



Appreciative Leadership and Teacher's Subjective Well-being: An Appreciative Tool for an Appreciative Outcome

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Abstract: Educational scholars and reformers have reached a consensus on the importance of teacher's well-being in education. Teacher's and student's well-being can be considered two sides of the same coin. It is considered by a lot of researchers as an essential ingredient for building human capacity in a first-rate educational system. Therefore, the need to improve teacher's well-being is essential within the education industry. However, teacher's well-being is a broad concept governed by multiple variables. The effect of school leadership on teacher's well-being has been under the microscope recently not only within educational research but also as part of well-being and organizational studies. This study examines the effect of Appreciative Leadership on teacher's subjective well-being through the perspective of teachers (instructional and non-instructional staff). It uses a mixed method approach using both a qualitative and quantitative instrument. It also provides interventions to promote teacher's well-being through Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 4-D cycle. The study targeted 94 instructional and non-instructional staff from different phases (K-12) in 4 schools in Dubai that has different KHDA rating. However, the Appreciative Inquiry Summit was delivered in one of those schools only for convenience issues. The current study consulted different theories that Appreciative Leadership is grounded in as social constructionism, Appreciative Inquiry, and positive psychology. The major results of the study indicate that Appreciative Leadership affect teacher's subjective well-being at school. The positive core shared through the Appreciative Inquiry Summit indicates that Appreciative Leadership strategies and practices have a positive effect on teacher's well-being. The Appreciative Inquiry summit produced several interventions designed collaboratively and positively by teachers and leaders to be delivered within schools to promote teacher's well-being.

Keywords: Appreciative Leadership, Teacher's Well-being, Appreciative Tool, Appreciative Outcome

INTRODUCTION

Well-being at workplace is rapidly becoming the center of organizational research. High well-being has positive effects on employee's performance and job satisfaction. The educational organizations engage in continuous efforts to improve education and offer the best learning experience for students. Educational leaders are under a lot of pressure to keep up with these demands, changes and expectations. Leaders on the other hand exert the same pressure or even more on teachers being the vehicle of change. Teacher's reaction to educational changes results in an environment of stress, disengagement, burnout, and eventually low well-being. Low teacher's well-being burdens the educational institutions whether by the financial drain of

recruiting and training new teachers due to a high turnover, or by affecting students' achievements and well-being. Previous research and studies investigated the relationship between leadership style, organizational growth and staff performance. This relationship is emphasized in educational institutions too where successful school leadership builds human capacity for developing the learning environment (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Teacher's well-being is a key aspect in building capacity within schools. It affects school effectiveness and is reflected upon student's academic and psychological well-being. Hirsch et al. (2006) report that teacher's working conditions affect student's learning conditions. Sharrocks (2014) describes teaching as being a high stress occupation. This stress might negatively affect teacher's performance and the relationship with students. Teacher's high turnover level is an indicator of this stress and the unstable status of teachers within the educational organization. This instability can be a serious indicator of an underlying problem such as teacher's low well-being. Several observations and readings highlighted that teacher's well-being is vital for enhancing student's academic and emotional well-being. If schools want to enhance student's well-being, they must enhance teacher's well-being first.

Teacher's working conditions are influenced by different factors including the relationship with school leaders. In a report on teacher working conditions (2006), Hirsch et al. stated that teachers and school leaders view working conditions differently which might create a gap and eventually affect teacher's well-being. The need for a school leadership that bridge this gap is an important component to improve teacher's well-being. In Dubai, the average teacher's turnover ranges from 15 percent up to 60 percent in some schools compared to 3-5 percent in other countries (Absal, 2011). The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) reports the statistic to be alarming as it could negatively affect the quality of education. Although many teachers are expatriates who come to UAE with a two-year contract, other factors still contribute to this high turnover rate. Teaching conditions and teachers' well-being can be considered as contributing factors to this serious phenomenon. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in Dubai designed its first Dubai Students Wellbeing Census in 2017. The purpose of this census is to measure how students feel and think about their own well-being including their confidence, happiness and relationships (KHDA, 2018). UAE Vision 2021 National Agenda is keen on promoting happiness as one of the pillars of the National Agenda for a cohesive society. Knowing that our teachers are doing well is as important as knowing our students are doing well too. Teachers with low subjective well-being will struggle to be physically and psychologically available for the students. This will affect a second pillar in the UAE National Agenda which is developing a first-rate education system. The Adults@School Wellbeing Survey in 2018 is an attempt by the KHDA to raise the awareness to the importance of adult's wellbeing in education.

Some variables affecting teacher's working conditions, and accordingly their well-being, might be difficult to control as working hours, work load, and pay. However, the role of leadership needs to be highlighted as it can be developed and refined. Being grounded in social constructionism, positive psychology and Appreciative Inquiry, Appreciative Leadership emerges as a possible leadership style to create a relational school environment and enhance teacher's subjective well-being. Teaching is well-known to be a demanding stressful profession, and the above context adds to its complexity. Teacher's well-being should be an important priority to maximize the human capital and enhance education at schools. Research suggests teacher's well-being impacts student's academic outcome and well-being and is affected by the school's leadership. In a city that strives to have happy citizens and be among the best countries in the world, teacher's well-being is essential for schools to succeed and achieve a first-rate education and fulfill Dubai's vision and educational agenda.

