-health … almost double the rate for all industry" (pp. 177-8). Dr Phil Riley is currently involved in measuring and monitoring principals' well-being with a survey first conducted in 2012 as part of a National review of principals' well-being. It was reported that:

> A sixty hour working week is the norm for a quarter of Australian principals…. and almost half spend 25 hours a week in the office during holidays. On top of this heavy workload, some 46 per cent of principals volunteer their time in the community outside their professional role….. Principals indicated that the quantity of work, lack of time to focus on teaching and learning, employer expectations and poorly performing staff were the key areas causing them most stress. (Riley, 2012, p. 12)

Currently there is both a current and projected short-fall of school leaders in Australia, occurring partly as a result of retirement patterns (Lacey, 2007). It may be assumed that some primary school principals also leave the principalship as a direct result of work role related impact upon their well-being. Such issues increase the imperative for alternative ways in which principal leadership might be conceived and enacted (Anderson et al., 2007). It therefore seems reasonable to assume that there is a need to have principals personally maintain their SWB if they are to remain in the work role of principal and not leave work, increasing the current principal shortfall.

7.3.1.   Anticipated Uses to be Made of the Research

This research will add depth to the educational field as at present there is no published Australian research regarding how school principals maintain their SWB. There is some research about the negative impactors but not about the strategies that principals are actually utilising in the Queensland and broader Australian contexts.

7.3.2. Relevance of the Research to Education

It could be inferred that what has arisen from this study will constitute new research to the field including some recommendations for practising principals regarding possible strategies for maintaining their SWB. These recommendations may be of great interest to the Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) and the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP) who have on their agenda, a desire to see principals' well-being improve. The research may also have systemic and policy ramifications as principals staying longer in the workforce, with sustained levels of SWB could arguably lower human resource costings for Departments, like the Queensland Department of Education and Training.

7.3.3. Relevance of the Study - Theoretical Contribution

This study makes a theoretical contribution to the field of SWB research. The contribution is new and unique because:

- It explores the construct of SWB with reference to the constructs of work and role.
- It uses an interpretivist constructivist approach to develop an understanding of how a group of principals are maintaining their SWB.
- It develops theoretical and practical understandings of the maintenance of SWB in individuals who share the experiences of being a school principal.
- It focuses on a specific group of professionals rather than a broad range of professionals and explores in depth what this group is doing to maintain SWB rather than seeking to measure their SWB.

This study is different as it seeks to understand the SWB of a specific career group that are engaged in a very complex role, i.e. school principals. Furthermore whilst I researched utilising the same constructs as Ed Diener in relation to SWB I did not limit my research to the three fixed components (life satisfaction; positive affect and; low level negative moods) that Diener identified. Rather I invited participants to build on this definition. The present understandings of SWB as the result of positivist research (Diener, 2009: Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997) have relied heavily upon survey data and factor analysis. This research adopted a qualitative and interpretivist constructivist paradigm which

has developed some alternative understandings of the existing construct of SWB. Therefore this research builds on Diener's explanation of the SWB construct, from a work/role perspective. This research also explored the work of how a group of school principals maintain their SWB, making a unique contribution to the body of knowledge around the work of these important educational leaders.

At this point the question needs to be asked: What have these findings contributed to broadening our knowledge about SWB? In the following subsections the contributions that this research has made to conceptual, methodological and theoretical knowledge are addressed. There are three main concepts in the literature that my study confirms: definition of SWB; lack of sleep impacts cognition; a balance point for SWB. There are also three new contributions to the field; one is methodological (the use of methodology for investigating SWB) and the other two are theoretical (a process for maintaining SWB, captured in the explanatory framework; and tacit knowing informs evaluations linked to SWB).

7.3.4. Significance of the Study - Conceptual Knowledge

My study confirmed three concepts already in the literature: the definition of SWB; lack of sleep impacts cognition and SWB; and a balance point for SWB.

7.3.4.1. The Definition of SWB

My study confirms what was in the literature (Diener 2006; 2009) regarding how SWB has been defined and also reinforces that people focus on the most salient domains of their life overall when thinking about the level of their SWB.

I posited SWB consisted of Diener's (2009) three components (life satisfaction, positive affect and low level negative affect) and invited principals to discourse this conceptualisation of SWB. Principals reinforced this conceptualisation of SWB having three components. Additionally principals also emphasised health (physical, mental and spiritual) as an integral component of SWB. Physical, mental and spiritual health

were seen by the principals to be inseparable from life satisfaction, positive effect and low level negative affect.

7.3.4.2. Lack of Sleep Impacts Cognition and SWB

There were significant amounts of data evidenced in this study that a lack of sleep impacts cognition and SWB. All principals made explicit statements about sleep in relation to their SWB, particularly that sleep impacts cognitive function (i.e., the lack of sleep negatively impacts clear thinking and an adequate amount of sleep enables clear thinking). This in turn affects SWB as the cognitive evaluations that individuals make in relation to: life satisfaction; positive affect; and experiences of low level mood, are dependent upon clarity of thinking processes. This study further adds to the current literature where it is noted that sleep affects cognition and over all well-being (Haack & Mullington, 2005).

7.3.4.3. Balance Point for SWB

This study depicts that there is a point of balance for SWB where principals define that their SWB was balanced or unbalanced and that this feeling of balance was within relatively narrow self-identified margins. My study outlines the processes that principals used to maintain their individual margins so they could feel that their SWB was maintained (i.e. balanced). Within the literature homeostasis theory posits that SWB is not only maintained by the settled forces of personality and positive and negative affect, but also through underlying psychological processes that act to defend individual set points or margins (Cummins, 1998).

Whilst this study did not set out to measure SWB levels it does provide some insight into changing SWB levels that could be worthy of further study. Some research has highlighted that some individuals seem to improve their level of maintained SWB. Headey (2007) noted that the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP; Wagner, Frick & Schupp, 2007) utilising longitudinal data to test the stability of adult SWB reported that:

> About 6% recorded gains of 2 or more points (close to 1.5 standard deviations) on a 0-10 life satisfaction scale…. (p. 4)

This study provides some insights into how principals are maintaining their SWB and implementing processes to regulate or improve SWB. Perhaps the set point levels of SWB rise over time as people further develop their self-knowledge and tacit knowing which is linked to experience over time at maintaining or not maintaining SWB levels.

7.3.5. Significance of the Study in Relation to Methodological Knowledge

It appears from the literature that this research is the first qualitative study of how principals maintain their SWB. My study highlights that the methodology chosen (qualitative case study and interviews) revealed thinking that the principals used to maintain their SWB and this could not have been uncovered through a quantitative survey. This research provided the initial opportunity for explicitly engaging in exploration of SWB with school principals. Hence, their honest, in-depth and varied responses to the concept, and how they synthesised that conceptual understanding with their reality building and process selection and utilisation, provided me with the opportunity for deep exploration.

The honest and passionate manner with which these principals engaged with the discussion of SWB was really touching. My relationship with the principal participants was one based on trust and shared experience as I had been a principal in the same region for many years before becoming a researcher. It seemed that they wanted to say something, around how the system and their career group approached SWB, and that the chosen methodology provided them a much desired opportunity. The methods used encouraged and facilitated the articulation of the principals' voices (O'Sullivan, 2002). This can be evidenced in the semi-structured interviews where snippets of interviews were reported in Chapter Four. Therefore the use of methodology to study SWB was very important to capture the thinking of the principals, thinking that could not be captured by a survey. Recent surveys such as the Australian Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey (Riley, 2012) and the Principal Health and Wellbeing survey (Riley, 2015) for Australia and Ireland (accessed at http://www.principalhealth.org/) that is currently open depict the constraints of qualitative surveys in capturing the tacit knowing of participants.

7.3.6. Significance of the Study in Relation to Theoretical Knowledge

This study has significance in relation to theoretical knowledge. Two main theoretical contributions are made:

1. a process for maintaining SWB, captured in the explanatory framework; and
2. tacit knowing informs evaluations linked to SWB.