Appreciative Leadership has the potential to change the behavioral pattern of a teacher. To obtain a clear picture about the relationship between teacher's well-being and appreciative leadership, this research intends to answer the following questions: How does appreciative leadership affect teacher's well-being? What are the strategies of appreciative leadership that affect teacher's well-being the most? Can Appreciative Inquiry be used to initiate positive organization change and enhance teacher's well-being? How can leaders improve teacher's well-being at schools?

Literature Review

Teacher’s subjective well-being is affected by various variables and school leadership is considered as one. High teacher’s subjective well-being increases the performance and effectiveness of schools by increasing student’s academic attainment and psychological well-being. Appreciative Leadership is characterized by five strategies that generate a relational school environment. This leadership style highlights the strengths and turn the potential in individuals and systems into positive power. Therefore, it can be assumed that such outcomes support teacher’s well-being and enhance it. Figure 1 highlights the framework for the conceptual analysis used in this study.

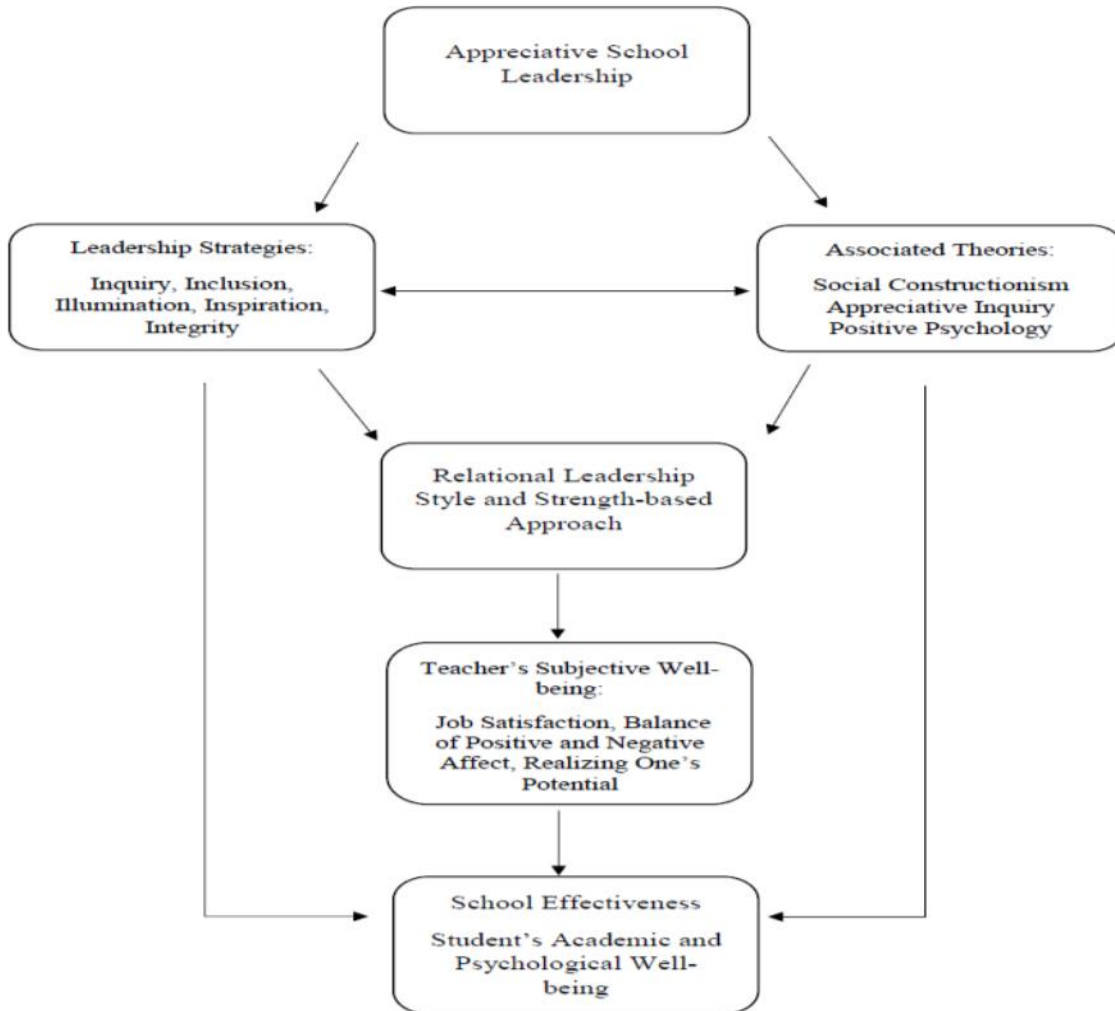


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Appreciative Leadership is grounded in generative theories and emphasizes a strength-based approach. The positive leadership approach builds a relational environment that promotes teacher’s subjective well-being. Appreciative leadership is established on the foundation of Appreciative Inquiry. Donaldson and Ko (2010) mentioned that the organization is observed as a relationship that needs to be developed and explored as a team with some definite practice and purpose with individual thoughts and motivations. Appreciative leadership is a positive philosophy and worldview that is based on the belief that every person or team offers

a positive potential which needs to be identified, highlighted, appreciated and utilized as a catalyst to enhance performance in an organization (Bushe & Paranjpey, 2014).