7.3.6.1. A Process for Maintaining SWB

My study clearly depicts an evaluative process that principals enact that leads to the maintenance of what they term as balanced SWB. My study provides new information regarding SWB as it depicts a process that some people utilise in order to deliberately maintain their SWB. The process involves:

1. experiencing a moment
2. evaluating the moment
3. making a decision
4. implementing processes with maintenance or intervention strategies
5. reflecting
6. evaluating that SWB is maintained

Principals experienced moments and either consciously or subconsciously acknowledged impactors to their SWB. The manner in which each principal experienced each moment depended upon the complexities involved, and their previous knowledge and experience of similar type events. Each individual's evaluation of the moment was informed by their individual tacit knowing and their mindset (i.e., management mindset; or control and influence mindset). The principals then responded to the moment with: type 1 agentism; or type 2 strategic agentism; or type 3 strategic agentism where processes are used organically and fluidly. This evaluation then determined what decision they made in terms of enacting a process to ensure that SWB was maintained.

Using agentism principals initially enacted the FIT (Fuel It) process which consisted of a variety of maintenance strategies to help them feel good (e.g., going running,

having coffee with a friend). If after reflection and evaluation their SWB still remained low, they deliberately enacted another process termed as the ATER process. Principals who responded to moments with strategic agentism enacted one of three processes: FIT process; ATER process or MegaPositioning.

The Explanatory Framework that was developed to explain how principals maintain their SWB. It could therefore be used in Professional Development sessions as a way to help participants develop alternate ways of maintaining their SWB. Potentially it could also be useful in leadership courses for executives in other, non-education, employment sectors.

7.3.6.2. Tacit Knowledge, Tacit Knowing and Core Motivators Informs the Evaluations That People Make

In reflecting upon their SWB levels principals made evaluations that were reflective of their core motivators that underpinned their way of working. The Primary Core Motivator referred to: the school being run in a manner that produces what they consider to be optimal outcomes for students, teachers and the broader school community (competency based motivator); and the Self Core Motivator referred to maintaining the capacity to be emotionally capable and professionally competent (involves emotional regulation) in the role of principal. By referring back to their core motivators during the evaluation it provided principals with the opportunity to look at their work and complexity through a lens of 'I am worthwhile in the role of principal' and 'the work I do is worthwhile'.

The process of maintaining SWB appears to be learnt. It has been learnt through experience and principals report that they just know what to do to work in an event or moment so that they can rebalance their SWB. SWB is facilitated by self-awareness driven by either cognisant or tacit knowing.

The principals clearly described the experiential learning that they drew upon in all aspects of the process. As they learnt to cope in stressful situations they then knew they could cope in similar stressful situations (i.e., tacit knowledge) if they implemented certain ways of working at particular moments (i.e., tacit knowing).

7.4. Recommendations

It is important that we grow our principal's expertise and don't lose our experienced principals, so I will make three recommendations with this in mind. I perceive that these recommendations would be of use to State school principals in Queensland and the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP). The recommendations should also prove informative to supervisors and the State education system. Whilst the recommendations have arisen from the intended outcomes of the study some of the unintended outcomes of the study have also been used to inform the recommendations. The key recommendations will now be outlined.

7.4.1. Recommendation One

Principals need to engage in professional learning throughout their career around improving their own SWB.

Professional learning needs to occur to help principals develop personal strategies for maintaining their SWB, strategies targeted into the thinking processes or thinking tools that can be used. This research depicted that people can learn to better maintain their SWB. If people feel appreciated and valued in their work role, and are competent at what they do, they will be likely to evaluate that they are satisfied with life, and likely will stay within the system longer, utilising their skillset to make a difference in schools. Professional learning about how to maintain SWB should be mandatory and embedded into the capacity building process for principals. It should be included in professional development programs.

7.4.2. Recommendation Two

Principals should be provided with safe and supportive opportunities to improve their competency.

My research into school principals SWB was strongly linked to personal evaluations of competency. It therefore is logical when considering how to facilitate the

maintenance of SWB that a systems approach could be the implementation of safe and supportive opportunities to improve competency. There are a variety of ways this could be down with the participants in this study suggesting: networking; work shadowing; mentoring; and supervisor feedback.

Several principals highlighted the importance of networks suggesting that people need to be put together in smaller groups for meetings giving people time to get to know each other and develop trust and share their learning. Networking also offers principals opportunities for sharing their problems, which may be similar to what other principals are feeling. By sharing the problem, others may realise that it is not just them experiencing the complexity and a feeling of aloneness or incompetency may well lift.

Networking provides principals with the opportunity to see there is a likeminded-ness of people who are having very similar experiences and these experiences can be discussed with effectual or proactive solutions shared. Through sharing experiences trust can be developed and principals are more likely to then seek support from trusted colleagues. This form of sharing promotes experiential learning where other principals also have the opportunity to vicariously learn from what someone else has done thereby increasing the learning capacity of the workforce and contributing to the maintenance of SWB.

Professional learning may need to occur for principals in the workforce around: (a) how to set up an effective network; (b) the types of skills that people in the network might need (e.g., listening deeply and with empathy); and (c) the type of people chosen to be part of the network (e.g., ethical, expert, trustworthy).

This could include well-developed work shadowing programs. Our less experienced principals could work shadow our more experienced principals in such a way that there is opportunity for the sharing of tacit knowing. Work shadowing could also be used with experienced principals having the opportunity to learn from and with each other, especially in how to work through difficult situations and maintain SWB.

The utilisation of mentors has also been shown to be an effective way of promoting organisational learning and of passing on tacit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

In order to enable the sharing of tacit knowing between mentor and mentee professional learning may need to occur in how best to make tacit knowledge, tacit knowing and then explicit knowledge. One way of doing this would be to engage with the knowledge creation model presented by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995).

The engagement of retired principals as mentors could also be a possibility. By engaging people who no longer work as a principal in the system it potentially eliminates issues of both the mentee and the mentor applying for the same promotional positions. Experienced principals also need support and whilst they have usually learnt ways to maintain their SWB (e.g., participating intrusting professional networks) they also need to feel supported by their supervisor. This study does have important messages for power relationships between principals and their supervisors. Processes need to be in place for reporting principals with low SWB knowing that these principals will be supported rather than talked about.

Principals suggested that supervisor feedback could be utilised to improve their competency if the feedback was provided in a knowledgeable and supportive manner. It was suggested that supervisors need to spend time in schools with the principals to develop more trusting relationships and a deeper understanding of a principal's actual performance in schools so that accurate informed feedback can be given to the principals. This supervisory relationship also needs to be one based on trust rather than a power relationship (i.e., primarily judging perceived competency for promotion). Perhaps supervisors need to be removed from promotional panels and their role be aligned to have a stronger focus on working with principals and supporting them in their role.

7.4.3. Recommendation Three

Principals need an appropriate reporting system for principals with low SWB and the signs of not coping.

An appropriate reporting system needs to be implemented which is built on trust that the person will be helped to cope and that this reporting does not result in a lack of

promotional opportunities. It would be expected that part of this reporting system involved supervisors working in trusting relationships, not power relationships. Supervisors would need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to be empathetic and supportive in the implementation of enabling factors so that the principal with low SWB are better able to select SWB maintenance and intervention strategies.

Professional learning also needs to concurrently occur so that the signs of not coping are shared with principals and supervisors and they are better able to support each other being knowledgeable of ways to maintain SWB.

7.5. Unintended Outcomes of the Study

During the course of this study, principals shared information regarding their perception that they thought the study was important. They clearly wanted some opinions to be heard. I have included some of their actual statements in this thesis (see Appendix G).

Several principals espoused concern for principals in general articulating that they were worried about their colleagues. All principals made comment that the study into principals' SWB was important and that the maintenance of SWB should be foregrounded at principals' meetings and professional learning opportunities. There was a significant amount of data that current well-being supports are ineffectual. Principals made numerous suggestions on how SWB supports could be more effectual and these will be explained now.

7.5.1. Programs

In relation to accessing a Department of Education Employee Advisor for counselling or support to improve SWB, all principals asserted they had not used this service. Most principals commented that they recommended it to their staff and several of their staff used it. The majority of principals said they would not use the Employee Advisor service if their SWB was low as they did not know and trust the person.

The Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP) has a welfare officer that is available to talk with principals and offer them support. More localised QASSP local branches usually have a welfare officer as well. Principals thought that it was a nice gesture to have available someone in this role but several principals commented that it was ineffectual as they do not have a relationship with the person and do not trust them. Principals report therefore that they do not access the program when their SWB is low.

The data highlights what Schein (1989, p. 278) suggested in relation to organisational culture:

> Organizational culture, then, is the pattern of basic assumptions which a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

As Schein points out the assumptions lie behind the values which determine the behaviour patterns, so if the support structures that are in place (i.e., Employee Advisor services, QASSP welfare officer) are not trusted by the principals then the principals will not use them because they do not feel safe, even though the system espouses values of caring for and supporting staff.

7.5.2. Systemic Programs

The Queensland Department of Education and Training has a variety of programs that have been implemented or are about to be implemented that involve coaching and mentoring. The coaching and mentoring programs currently being implemented were received with mixed feelings in relation to the level of effectiveness in contributing to a principal's SWB. The majority of principals articulated that these programs do not help their SWB.

Coaching and mentoring were viewed by the participants in this study (i.e., experienced principals) as effectual for inexperienced principals. Effectual because they perceived that at times less experienced principals just needed someone with experience to talk to and discuss a situation. From the remembered experiences of principals, the first few years in the principalship are about survival and support. As principals become more experienced the need to seem competent in both the eyes of their peers and their supervisors is very important as it correlates with promotional opportunities. The perception that in current coaching and mentoring initiatives the principal's competency may be questioned, seems to be a barrier to some experienced principals fully engaging in the coaching and mentoring process.

7.5.3. Supervisor Support

Numerous principals also called into question the viewpoint that their supervisor would be supportive. It was perceived by the school principals that the rhetoric of the system dictated that principals would be supported but in actual fact the vast majority of principals did not think that was the case. The feeling was that Assistant Regional Director (ARD) role, where the ARD is on a contract to deliver results or the ARD would no longer be an ARD, was flawed in its model. The perception was that ARD's were then focusing on their own interests, and not particularly tolerant of principals who appeared to be struggling with low SWB. There were however two principals who said that they would talk with their supervisor if it was in relation to a personal tragedy in the family or another issue that was not primarily linked to a perception of their competency levels. Both of these principals also articulated that they had no further promotional aspirations.

Concerns were articulated about the impact of disclosure by the principals on future career prospects. All other principals articulated that they would not reach out to their supervisor for support if they had low or very low SWB. This did not appear to be linked to who the supervisor was but rather to the nature of the supervisory role within the system.

7.5.4. Supportive Environment

The State education system is perceived by the principals in this study to provide rhetoric of wanting to provide a safe and supportive environment for their employees. As part of rhetoric, the state education system endeavours to capture a broad view of the well-being levels of principals via targeted questions on the School Opinion Survey. The survey is reported by the State education system to be confidential in nature with individual responses not identified. The principals involved in this study revealed that they do not put faith in this and do not accurately answer the questions as the data could be captured and used against them for promotional opportunities or perceptions around their competency.

During several interviews, numerous comments were made about a recent school principal well-being survey (Riley 2012) that was conducted in relation to the measurement of school principals' well-being and then published in Educational Views. Principals were asked to complete a survey and then the results of the survey were published. Principals noted that the data set was a large sample, but raised questions over who had actually completed the survey. Several principals in this study raised questions regarding how representative the data capture was, asking: (a) would principals who feel they may not be coping and may have low SWB have filled in the survey?; or (b) would it be more likely that principals with higher levels of SWB and feelings of competency took the time to complete the survey? Numerous principals in this study noted however, that principals were still below the National mean in relation to their levels of well-being.

7.1. Limitations

There are several limitations of this study and of case study as a method. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) explain that whilst case studies are successful in revealing some of the complexities of the phenomenon being studied, the representation of this is often problematic due to difficulties presenting realistic and comprehensible pictures of that intricacy in writing. Presenting the findings utilising diagrammatic representation was problematic in this study, as some of the richness was separated out from the whole concept in order to pictorially convey how principals were maintaining their SWB.

Stake (1995) suggests that the quality of a case study relies on the quality of the insights and thinking brought to bear by the individual researcher and the judgements that they make. No matter how thorough and meticulous researchers strive to be, the research cannot be entirely objective, or transparent as it involves individual interpretation and researcher judgement (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001).

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001), note that there is also a problem when issues or findings that are unpopular, as those who do not like what case study research find reasons to dismiss the findings, such as the sample was too small.

This study was conducted in a particular context with a small group of experienced principals within one educational system and geographic area. This means that the particular cultural nuances and the findings in this study may not be transferable to other contexts.

Patton (1999) suggests that qualitative case study findings are limited by the generalising of the results. "By their nature, qualitative findings are highly context and case dependent" providing deep insight, using a small or narrow sample (Patton, 1999, p. 1197). The findings of this study provide deep insights into how some school principals in Queensland, Australia are maintaining their SWB, with readers forming their own interpretation, acquiring the ideas from the case study research into their personal experience (Rowley, 2002). It may be plausible to assume that other principals in other Australian states or territories and or in other countries (with similar work or cultural conditions), are maintaining their SWB in similar ways to those involved in this study. Further study is however required for this to be a generalisation.

7.2.   Implications

This approach of teaching principals alternate ways to maintain their SWB is destined to be a rocky one. Firstly, entrenched systemic structures need to be changed and secondly people need to acquire knowledge that is usually developed in a tacit manner from experience. Principals did however articulate that they believed it was possible

to learn strategies and processes and that explicit professional learning would be beneficial.

This research raises various elements for future consideration including intervention for principals whose SWB is low and the generalisability of the interventions which could be developed from the recommendation presented when the initial sample was only 11 experienced principals.

7.3. Directions for Future Research

This thesis offers a number of insights and directions for future research into the maintenance of SWB. These directions will be commented on in two parts: further directions arising directly from the study; and questions linked to further theoretical exploration.

7.3.1. Directly from the Study

The principals in this study knew the researcher and there was a pre-established trusting relationship between researcher and participant which enabled participants to talk about their inner self. Principal participants wanted their voices heard in relation to the issue of SWB and it was a motivator for them to share their very personal experiences. In engaging in further study the methodology needs careful consideration as to how trusting relationships are firstly developed so as to enable the sharing of elements of the inner self.

The results highlight a need to understand the processes that are being used currently by school principals in complex environments, to maintain their own SWB. Further study with a broader sample group would provide more insight into what other school principals are doing to maintain their SWB. Results from a further study could then be compared with this study to see if there is a similarity in both sets of data findings.

Further study could also investigate the questions: (a) what are the recognisable external signs of school principals with low SWB and whether the promotion of these

signs leads to any improvement in the maintenance of SWB in principals?; and (b) if there was a causal link to improved SWB maintenance then how could this best be promoted to school principals and perhaps the broader educational community?

Further study could also investigate how the individual recognises the balance of their SWB. Ryan and Deci (2000) outlined in their self-determination theory where they articulate that there is both autonomous regulation and controlled regulation and linked this with types of motivation. Perhaps this theory also applies to how principals are maintaining their SWB but further research could help to illuminate how the individual recognises the balance of their SWB.

This study also looked at the processes that school principals were utilising to maintain their SWB. One process that the principals used was the ATER process which involved an awakening (A) where the person became aware that their SWB was low. Further research could explore whether an awaking always occurs and if it does not what is the result. Is there any link between no awakening and burn out?

All principals in this study made reference to their experiential learning relating directly to the strategies and processes that they enacted in order to maintain their SWB. Perhaps if a person's SWB levels rise over time they only continue to do so until a certain point (i.e., when an individual is self-actualising). I do not have hard data from my study to support this as my study was not set up for such an investigation. I pose it here simply because my data set generated the worthiness of raising the point for further study. Perhaps experiential learning also links around the lowering of SWB set-point with concepts like learned helplessness. This is well beyond the bounds of this current study but it could warrant further study.

7.3.2. Further Theoretical Exploration

Lastly further exploration is recommended into whether MegaPositioning as a process enables principles to better maintain their SWB over time. Research by its very nature is searching, seeking answers to questions. Hence this is not the 'final' question, just one more added suggestion for future longitudinal research.