Appreciative leaders normally collaborate with others and share their ideas and beliefs which is the opposite of being an authoritarian (Mills, Fleck & Kozikowski, 2013). Here, the success of the organization is mainly based on the strength that arises from everyone's involvement. Appreciative leadership is a "relational capacity which helps to mobilize the creative potential and turn it into positive powers" (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader 2010, p. 3) which helps to boost confidence. Appreciative leaders recognize potential which seeks to turn the positive powers into life-affirming results. It creates or offers waves of positivity with rippling outward change. Bushe (2005) emphasizes that the first transformation an appreciative leader would do is the intentional change of people "mindsets" to develop an appreciative one. Changing people's mindset is not an easy task that can happen in a short period of time, but rather a lifetime process that focuses on the right things happening rather than the wrong things. Appreciative Leadership does not only transform the mindset of people but also transforms the potential into positive power. Figure 2 highlights the five relational strategies used by appreciative leaders to drive positive change and power.



Figure 2: Five Core Strategies of Appreciative Leadership (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader 2010, p. 1)

Inquiry: The most powerful tool for appreciative leaders would be inquiry. Inquiry opens the door to a plethora of ideas, experiences, and information. The wisdom of inquiry is all about asking positive questions and diverting from the negative. Whitney, Trosten-Bloom and Rader (2010, p. 28) suggest that these positive questions "are compelling vehicles for empowerment, for fostering risk taking, and for guiding value-based performance". Appreciative leaders select the topics of positive questions carefully as they define what the organization will learn.

Illumination: Appreciative leaders love to share success stories to pave the way to a culture that celebrates high performance and strengths. This strategy "requires the willingness and the ability to see what works rather than what doesn't" (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader 2010, p.59). They usually attempt to find the "Best" of people, experiences, and institutions. They analyse these success stories to highlight what works. This creates an environment of learning, collaboration and high expectations. Research suggests that people who can connect between their strengths and organizational goals feel more inspired to perform.

Inclusion: Authoritarian leadership is no longer accepted by people. People are interested in leadership that welcomes different people along with their different emotions and backgrounds. People are interested in

leadership that facilitates cooperation and collaboration. Appreciative leaders include all stakeholders to participate in shaping and creating the future of the organization.

Inspiration: Appreciative leaders are not only good listeners and strength spotters, but also pay attention to what inspires people and motivate them to move forward. They set high expectations and develop inspirational vision for their organization. However, what is more important is not only to have a vision but to share the path of how to move forward with this vision. Showing people how to become their best creates a positive transformation within the organization. This visionary liveliness excites people to be their best and do their best up to the highest expectations. The sense of purpose constructs confidence unleashes energy and creates positive transformation.

Integrity: Appreciative leadership is all about integrity. Integrity assists organizations and members to metamorphoses towards wholeness. Integrity is a relational approach that encompass a lot of points as “honesty, transparency, moral and ethical conduct, speaking truth to power, making and keeping commitments, open communication, congruity of words and deeds, reconciliation, forgiveness, and authenticity” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom 2011, p. 43). Appreciative leaders engage in high performance by defining the principles of success and what is acceptable and unacceptable within an organization. They walk the talk in an organization which leads to enforcing these performance principles as shared ones. These principles lay the foundation to successful collaboration for positive change.

The educational system is generally characterized by the problem-based approach that focuses on finding faults and failures within the system. It emphasizes addressing these problems and finding solutions by re-inventing the wheel causing a deficit-based-thinking that drives the school back to status quo. These responses are short-termed and shallow that they don't solve the actual pedagogical factors (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). The surges of intense responses to problems breed stress within the educational system causing burnout, resentment and negativity. A different strength-based approach that highlights strengths and best practices is more productive within school settings. Daly & Chrispeels (2005) clarify that such an approach builds organizational trust which subsequently promotes positivity and increase school effectiveness.

Research on trust in educational organizations highlights its positive effect. It is correlated and linked to “increased collaboration, engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors, promotion of risk-tolerant climate, and links to improvement in academic productivity” (Daly & Chrispeels 2005, p. 14). Fullan (2003) adds that organizational trust encourages organizational learning and shared knowledge. This is developed through collaboration which increases collective and individual efficacy. The sense of self-efficacy for teachers allows them to overcome obstacles and challenges while developing collaborative innovation and consistency throughout the school system. Bandura in 1997 (cited in Daly & Chrispeels 2005, p.15) states that "the stronger the staff members' shared beliefs in their instructional efficacy, the better the schools performed academically".