7.4.   Researcher Reflection

Given the depth of tacit knowing that has emerged in this study, as part of both the FIT process and MegaPositioning, it makes the imparting of this knowledge to those who might deem it useful, somewhat problematic as tacit knowing typically is acquired without direct help from others and is attributed to being a key aspect of practical intelligence. A chain of the epistemological complexities, stretching back to include Socrates, has suggested that tacit knowing also termed as an uncodified substrate of codified knowledge (Duguid, 2005), needs its own code in order to be understood. Raising the question of how does one find the code? Aristotle also made reference to this complexity:

> While it is easy to know that honey, wine, hellebore, cautery, and the use of the knife are so, to know how, to know whom, and when these should be applied with a view to producing health, is no less an achievement than that of being a physician. (Aristotle, 1908, book 5 part 9)

Sternberg (1998) asserts that at best, others can guide one to acquire tacit knowledge.

7.5.   Summary

In summary, this chapter presented an Explanatory Framework for how school principals maintain their SWB. The experienced principals in this study had a particular world view that involved two core motivators: a competency based motivator; and an emotional regulation motivator and these influenced their decision making. In making decisions principals used one of two mindsets: management or control and engineer. Principals utilised on-going evaluation to continually endeavour to create the best possible outcome in any given moment. The principals made a decision to act, according to their chosen mindset and the evaluation that they had initially made of the moment, using either: type 1 agentism; type 2 strategic agentism; or type 3 strategic agentism with intuitive ways of working. Their mindset and their evaluation then determined what decision they made in terms of enacting a process to ensure that SWB was maintained.

The Explanatory Framework highlighted the three processes that principals were engaging in order to maintain their SWB: FIT Process (on-going strategies to Fuel IT,

like having a coffee with a friend); ATER Process (Awakening that their SWB is low, Thinking through alternate scenarios to either manage the situation or engineer a desired outcome, Enacting strategies to improve SWB, Reflecting upon what they have done and if more needs to be done); and MegaPositioning (purposeful engagement of a process involving the dialogical self and complex problem solving to engineer a desired outcome).

The principals relied on their own knowledge of themselves and past experiential experiences to maximise the elements in any moment to try and obtain what they perceived as being in the best interests of their students, staff and community (i.e., motivators). When they felt that they were achieving this, they felt satisfied with life in general and their SWB was maintained. The findings show that tacit knowing is strongly linked to the maintenance of SWB.

The chapter then outlined the contributions to knowledge, the importance of the study, several unintended outcomes in terms of current ineffectual well-being strategies or programs, the limitations of the study, and three recommendations were then made, before the implications and areas for future research were discussed.

7.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results presented in this thesis generally depict that Diener's (2009) definition of SWB is embraced by the principals involved in this study. The study also demonstrates that principals recognised the balance of their SWB and showed agency in endeavouring to maintain their individual levels of SWB balance through the utilisation of on-going evaluation and maintenance processes: FIT; ATER and MegaPositioning.

Underpinning this research was the motivating idea that the study had the potential to establish how some of principals were successfully maintaining their SWB. This knowledge could then be shared by those in the principalship or interested in the principalship, creating a ripple effect whereby the maintenance of school principals' SWB is seen as important. Our major resource in schools is people and school

principals are in the position of leading our people in schools. It therefore would seem pertinent to try and support principals so they have adequate levels of SWB in order to competently function in school communities.

Begley (2006) asserts that "In order to lead effectively, individuals in any leadership role need to understand human nature and the motivations of individuals in particular" (p. 571) and I would also add, understand themselves. The Ancient Greek aphorism "know thyself" which was also embraced by both Plato and Socrates, seems to apply here. I propose that principals firstly need to know the level of their own SWB and ensure that they maintain it before seeing to the needs of others. By doing so it seems probable that the leader who has firstly maintained their own SWB will then come from a position of strength to help those around us thereby increasing our capacity for leadership.

In presenting my thesis to you I conclude with the words of Ernst von Glasersfeld (1981, p.2) who asserted:

> But for constructivists, all communication and all understanding are a matter of interpretive construction on the part of the experiencing subject and, therefore, in the last analysis, I alone can take the responsibility for what is being said on these pages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics Approval

University of Southern Queensland

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES
Ethics Committee Support Officer
PHONE (07) 4631 2690 | FAX (07) 4631 1995
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Wednesday, 13 June 2012

Susan Carter
Faculty of Education
USQ

Dear Susan

The Chair of the USQ Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) recently reviewed your responses to the HREC's conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the below project. Your proposal now meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethics approval has been granted.

Project Title	Principals' stories about subjective well-being
Approval no.	H12REA108
Expiry date	01.12.2012
FTHREC Decision	Approved

The standard conditions of this approval are:
- (a) conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
- (b) advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
- (c) make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
- (d) provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
- (e) provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
- (f) advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website: http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement (2007)* may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

You may now commence your project. I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Melissa McKain
Ethics Committee Support Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees

Interview Questions:

There has been a lot written about well-being and what I am interested in exploring with you is SWB (SWB). To do this I would like to explore

1) How would you define your own SWB?
2) What factors contribute to SWB?
3) Tell me about how you maintain your own SWB?
4) How is your SWB built or refuelled and what are the consequences of this for you?
5) What is your view regarding the maintenance of your SWB?
6) What might you like to share with others regarding SWB?
7) How could some of the strategies to maintain SWB be shared?
8) What factors detract from your SWB?
9) What did you think about Diener's definition of SWB?

Prompts / Probing Questions

What does it feel like……?

What are you thinking when …..?

What does this sound like…..?

What does it look like when …..

How did this impact upon your SWB?

Tell me about a time when …….

Talk me through how that felt ….?

What were the impacts upon …..?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C: Interview Two – Conversational Questions

Date: Interview:

In our previous interview you had mentioned *(highlighted on individual transcriptions as individualised points from interview one were further explored in interview two E.g. Self Talk / Shared leadership / Networking / SWB)*:

_____
_____
_____

Today I would like to explore this with you.

- Can you talk me through what is it?

- How is it engaged? When is it engaged?

- Can the 'self talk' occur at the same time you are in a conversation with someone else?

- Is there more than one voice? How do you prioritise the voices?

- Does 'self talk' link to your SWB?

- Can it be further developed?

In a previous interview you mentioned _____ *(highlighted on individual transcriptions as individualised points from interview one were further explored in interview two E.g. networking)*. I am wondering about the interplay of:

- self talk;
- shared leadership;
- networking; and
- SWB.

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

Phase A Data Collection Interview 1

Participant	Date 2012	Time	Venue
Ella	20th of June	9:30 am	School
Steve	21st of June	3:30pm	School
Sam	22nd of June	12 noon	School
Ewan	27th of June	2:30 pm	USQ
Evan	28th of June	9:30 am	USQ
Merv	10th of July	9:00 am	Residence
Lawrence	11th of July	10: 00 am	School
Nev	12th of July	12:00 noon	School
Amy	20th of July	1:00 am	School
Emma	27th of July	12:00 noon	School
Kirk	31st of July	2:00 pm	School

Phase B Data Collection Interview 2

Participant	Date 2012	Time	Venue
Ewan	22th of October	9:30 am	School
Amy	26th of October	10:00 am	School
Merv	29th of October	12 noon	School
Ella	30th of October	9:30 am	School
Steve	31st of October	9:30 am	School
Kirk	1st of November	9:00 am	School
Lawrence	1st of November	11:20 am	School
Emma	7th of November	3:30 pm	School
Evan	13th of November	1:00 am	USQ
Sam	Not reinterviewed		
Nev	Not reinterviewed On leave		

Appendix E: Survey to Principals

The purpose of this survey is to holistically capture your experience as a principal and also my position as a researcher.

1)   How many years have you been in administration (including principal/ deputy/HOD)?

2)   How many years have you been a principal?

3)   What contexts have you worked in as a principal? Please complete the table below.

School and rural /urban/ inner city Please write A for administration role other than principal P – worked in the school as a principal	Approximate number of students /size of school	Socioeconomic status e.g. low SES medium High	Region (E.g. Wide Bay, Darling Downs)	Country E.g. Australia	State/ Territory	System (State/ Private/ Independent education)
EXAMPLE: *P - Pallara State School – Urban*	*120 students, Old band 6*	*Medium SES, lots of complexity as near Inala, significant number of ESL*	*Greater Brisbane*	*Australia*	*QLD*	*S*

4)   Why did you participate in the research?

_____
_____
_____

5)   Would you have participated in this research if you did not know the researcher?

6)   Would you have participated in this research if the researcher had not been a school principal?

Additional comments:

_____
_____

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Thank you very much for being part of the research. This is the final piece of your time that I require. Your generosity has been appreciated.

Kind regards Susan Carter

USQ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

Faculty of Education

Re: Credibility Information Email

Dear

I hope all is going well in your busy world.

I am emailing you for two purposes: one is to enquire whether you would like any feedback on your interviews or the interview process that I have utilised; and secondly to ask you to please complete a very brief survey regarding your experience as a school principal and your reasons for becoming involved in the research.

Survey

My I please ask that you complete a very brief survey (evidence based trail is important for me) that demonstrates that you are an experienced principal. It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete this survey and email it back to me at your earliest convenience. Whilst your years of experience in the principalship are known to me I would like to establish a paper trail that evidenced this, and I would also like to establish the breadth of your experience, hence the survey.

Thank you

Thank you very much for participating in the interviews and the research. If you would like to meet with me and discuss any part of the interviews or the process you are most welcome to do so. Just let me know if this is something you wish to do. Please feel welcome to call me on 0409346466 or email me.

I want to thank you on behalf of other principals for the work you do in supporting your colleagues and at various times encouraging them. Well done! It has been really heart-warming to hear the passion that everyone has for the profession and for making a difference in the lives of students. Again I thank you for your participation.

Kind regards,

Susan Carter
University of Southern Queensland
Lecturer Special Needs
Faculty of Education

Principals' Comments Regarding The Importance Of The Study and Ineffectual Current Programs Or Activities And Recommendations

Importance of the study:

Several principals espoused concern for principals in general articulating that they were worried about their colleagues.

> *I am worried about our colleagues. We do actually have a lot of colleagues falling over and the new promotional system I don't think helps that either. Where you apply blindly so you apply for a capability rating but you - I think it was healthy when a particular school would come up and you could decide whether you applied for that school. But I've seen a number of principals fall away.*

All principals made comment that the study into principals' SWB was important.

> *I think bringing it to our professional meetings and heightening people's awareness of the need for us to function well in order for our schools to function, we need - it's a bit like, as a parent of a family in order for us to work well, to be able to look after our children we've got to be able to look after ourselves first and our spouse and our children.*

Another participant shared:

> *Yeah I think it is worthwhile, but how you do it, is a touchy one. I think defining wellbeing is something that could lead to those discussions. What is wellbeing?*

> *So I think the lessons you are going to learn and the research that you do, I think should really* benefit a lot of people, not just principals.

Ineffectual Current Supports:

The Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP) has a welfare officer that is available to talk with principals and offer them support. The Department of Education and Training also has a counsellor that provides support to principals. The concerns with this type of support is trust and confidentiality.

One participant commented:

> *But most QASSP branches have a welfare officer attached. It depends on what role that they do. Look, I'd be pissed off if a welfare officer that I didn't know rang me up to see how I was going. So it does have to have someone who's got some familiarity with you and at least knows you and knows of your circumstances and has talked to you in the past. So it's not something that someone just pick up a phone, I don't think and ring up because people just don't open up. They're not going to open up, so if someone rings me up, doesn't know anything.*

Another remarked:

> *We have groups like [QASSP] but I don't really think they help my wellbeing. We have cluster groups of principals but I don't really think they help my wellbeing either.*

Another respondent commented on whether a telephone call from a QASSP welfare officer would be helpful to their SWB:

> *I guess they're the people that you like and spend a lot more time with than others and some people you like but you wouldn't know them from a bar of soap. You think, oh I like this person, they come across nicely. They say right thing but I don't know you, I don't know anything about you. I don't know your history. I don't know what sort of character you've got.*

In relation to accessing a Department of Education Employee Advisor for counselling or support to improve SWB, all principals asserted they had not used this service. Most principals commented that they recommended it to their staff. And several of their staff use it. When I directly asked principals whether they would use Employee

Advisor if they felt their SWB was very low one participant indicated that they would consider it:

> *I knew about the employee advisor. I think if you know - I don't have an issue with ringing somebody like that, because it is totally confidential. I think the time that, myself - and I would say other principals would hesitate and say how will this look? You think about that. How will this look to my supervisor? What impact will this have on what he thinks about me? Yeah, so they're big questions. They're big - and even the person who you might mention it to, who might be a colleague, again, I think you ask yourself those questions first and say, how will this look? What will they think of me? Which is interesting, but I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who thinks that.*

The majority of principals said they would not use the Employee Advisor service if their SWB was low as they did not know and trust the person. One participant commented:

> *That trust and that relationship is so important, like we've got Employee Advisors in EQ and they're great, yes. Would I go to one? I don't know them from a bar of soap.*

Networks appointing someone to be a welfare officer or contact person were believed to be ineffectual by this participant:

Interviewer: *If say a colleague rang you, for example, does that - and was just ringing to touch base - does that have any impact on your wellbeing?*

Interviewee: *I think it's nice they do. It's probably the equivalent to stop and having a break, going for a walk and not having to deal with issues. It's nice. Do I feel as though - even if they were to say to me hey, I'm just checking on you, you've been busy lately, how are you going? Do I feel as though - do I feel a bit more valued or whatever? No, not really. I'm not a - I don't want to sound as though I'm cold. But I'm very male like in that approach.*

The Department of Education and Training has a variety of programs that have implemented or currently are in the processing of implementing that involve coaching and mentoring. The majority of principals articulated that these programs do not help their SWB. One participant commented in relation to the effectiveness of coaching:

> *Not so much a coaching because they don't want to be coached*

Another participant commented in relation to mentoring programs supporting mentees with contribution to improved SWB for younger mentees:

Interviewee: *I know EQs put a couple of things in place about mentoring programs, experienced principals mentoring younger principals and all that.*

Facilitator: *Does that work?*

Interviewee: *No, because an experienced principal, by the time they get to that point they've forgotten what it really feels like to be that first year principal, to truly understand that and also I'm an experienced principal and you're a first year principal. Oh my goodness, that's a little bit daunting and unless you've got a relationship it's not going to work at all, you know?*

The view point that your supervisor will support you was also called into question by this participant:

> *But I guess we don't see them, to be honest. They are making sort of judgement calls on our school from afar and from the odd meeting here or there. I would probably like it more if he could be in my school rather than the fleeting one hour visit where he brings in his checklist that he needs to probably do for his performance plan. But it shouldn't be really about that. It really should be about our school.*
>
> *But I also understand that he has targets and he's on a contract and he has to dot his I and cross his T. But I'm not sure that helps us as a school and probably me as a person. I have started telling those things but I think it's*

only going to get worse now because of the system that we have now. Whereas our region - I think we've got umbrellas now - so therefore your regional director will only have one 25 per cent of time in schools, but they're never in schools.

Personality, my ARD he's a very poker faced, straight down the line, non-emotional sort of person. I would think in a school setting fairly black and white.

All other principals articulated that they would not reach out to their supervisor for support if they had low or very low SWB. This did not appear to be linked to primarily to who was the supervisor but more to the nature of the supervisory role within the system.

When asked by "Do you think principals ring their supervisors?" a participant commented:

Interviewee: *Shit no.*

Facilitator: *Why would that be?*

Interviewee: *Trust.*

Facilitator: *Can you talk me through that process - not that process but that concept of trust and why it's apparently not there.*

Interviewee: *It's a new regime, you know as well as I do. In the old days the inspector was someone who'd been there done that and had no political agenda. We knew politics played a part in the higher echelons, always of course, but now it's filtered down to a level within our system where it's problematic because that senior level is using political pressure to achieve an outcome. They've lost sight of the real deal. I've got 861 of the real deal.*

The system does not have an accurate measure of how principals are in relation to their SWB. The system makes efforts to capture this information but principals report that they do not answer it accurately.

During several interviews the question was asked by me:

Facilitator: With the school opinion surveys there's a section on there around welfare and wellbeing of principals. Do you think that that is filled out accurately?

All respondents who were asked this question replied no.

Interviewee: No!