Appreciative leadership encourages the strength-based approach and refrains from the traditional problem-centered model. This paradigm shift in leadership identifies strengths, develops emotional, social and intellectual capital, and supports innovation within schools. Orr & Cleveland-Innes (2015, p.239) highlight the potential of appreciative leadership at schools as it helps “restore the morale of its members and liberate their considerable strengths and innovative capacities in the service of future generations”.

Although there has been an increased interest in the study of well-being recently, there has been no consensus over its definition. Well-being is defined as “the state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous” in the Marriam Webster and as “the state of being comfortable, happy and healthy” in Oxford dictionary. On the other hand, well-being is an integral word of the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as being “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not only the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 2006). Conceptualizing well-being is essential for the process of properly measuring it. Throughout history, there has been ongoing attempts to conceptualize well-being, and research argues that the lack of agreement on an understanding of it continues until today (Jayawickreme,

Forgeard & Seligman, 2012). Cooke, Melcherte and Conner (2016) define four general approaches or models of well-being in a study to identify the available instruments for measuring it: Hedonic approach, Eudemonic approach, Quality of Life (QoL), and Wellness.

Subjective well-being is the most distinct model of the Hedonic approach concerned with “an individual’s cognitive and affective evaluation of the extent to which he or she experiences pleasant emotions, negative mood, and life satisfaction” (Diener et al. 2005, cited in Wang, Yang, & Xue 2017, p.1111). It consists of the emotional well-being and the positive functioning. The emotional well-being is concerned with the individual “perceptions of happiness, satisfaction with life and the balance of positive to negative affect” (Russell, 2008). Positive functioning is a multidimensional theory focusing on the psychological well-being at the individual level, in relation with others, and society. People spend at least 8-hours at work daily which is almost a quarter of their day. Their experiences at their workplace affect their physical, mental and social well-being in that context. The well-being of individuals at their workplace affects their job satisfaction, emotions, organizational commitment, innovation, performance and engagement. Employees with high level of well-being are better performers characterized with resilience, grit, creativity, growth mindset, sense of belonging and engagement.

Subjective well-being is an instrument that measures how people think of their lives and their experiences. The framework used in this study for measuring subjective well-being is recommended by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and includes life evaluation, positive and negative affect, in addition to Eudemonia. Researchers link subjective well-being to areas of well-being at workplace as job satisfaction, work performance and outcomes, productivity, engagement, fulfillment, commitment, and civic responsibility (Russell, 2008). Pavot and Diener (2012, p.685) link subjective well-being (SWB) to positive successful workplace as “happy workers are productive, satisfied workers, and their positive affect is associated with good citizenship, good relations with co-workers, and improved conflict resolution”. Employees with high subjective well-being will experience higher levels of satisfaction and positive emotions. Positive emotions facilitate knowledge sharing within organizations. Research demonstrates that knowledge sharing, which creates an environment of collaboration and innovation, positively correlates with subjective well-being (Wang, Yang, & Xue, 2017). Teacher’s wellbeing at school is vital for achieving educational goals and supporting student’s well-being. The well-being of teachers and students are interconnected with each other. Enhancing teacher’s well-being has various positive outcomes on teachers, students, and the whole educational process. Waters and White (2015) mention that well-being needs to be maintained to raise the academic performance of schools. Schiller, Holland and Riley (2011) stated that well-being is important as healthy students have more attention and engagement which results in better academic attainment and progress as well as building their character strengths. High subjective well-being can help increase the academic well-being. It helps build self-awareness as well as creativity, trust, equality and happiness among all stakeholders. Greenberg and Jennings in 2009 (cited in Brooks 2015, p.22) suggest that “high well-being reduces stress, sickness, absence and improves teacher performance”.

Research on school leadership is although evolving in the UAE, it is not many on appreciate leadership. Some applied research on school leadership in the UAE offer relevant insights for future school leadership development in the country. Abu Afifeh & David (2016) explored the leadership styles that influence students’ learning environment in Abu Dhabi, UAE. Their results suggest that the six prominent leadership traits such as; effective communication, friendly, insightful perspective, self-confidence, persistence and trustworthy were considered as leadership styles influencing student’s learning. Al Hussein & David (2017) studied the impact of head teachers’ instructional leadership role on teacher’s professional practices in four private schools in Dubai, UAE. They identified that school leaders demonstrate instructional leadership abilities by supervising, observing classes, offering feedback, review lesson plans, helping in curriculum and assessments, and encouraging teacher’s professional growth. Daraghmeh & David (2017) researched the impact of the technology usage of school leaders. They identified that strong tendency of school leaders in the UAE to use

technology tools as a substitution to the conventional ones with null, or minimal functional improvement. These and several other studies on school leadership is interesting. However, this current study aims to role Appreciative Leadership plays in employee well-being. It also fills in the gap concerning the role of Appreciative Leadership especially in education. It is expected that Appreciative Leadership, through its five strategies, will have an impact on teacher's subjective well-being. Appreciative Inquiry is assumed to provide interventions that are able to promote teacher's well-being.

Methodology

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology to collect data from quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The rationale for using a mixed method approach in this research is to study in depth the relationship between appreciative leadership and teacher's well-being. Quantitative data collection through questionnaire instrument is used to identify the relationship between appreciative leadership and teacher's well-being based on the strategies of appreciative leadership. The reliability level of the questionnaire was measured by SPSS Software, and the measured Cronbach's Alpha = 0.867 > 0.7 indicates a high level of reliability for this questionnaire. Appreciative Inquiry was used as qualitative research tool through focus groups to collect data and provide interventions and recommendations on how to enhance teacher's well-being. Participants are encouraged to share their positive experiences through storytelling. A strength-based approach is used to identify key themes to complete the Appreciative Inquiry framework known as the AI 4-D cycle. The qualitative data collected in the Appreciative Inquiry focus groups complements the quantitative data and provides an extension to the research by identifying strengths, generating possible statements, designing an action plan for interventions, and turning the dream into a reality.

The population for this study is selected through a non-random sampling method. As this study is a mixed study research, it was common to use more than one kind of sample, size, scope, and type (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The samples in this study are selected in a parallel mixed methods sampling. Both methods used are identified as being non-probability strategy or method. The first sample is a convenience or opportunity sample. This sample included instructional and non-instructional staff who work in the same school as the researcher while the second sample is a snowball sampling. Figure 3 below shows the process of the snowball sampling used for this research study:

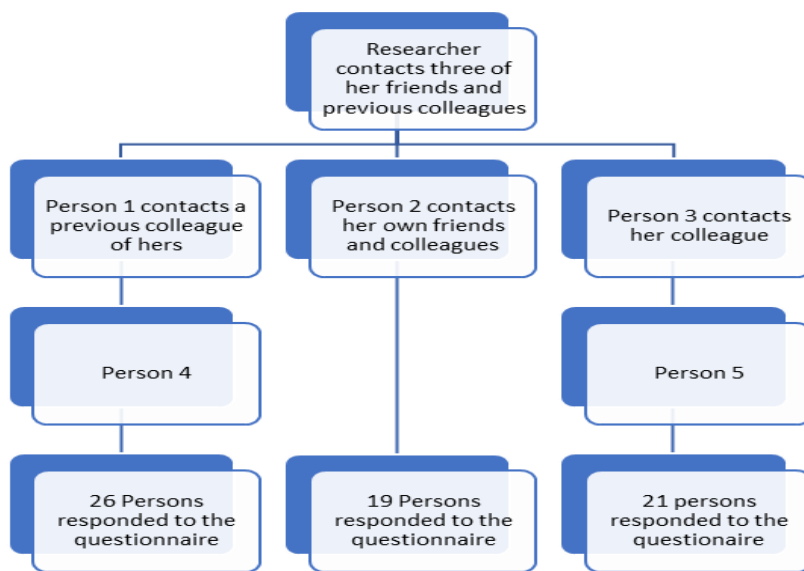


Figure 3: Snowball Sampling

Of the initial 170 questionnaires distributed in two sampling methods (convenience sampling & snowball sampling), 110 questionnaires were answered and returned to the researcher. However, 16 samples were eliminated from the data analysis as the respondents tend to choose the same answers throughout the questionnaire. This shows that the respondents didn't take the questionnaire seriously leaving 94 questionnaires to be considered in the data analysis. The instrument used for the quantitative data collection is in the form of close ended questionnaire. This instrument is adapted based on the appreciative leadership strategies (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader, 2010) and the subjective well-being instrument developed by the OECD Better Life Initiative (OECD, 2013). The questionnaire groups the questions into three clusters or areas. The first cluster gathers demographic data for the participants while the second cluster uses the Likert scale to measure their perception of the relationship between the different strategies of appreciative leadership and the chosen elements of subjective well-being. Teachers use a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (doesn't affect at all), to 2 (don't know), and to 4 (completely affect). The areas of subjective well-being measured in this questionnaire in relation to the appreciative leadership strategies are: level of satisfaction at work, positive affect, negative affect, and realizing one's potential. As per the recommendation of the OECD, affect is multi-dimensional and cannot be measured through a single question. The affect questions in this questionnaire covered an affect in each quadrant of the Circumplex Model of Affect. The quadrants and the affects measured are: happy for positive high arousal, confident for positive low arousal, worried for negative low arousal, and frustrated for negative high arousal. Figure 4 represents the quadrant of affect measured in the questionnaire.