Another respondent stated:

> *Only that probably when the department sends out their surveys, that's probably the one that, to be honest with you, probably isn't responded honestly by everyone including me. Because they ask you about all the things - is your workload too heavy or whatever. I don't know that we - because it can be personally identified, without sounding paranoid, I don't know that - I just don't think that's the right instruments to use to get an authentic response.*

The value placed upon completing a survey about well-being so that principal's well-being could be measured did not appear to be highly rated by any of the principals involved in this study. The following example typified the responses:

> *The one I'm specifically talking about is the school opinion survey. There's a school opinion survey for principals [laughs]. They send them - there are other wellbeing surveys, but mainly that one. There's - I just think they could probably do that differently. I think the thing that we're in a people business. We need to continue to be child-focused and service-oriented. I think that EQ Central Office needs to always ensure that they remember that what drives our work is little children here in the school that they're safe and secure and they're getting a quality education.*

During discussion principals raised the point that perhaps busy, stressed principals with low SWB would not have bothered to complete the survey. One participant articulated:

Yeah. It's a heck of an assumption that gentleman's made about people without thinking who didn't complete the survey.

Recommendations

Principals offered suggestions in relation to what they thought would be effectual in supporting their SWB:

That's hard without support. I'm not getting counselling or anything, and I think principals need that actually. I really - I've thought for a long time that we present this image and performance to our community that we need debriefing from, so that we can go back to a normal human. I've spoken to Regional Office about this several times, not just critical incidents and debriefing that. But I think principals should go to a psychologist once a term, and just talk about their job and offload, because we don't tend to do that.

Principals are encouraged to look after themselves first (their work life balance is treated as important).

We've got to be able to look after ourselves first and our spouse and our children.

Another participant commented:

Balance, what's important, what's not. That's not rocket science; what's important to you and what's not. So I really enjoy bringing people on, you know, people who want to aspire to the principalship because we need them.

Several principals commented on the need for professional development to help principals developing personal strategies for maintaining their SWB. One participant articulated:

I think certainly - I think yes, there are certain tenets I would say that I would itemise as essential in what I've found successful. One of them is to look at a problem as a potential solution - you know, turn it on its head. Turn it on its

head is my number one thing. If that's stressing me, turn it on its head, how can I change it? What would it look like if it were not like that? Turning it on its head is learnable. You can look at an issue or a stressor or a problem or a behaviour and say, let's turn it on its head. What would it look like if it was different? I think that it's about - the learned behaviours are about recognising it, looking for the opposite of it. Stepping back from it, thinking it through, taking the time, it doesn't have to be instant. I think I naturally think things quickly. But people can learn to think things through differently. That's what coaching does for you. It teaches you a framework and there is a framework. I think there's a framework about self-talk. It could easily be helpful to a lot of people.

Another participant remarked:

I hypothesise that there's a difference in how you manage your work, your role and your subjective wellbeing in terms of strategy usage from when you're an early principal through to when you've been a principal for quite some time. But also there are principals we're losing along the way and there are a variety of reasons for that. That links back to wellbeing. But if there are strategies that we're doing to fuel that and maintain it and they're working, it makes sense to share it and make sure people know about it.

In discussion with principals on how such strategies could be implanted one participant responded:

I'm not talking about strategies, go for a run, eat well, that sort of stuff. That's out there. I'm talking about the thinking in relation to the job and the work. So it's been really good and helpful today to then look at putting that into a framework.

Another participant commented:

I believe the greatest need for us is how to, or what tools, what strategies can we use? So, whether we call it head talk or whether we have a little framework that gets you out of an emotional situation to find some quiet time. So, whether

it's saying to somebody I can't deal with that right now, I will get back to you, but I need some time to think about that. So, to me, that's one thing that I can use and have used, because, especially, it's about how - it's also about having the skillset or the knowledge to know when you're in that emotional state and how to give yourself time. How to go beyond it to then look at…

Networks

One participant remarked:

Using networks (time to network, opportunity to network)

Another shared:

You're in networks and you get a conversation going about that then (a) you see there's a likeminded-ness of people who are the same and they're in the same boat. I think that sometimes with the principal-ship everyone thinks they're the only one having the problem but when you put five people in the same room, they've all got the same problem.

So certainly that to me - I knew that years ago. I'd go to a meeting and raise the issues and everyone would go - you know, it was the interface. Obviously you've got the same issues, get them out and let's see what we can talk about. Then people open up and that in itself is a reassuring fact that it's not just me. By getting people together and starting to pull things out - I've lost the train of your question but the answer is, for me, you can take things from that that helps you to then implement what you have to do which relieves any stresses or pressures on yourself.

Another participant remarked on the importance of introducing and promoting discussion about SWB into networks:

Along the way introduce it to networks across Toowoomba

Mentors

One participant commented:

My thought is that the concept of mentoring principals at whatever stage of their career is critical. It's different to things like work shadowing or it's different to coaching in that the expectation isn't there that someone will follow someone and maybe pick something up. It is where there can be some direct intervention by somebody in a mentoring capacity to say hey, you're doing this, why? Hey, have you thought about this? You need to do this, or whatever.

I see older principals - not older - more experienced principals who have been through lots in their careers, having so much to offer back into the system. But where do they go? They retire into the abyss and take all those skills and experiences with them. To me, I would see that would be really valuable in having somebody in those capacities.

Ideally the mentor is a close friend or somebody whom a person trusts but it may not necessarily be the case. It may be that it is somebody who is paired up or [passionate] and said look, this person has got a mountain of skills, they're going to share at least one with you.

But coaching really is only about getting the best out of somebody who wants to give it. A mentor is completely different. Mentoring allows people the opportunity to say, listen son, here's a major hole in what you're doing, let's talk about it. Whereas coaching pursues the questions that you might hope might get to the fact that that person's got a major hole in this area. They're two completely different skills.

At the end of the day, a coach has no - well a coach can - he doesn't have to have any background in anything that they're talking about because it's the set of questions and skills that they use to draw that from the person. Whereas mentoring implies that someone's got a bucket load of experience who can come along and present and use those to help someone get better.

One participant suggested principals work shadowing would be effectual remarking:

I think personally work shadowing is more valuable than coaching and work shadowing is a form of coaching but coaching is not a form of work shadowing.

So I think work shadowing is a far more valuable tool because you can actually walk someone through your thought processes in the day and they can sit with you in a situation and you can analyse that situation with them when it's finished. Say to them this is what I was thinking and therefore these were the things that I did or said.

Another principal remarked that feedback on performance was needed:

But I've seen a number of principals fall away. I think sometimes what would help us as - and I'm talking now as principals rather than principal. I think sometimes if we're not cutting it I think we should be told rather than let it just hang out.

I think there's a number of people who in our system have got capability ratings in the last 12 months and probably thought they would get positions locally but haven't. But I wonder if that's because someone hasn't had a tough conversation with them. I think we need that. If I wasn't doing my job well I would like to know and I think most people would to be honest.

Several principals advised of a need to undergo a cultural change within the Department of Education and Training. One participant asserted:

Yes, absolutely but also have a culture that says we can go to someone, whether it's your supervisor or whoever, without that feeling of being judged, if you can, because I'm sure everyone in their careers and in their lives have had a time where something has happened and it has really knocked them for six but have bounded back more resilient. So how do you make it okay that it's okay to recognise it, it's okay to say that this has happened and it's okay for you to come to me and say, this is where I'm at and I'm not in a good place.

I need to find out what I need to do about this and not feel that there's any ramifications about it because I think it is about - it is about resilience but you can't build resilience unless you've had to overcome things. We should be made to feel it's okay to overcome things and during that time when you overcome something, it can be quite a period of time or it can be a process. It

can be that you do just step back and go, wow, I can't cope with this at this time but at some stage you come back again. You should be made to feel that that is okay, to be confident that I will get through this in sometime and when I come back I'm not going to be judged about it.

I think that that's - I've seen a couple of principals that happened to and I believe it's because they haven't had the support or the encouragement and they didn't have the skills to recognise and deal with it. I think because there's some sort of stigma attached to the fact that if you need to talk to somebody.

One principal shared:

So the time to develop those sorts of skills is not there. They may well and truly have the curriculum knowledge and they may well and truly have the day to day managerial ability to control a budget, pay a bill. But what they haven't learnt, because it takes an enormous amount of time, are the skills of managing people, managing schools, managing yourself, managing those mental processes and those planning processes. All of those parts of the job come purely from experience and time.