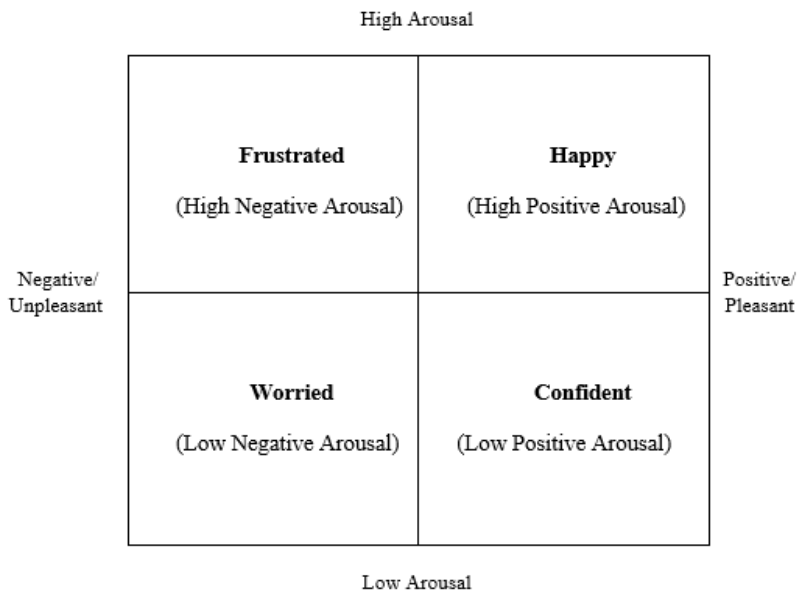


Figure 4: The Quadrant of Affect Measured in Questionnaire

In the third cluster, participants are asked to rank the five strategies used by appreciative leaders in relation to their high subjective well-being at work (satisfaction at work, feeling happy, feeling confident, not being worried, not being frustrated, and realization of one's potential). They order their views by assigning a number to each strategy with 1 as the highest importance, 2 the second highest importance, and so on.

The qualitative data collection for this research study was designed in the form of a focus group as part of an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Summit. Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008) suggest that Appreciative Inquiry is a flexible method used for organizational change and accordingly there is no specific length for running an AI Summit. Bushe (2011) suggests that Appreciative Inquiry can be done in different ways, and that researchers cannot judge the accuracy of one way or another. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit was

conducted over two days with a period of one week separating the two sessions from each other. The focus group participants were selected to include members of the senior leadership team, non-instructional staff member, and teachers. Including staff members of different positions in the focus groups helps close the gap between the perspective of leaders and that of teachers concerning the well-being of teachers at school. Bushe (2011, p.4) argues that “engaging the right people, especially powerful sponsors” is vital for the success of any AI Summit.

The 4-D model of Appreciative Inquiry is modified in this study into a 5-D model to accommodate the needs of the participants. Participants’ prior knowledge of AI is not confirmed for the facilitator and accordingly a fifth stage is added to the 4-D model to introduce and define the concept of AI and how it is different from the common problem-solving research methods. Some researchers and institutes as the Clergy Leadership Institute uses the 5-D AI model starting with “Define”, while some researcher as Cooperrider uses the 4-D model with the “affirmative topic” as the core of the model (Bushe, 2011). McQuaid (2018) suggests in her 100th podcast interview that although the 4-D AI model is the foundation of any AI cycle, extra Ds can be added to it as the “Define” at the beginning and the “Drum” at the end. The first focus session represents the initial stage of the 5-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry. This stage is referred to as the “Define” stage. During this session, participants take turns in the storytelling of positive experiences. Reflections on these experiences assist in discovering themes and generating strengths. Each participant votes at the end of the discovery stage to the top three themes he/she believes affect teachers’ well-being the most. Participants work together afterwards to dream of a possible positive vision statement for the specific theme(s). They move to the following stage by designing a smart action plan to turn the dream statement into an actual reality in the “Destiny” stage. Participants commit themselves for the application of this statement and how it will look like at the end of the Destiny phase.

The researcher uses context analysis for the AI Summit qualitative data to identify codes and categorize them. Ezzy (2002, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) clarifies that in content analysis the researcher begins with the text to be analyzed, decides on the units of analysis and categories, codes the text while reading, categorizes the codes, and at the end creates logs for the repetition of codes and categories. One advantage for content analysis is that it can be quantified by “counting concepts, words or occurrences in documents and reporting them in tabular form” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2011, p. 564). This can be done to provide a quantitative analysis to the qualitative data.

Results, Analysis and Discussion

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of Appreciative Leadership on enhancing teacher’s well-being at school by measuring teacher’s attitude and perception of the different Appreciative Leadership strategies. The findings of the research are analyzed thoroughly and compared to results of previous and similar studies. A set of interventions are developed through the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle. Each section in the questionnaire measures teacher’s perception of the relationship between the domains of their subjective well-being and one of the strategies of Appreciative Leadership. The similar domains in each section are added up and averaged to measure teacher’s perception of the overall effect of Appreciative Leadership on the different domains of their subjective well-being.

The crosstabulation of overall satisfaction at work with gender shows that almost all respondents (94.3%) thought that the five different strategies of Appreciative Leadership completely or partially affect their satisfaction at work. The crosstabulation between the overall “Happy” domain and the gender of the participants shows that 66% (n=62) of the total 94 respondents thought that Appreciative Leadership strategies completely affect their happiness at work. The overall cross tabulated “Confident” domain with the gender indicates that 61.7% (n=58) of the total 94 respondents felt that the strategies of Appreciative Leadership “completely affect” how confident they feel at work. Only 8.5% (n=8) of the respondents were

uncertain of the effect of the strategies on their confidence. To measure the negative affect of feeling worried at work, responses for questions 10, 16, 22, 28, and 34 in the questionnaire were averaged. The results of the crosstabulation between the overall “feeling worried” domain and the gender of the participants shows that 31.9% (n=30) of the respondents couldn’t decide whether Appreciative Leadership strategies affected their worry at school while 43.6% (n=41) felt that it doesn’t.

Responses for questions 11, 17, 23, 29, and 35 were averaged to measure the overall negative affect of feeling frustrated at work in relation to the different strategies. In the crosstabulation of feeling “Frustrated” at work and gender, almost 39% (n=37) of the total respondents felt that Appreciative Leadership “partially doesn’t affect” being frustrated at work, while 33% (n=31) didn’t know if there was any effect for the leadership strategies on their frustration level. To measure the overall domain of “Realizing One’s Potential” at work, responses for questions 12, 18, 24, 30, and 36 were totaled and averaged. Almost all the respondents for the questionnaire felt that Appreciative Leadership either “partially affect” or “completely affect” the realization of one’s potential. The last section of the questionnaire investigates which strategies of Appreciative Leadership affect teacher’s well-being the most. The ranking of the importance of Appreciative Leadership strategies is clear in Chart 1. “Integrity” is ranked first, “Inquiry” comes second, “Inspiration” comes third, and in the fourth rank “Inclusion” and “Illumination” ranked with a tie.

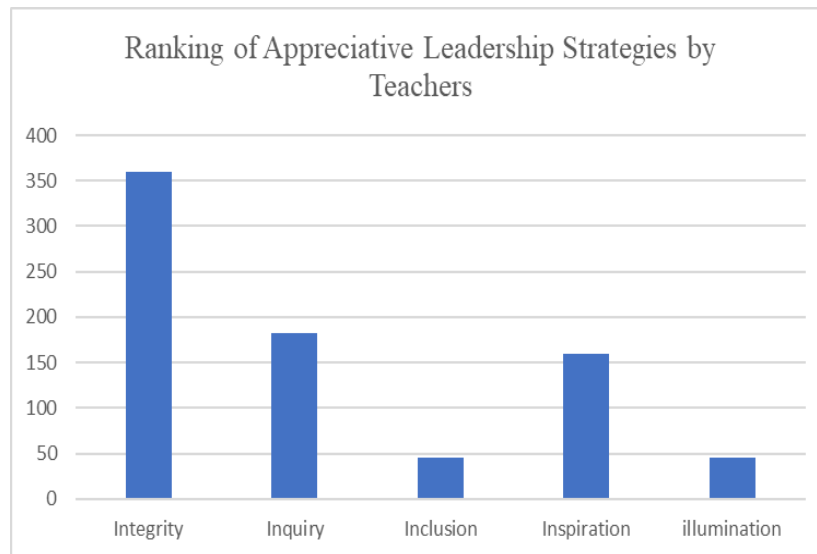


Chart 1: Ranking of Appreciative Leadership strategies by teachers

The data collected throughout the focus groups of the AI Summit is a qualitative data in the form of stories, conversations, and discussions. The focus groups were voice recorded and the content was transcribed to ensure the validity of the data and analysis. The names of the participants were replaced by fictitious names. Content analysis was used to analyze the AI data. After identifying codes from the transcribed data, five categories were created; each represents a strategy for appreciative leadership. Each category is examined through reading books and articles related to the leadership style being studied. Identification of key themes, actions and approaches for appreciative leaders was developed during the examination of texts. Content Analysis allows the researcher to take into consideration the calculation of the frequencies of the codes and themes generated during the analysis. The strategy of “Inclusion” is the most recurrent strategy whether in the positive core shared by participants or through the products of the AI cycle. It was repeated 24 times throughout different codes and themes, while the “Inquiry” strategy was repeated the least among the participants. On the other hand, the code of “Trust” is the most recurrent code being repeated 14 times during content analysis, followed by “Setting Goals” which is repeated 8 times, and in the third place repeated 6

times each the codes of “Collaboration”, “Empowerment”, and “Appreciation/Recognition”. Table 1 represents the tabulation of the general themes generated from the AI Summit, frequencies, percentages, and the leadership strategy they fall under.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages for Leadership Strategies Repeated during the AI Summit