One participant articulated:

I think, value what you're doing through showing that. I think, because they can do all the talk - lots of us can say, …. got a great school here, yadda yadda. But I'd love them to be able to come in regularly. So, for me, to value it is not just the talk and what they've heard from someone else, but come into my school and come and see what we're doing. I'd love that. I'd love that to get back to what we had years ago, where they were coming regularly and coming and seeing what you were doing, and saying what your best practice was because they had seen it.

Importantly one participant put in place several criteria around trust when establishing a network and the importance of selecting people with the ability to listen and question in a manner that promoted deep reflection.

Interviewee: *I think it's just around personalities, we just seem to hit it off I suppose. We don't always talk about school but it was actually a work related relationship that developed but no longer in the same workplace. I think there were some commonalities there, around that.*

Facilitator: You said you walked away feeling buoyant, so what is it between having that conversation with a person that you've deliberately chosen that leads to that buoyancy?

Interviewee: *I think it's the shared talk, the shared; this is what's going on at the moment. It's that level of - I'm trying to find the right word - acknowledgement perhaps and edification that okay, there's something similar in our conversations in what's happening in our lives, in around our workplace, around our relationships with our staff. There are some commonalities there and I think it's because you've actually verbalised it. You've actually put it out there on the table.*

Facilitator: You've taken a risk to share that and you've taken a risk to share it with that person because you?

Interviewee: *Trust them.*

Facilitator: You've picked somebody who you can trust…

Interviewee: *And who listens, yes.*

Facilitator: Will they give you the solution?

Interviewee: *No, but they may give me - and I suppose this sounds a bit funny but often I find I'm the person who they will bring an issue to more so. It sounds funny; I'm not actually singing my own praises here. I often find that they will open up about something and I just like to listen. But also, I might just put in there have you thought about, or this would be something for you to investigate. I tend*

to do that a fair bit. I think that is because I am a good listener. I've been told that by others. I think there's a lot of give and take in that situation.

Facilitator: You choose somebody who has those same attributes?

Interviewee: *It's funny I would say a couple of them do, yes. The others are just - and this is in no way an evaluation of that friendship or anything like that, or a statement because I value them for different things, but a couple of them know. I think that they're not necessarily good listeners but they're other - I don't know, they're…*

Facilitator: You talked about energy, does it have any link to energy, because you mentioned you were low on energy and you go from low energy to…

Interviewee: *Yes, one particular group I think that we have, we can see the humour in a lot of things. We can be serious but we tend to find a lighter side to stuff as well. So that's one particular group. Then there's a - I suppose one particular person I would believe that - I could most probably open up to most anything and she's younger to me and someone I've met more recently, but we can have a laugh and we can have a giggle about stuff, but we can also - she's very dedicated, she's a good listener too but also I think on the flipside of that, I see some of those things in myself as well.*

Being able to have some fun but also to talk to each other professionally; yes, so I think that connection is - I know that she most probably has all of those things and I hope that I have all of those things for her as well. Then again, on the other hand, the friend who is the teacher, there are things that I obviously feel - because it's a professional thing; that I don't feel I could open up about because of confidentiality and stuff like that as well. But there's that sense of fun around that. I think if it was anywhere other and had met her in a workplace and been her supervisor, if

I'd met her anywhere else any other time, we'd have been really good friends but I think this job also brings certain restrictions with it.

Facilitator: Is that like moral ethical friends?

Interviewee: *It is a little bit because it's around equity and treating people with - not equity but you're not wanting anyone to see that perhaps one person has a better relationship with you that is a personal relationship and friendship as well. So it's about an ethical and an integrity thing again. That relationship was much easier to develop once that person moved schools but there still are some restrictions around that relationship because of the fact that she is a teacher and I am a principal. You have to be careful, especially in the situation that way. So there are restrictions and barriers in place in the workplace as well.*

Several Principals made reference to what they referred to as principals with low SWB and the Signs of not coping and perhaps these signs are what both colleagues and Supervisors need to be aware of:

I want to be the same and that takes a lot of strength, I think, sometimes to be able to do that, so that people know that they can - well, every time I go to that she's willing to listen, she's willing to talk, she'll organise time for us, she will come back to us, she's the same. I'm never going to go and she'll tell you to pee off or something, you know, she's the same. So they have that constant and if I'm presenting myself externally like that, well then I know, for me, then people know that well, you're managing.

But if I came and I didn't do that, that'd be a big sign, I think, to anybody here or at home too, that I'm just not coping, if I didn't ring my mum every day or if I missed her phone calls and didn't return them, well that's telling people that maybe she's not coping.

Appendix H: Invitation to Participate Email Template

Subject: Research into principal's SWB (SWB)

Dear ....,

Thank you very much for showing an interest in my research and volunteering to participate in an interview. I greatly appreciate it.

Attached:

- The participant consent form, in word form and also in a scanned form (1043_001) with USQ letter head.
- Participant information sheet. This details what the study is about and provides you with a more detailed outline of the questions that will be asked.
- A letter from Education Queensland (EQ letter 1046_001) that demonstrates approval for the study.

Action:

- Please read the documents.
- Please complete and email back to me the signed consent form as I require these before conducting the interviews. Please note that the approval number from the USQ ethics committee is on the word document form of the participant consent form. This is the number you need if you wish to make any enquires with the Ethics committee.
- Please return a copy of the signed participation form to me at your earliest convenience.

Confirming Details

- Our first i**nterview is scheduled for-------------**. The venue for this interview will be -------------- .

Again I thank you for taking part in this study and sharing some of your precious time with me.

Kind Regards

Susan Carter
Mobile: 0409346466

Appendix I: Participant Consent Form

HREC Approval Number: **H12REA108**

TO: Principals - State Schools Principals

Full Project Title: Principals' Stories About SWB
Principal Researcher: Susan Carter

Associate Researcher(s): Nil

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.

- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.

- I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential. If other arrangements have been agreed in relation to identification of research principals this point will require amendment to accurately reflect those arrangements.

- I understand that the tape will be retained for a period of five years. The tape will be stored in a locked cabinet, in a locked office at the University of Southern Queensland with the principal researcher having access and access being given only to a trained research assist for the period of transcription. After a period of five years the tape will be destroyed.

Please complete the consent details below:

Name of participant………………………………………………………….........

Signed……………………………………………**Date**……………………..

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350

HREC Approval Number: H12REA108

Full Project Title: Holding it Together: An Explanatory Framework for Maintaining SWB in Principals

Principal Researcher: Susan Cater

Other Researcher(s): none

1. Introduction

My name is Susan Carter and I have been an educator in the Queensland State school system for 19 years and a school principal for 13 of those 19 years. I am conducting a study for my Doctoral research through the University of Southern Queensland. I am interested in examining how people who perceive themselves as successful principals maintain their SWB. The findings of this study will be used in my dissertation and may be used in future publications and presentations.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project.

2. Outline of the Study:

As part of my study I have explored theories regarding what makes life worth living (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the study of well-being fits this broad category. The focus of this study is on SWB and you may wonder: What is SWB? SWB can be defined as "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives; it includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment, and life satisfaction" (Diener, Oishi and Lucas, 2003, p. 403). One's view of SWB is personal and dependent upon how one evaluates their own life.

The research study is entitled: Holding it Together: An Explanatory Framework for Maintaining SWB in Principals. The research study will provide qualitative evidence based research regarding the enablers to SWB as experienced and shared by a group of principals, in contemporary Queensland State schools. The research question that this study will address is: How do principals maintain their SWB?

Statement of the research problem

The proposed research will investigate, the well-being, in particular SWB (SWB) of principals, and is important because of the possible impact on the well-being and learning outcomes of students and the well-being and performance of staff (Leithwood & Levin, 2005). It is therefore important that research into ways that principals maintain their SWB can under taken (Lacey, 2007; Mulford, 2003). Currently principals are self-reporting that they are experiencing issues with maintaining their SWB (Lacey, 2007) and currently there appears to be no research on how Australian principals are successfully managing their SWB. This research aims to address that gap. This study builds on Diener's work and builds on SWB as defined by Diener, Oishi and Lucas', (2003) as "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives; it includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment, and life

satisfaction" (p. 403). One's view of SWB is personal and dependent upon how one evaluates their life.

Goals:

This study will seek to develop a deeper understanding of the manner in which principals maintain SWB. It will utilise and expand the current research base, examine the major components of a principal's role within the context of a rapidly changing society and the increasingly complex challenges faced by schools, teachers and principals and then extend this to new research.

This study will involve engaging in research with selected principals where the principals will be asked to tell their story of how they work and maintain their SWB (SWB).

Specific key aims that will direct the study are:
> To reveal insights into how principals maintain SWB.
> To develop recommendations that will assist principals in maintaining SWB.

Objectives / Purpose:

The main purposes of this study are to understand from the perspectives of principals, their experiences and how these experiences inform SWB. In so doing I will:

* Complete a scholarly review of the literature, develop a deep understanding of the construct of well-being, the factors which may affect well-being and the approaches to the maintenance of SWB.

* Explore how performing the role of principal in contemporary Queensland State education impacts on principals' SWB.

* Understand those factors which influenced SWB and the various approaches used by the principals to maintain SWB.

* Apply the findings of the study to help principals in the management of SWB.

3. Procedures

Participation in this project will involve:

If you choose to become a participant, I ask that you participate in two interviews. Each interview will have a duration of approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Please refer to the appendices of this letter for the format of the interview.

We can schedule a convenient date, time and location for each interview. With your permission, I will tape all of the interviews and all interview recordings will be safeguarded under lock and key. All study materials will be safely stored for five years according to federal regulations and the data will be destroyed. I will protect both your identity and that of your school by giving pseudonyms and disguising identifying information. You should understand however, that I may quote directly from our interviews but will not use your name in any part of the study and any identifying information will be disguised.

The second interview will take place several months after the first interview and principals will be invited to elaborate fully on ideas that had arisen during the first interview.

I will be the only interviewer and a trained research assistant, will assistant me with the transcription of the interview recordings. All data will be kept confidential.

Together as participant and researcher we can monitor the progress of the study to strive to meet target timelines. My Doctoral supervisors (Professor Dorothy Andrews and Dr Mark Dawson) will also monitor my progress on the study itself, providing guidance where needed.

Benefits and Risks
As a participant there are benefits and risks. You will benefit from having the opportunity to voice your experiences in how you have maintained your SWB. Additional benefits included helping colleagues and future principals to think more about their own well-being. Principals risk being asked to examine sensitive personal information, which could bring up strong emotions. At any time during your participation in the study, you may withdraw without any negative consequences and this also includes the right to withdraw any data that may have been collected up to that point.

4. **Voluntary Participation**

Participation is entirely voluntary. It will likely involve two interviews each of 60 to 90 minutes duration. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. Any information already obtained from you will be destroyed.

Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Please notify the researcher if you decide to withdraw from this project.

Should you have any queries regarding the progress or conduct of this research, you can contact the principal researcher:
Susan Carter
Lecturer Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba, 4350.
Work office phone number: 46312347
Mobile 0409346466
Email: susan.carter@usq.edu.au

If you have any ethical concerns with how the research is being conducted or any queries about your rights as a participant please feel free to contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Officer on the following details.

Ethics and Research Integrity Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees
University of Southern Queensland
West Street, Toowoomba 4350
Ph: +61 7 4631 2690
Email: **ethics@usq.edu.au**

I greatly appreciate your willingness to give your time to this important study and I look forward to talking with you in the very near future.

If you have any questions, please feel welcome to call me on my mobile 0409346466 or email me at susan.carter@usq.edu.au

Please keep a copy of the informed consent for your own records.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards

Susan Carter
Researcher

Appendix 1: Proposed Interviewer Schedule

Phases of Data Gathering	Questions and Actions
Phase one - At the beginning of the first interview	Interview Questions: There has been a lot written about well-being and what I am interested in exploring with you is SWB (SWB). 1) How would you define your own SWB? 2) What factors contribute to SWB? 3) Tell me about how you maintain your own SWB? 4) How is your SWB built or refuelled and what are the consequences of this for you? 5) What is your view regarding the maintenance of your SWB? 6) What might you like to share with others regarding SWB? 7) How could some of the strategies to maintain SWB be shared? 8) What factors detract from your SWB? 9) What are your thoughts on Diener, Oishi and Lucas's definition of SWB? (In the participant information sheet) *SWB can be defined as "people's emotional and cognitive evaluations of their lives; it includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment, and life satisfaction" (Diener, Oishi and Lucas, 2003, p. 403).* 10) Please create a concept map of how you conceptualise SWB.
Interview Prompts	How did this impact upon your SWB? Tell me a time when …….
Phase two – Interview Two	This interview will be much less structured as it will link to ideas for further exploration. These ideas will come out of your first interview responses. Interview Questions from your first interview: 1) During our last interview I asked you a series of questions and I would like to read these questions to you again and invite further input? • How would you define your own SWB? • What factors contribute to SWB? • Tell me about how you maintain your own SWB? • How is your SWB built or refuelled and what are the consequences of this for you? • What is your view regarding the maintenance of your SWB? • What might you like to share with others regarding SWB? • How could some of the strategies to maintain SWB be shared? • What factors detract from your SWB? I would like to link back to a question I asked in a previous interview and further explore this with you …..? 2) Are there any areas or factors of well-being that we have not discussed, that you might like to talk about?
	What were you thinking when …….? Tell me about ....?

Appendix 2: Research Activity Timeframe

Step/ Timeline	Action	• Strategy
Step 1: Mar/April	Raise awareness of research project	• Obtain appropriate approval from relevant school systems • Email the Department of Education and Training Regional Office – Toowoomba and request that an invitation, asking principals to be part of the study be sent out and also contact the IDEAS schools in Western Australia and Sydney inviting the principal to be part of the research.
Step 2: April/June	Purposeful sampling of principals And Researcher participant communication	• Target group of 12 principals selected. • Welcome principals • Research parameters, risks, time commitment, confidentiality, rights of principals explained. • Informed consent sort. • Meet face to face or by teleconference with principals if needed, otherwise communication could be via email. Principals have input into the chosen communication style. • Set interview time and venue • Email interview reminder to participant
Step 3: June /July	Phase one Interview A – approximately 60 minutes , maximum 90 minutes duration (12 interviews in 12 weeks)	• Questions emailed to principals a week in advance. • Transcription as soon as possible after the interview (1 to 2 interviews per week for 12 weeks).
Step 4: July	On – going communication with principals	• A few weeks before interview 2 send a brief email to principals encouraging them to reflect on their own SWB and incidents in that may have fuelled/built their SWB.
Step 5: end of July-	Feedback discussion regarding interview one (6 feedback sessions per week over 2 weeks)	• Face to face /email /phone feedback session regarding interview one (style of feedback depends on participant time availability and meeting style preference).
Step 6: Aug- Oct	Phase Two Interview B – approximately 60 minutes, maximum 90 minutes duration (12 interviews in 12 weeks)	• Questions emailed to principals a week in advance of interview two. Questions built on data from interview one. • Principals encouraged to discuss their reflections regarding SWB. • Transcription as soon as possible after the interview (1 per week for 12 weeks).
Step 7 end of Nov	Feedback from interview two (6 feedback sessions per week over 2 weeks)	• Principals are encouraged to clarify points of concern. • Face to face meeting / email /phone feedback meeting depending upon participant time availability and meeting style preference.
Step 8 Nov/ early Dec	Project Finalisation and feedback meeting	• Principals invited to provide feedback regarding the conduct of the research project. • Principals provided with the opportunity to answer any queries that they may have regarding the research.

Appendix K: Department of Education and Training Permission Form

Queensland Government
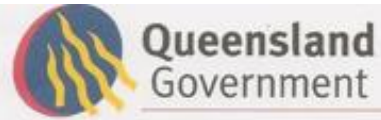
Department of
Education and Training
Darling Downs South West Region

24 January 2012

Ms Susan Carter
15 Sylvan Court
RANGEVILLE Q 4350

Dear Ms Carter

Thank you for your application to undertake research in state schools in the Darling Downs South West Region, and for your research proposal forwarded to Mr Russell Simpson.

I am pleased to inform you that I approve your application. Please note that this approval is for schools in the Darling Downs South West Region only.

I wish you every success with this project.

Yours sincerely

GREG DICKMAN
Regional Director
Darling Downs South West Region

Ref 12/25763