Frequencies and Percentages Log for Leadership Strategies Repeated during the AI Summit				
Strategy	Themes within Strategies		Frequency	Percentages
Integrity	Trust	14	19	21%
	Responsibility	3		
	Communication	1		
	Ownership of Mistakes	1		
Inquiry	Skill Identification	5	6	7%
	Positive Inquiry	1		
Inclusion	Sense of Belonging	3	24	26%
	Having a Voice/Heard	3		
	Empowerment	6		
	Delegation	2		
	Collaboration	6		
	Relational	1		
	Acceptance	2		
Inspiration	Teacher Development	5	20	22%
	Motivation	2		
	Gratitude	2		
	Setting Goals	8		
	Transformation	2		
	Confidence	1		
Illumination	Recognition/Appreciation	6	11	12%
	Excitement	1		
	Best Practices	3		
	Using Skills	1		
Miscellaneous	Intrinsic motivation	5	11	12%
	Ownership	1		
	Autonomy	4		
	Innovation	1		
Total			91	100%

The repetition of a code or a strategy more than the other in the focus group sessions doesn't mean it's the most important or the most influential regarding teacher's well-being. Simply, it was the most repeated during storytelling at the time of the focus group sessions. Different positive core in different setting may generate different frequencies.

How does appreciative leadership affect teacher's well-being?

Studies of employee's well-being have increased recently and there is a lot of evidence to support the fact it is affected by the organization's leadership (Kelloway & Barling, 2010). Most research focuses on the negative influence of poor leadership on the well-being of employees without highlighting the positive influence or benefits that the leadership has on it (Kelloway et al., 2012). Van Dierendonck et al. (2004) mention that several studies emphasize the presence of a relationship or link between employee's well-being and the different styles and strategies of leadership.

Several studies investigated transformational leadership in relation to promoting employee's well-being. Transformational Leadership resembles Appreciative Leadership in that both are linked to positive leadership. Some of the strategies of Transformational Leadership that are found to influence employee's well-being positively (Verbraak, 2014; Kelloway et al., 2012; Kelloway & Barling, 2010) overlaps with Appreciative Leadership. Gilbreath and Benson (2004) mention that research has found positive relationship between positive strategies of leadership in general, such as acknowledgement, empathy, consideration, appreciation and motivation of employees, and high psychological well-being as happiness.

Verbraak (2014) claims that the Transformational Leadership strategy of "Intellectual Stimulation" leaves employees feeling inspired through having a high sense of purpose, vision and goals. This places employees in a positive mood. Moreover "Inspirational Motivation" focuses on inspiring employees become their best resulting in increasing their confidence. Confidence encourage employees to achieve more than what was once thought possible resulting in building strengths, innovation, and resilience (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Feeling confident is a positive affect in the framework of subjective well-being. These two strategies resemble the strategy of "Inspiration" for appreciative leaders.

Being in a better mood, having hope for the future, and more confidence are all characteristics of high well-being. Questions 25, 26, 27, 28, and 30 measure teacher's perception of the effect of "Inspiration" on the domains of subjective well-being. Almost half of the respondents thought "inspiration" partially affect their satisfaction at work, happiness, confidence, and realization of their own potential.

The strategy of "Illumination" for appreciative leaders builds on "success breeds success". This is achieved through highlighting the best of employees, sharing their best practices by giving credit and acknowledgement to the concerned members, recognizing that simple praise or appreciation can open doors and create worlds, and align the skills and strengths to exciting tasks within an organization (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader 2010). Questions 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36 measure teacher's perception of the effect of "Illumination" and highlighting best practices by school leadership on the domains of subjective well-being. Almost all respondents of the questionnaire felt "Illumination" partially and completely affect their job satisfaction and happiness.

Highlighting best practices within an organization includes acknowledging positive performance, praising, and appreciating employees. Stocker et al. (2014) reported in a study on appreciative leadership and employee's well-being that simple praise was the most frequent appreciative behavior whether from a colleague or a leader, and concluded that praise, recognition and appreciation are important for promoting wellness and well-being at work. Employees who are being recognized and appreciated by leaders at work will identify more with their organization, experience an increased sense of belongingness and become more engaged and satisfied (Zhu, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2009; cited in Verbraak 2014).

Other studies have investigated the effect of appreciation by other leadership styles on employee well-being. Franke and Felfe (2011; cited in Stocker et al. 2014) suggest that "Individualized consideration" and "Idealized Influence" of transformative leaders positively affect well-being of employees in organizations. Transformative leaders pay attention to the needs of the employees and their achievements. This creates an environment of empathy, compassion, trust in the leader, and support for employees (Kelloway et al., 2012).

The strategies of "Illumination" and "Integrity" for Appreciative Leadership" can have the same effect on employee well-being as the transformational "Individualized consideration", "Idealized Influence" and the

mediating role of trust. Leaders who are identified by their employees to be honest, caring, competent, and fair create an environment of trust where employees feel comfortable, confident, and safe (Verbraak, 2014). Kelloway et al. (2012) suggest that trust affects positively the psychological well-being of employees by making them feel less vulnerable, safer, and more confident. Trust affects the social well-being of employees by creating a bond and positive relationship with leaders (Pillai, Schriesheim & Williams 1999; cited in Verbraak 2014). Appreciative Leadership being relational in its nature emphasize the role of trust as a foundation for its strategies.

It is obvious whether from theory or from the recent research that “Illumination” and “Integrity” as Appreciative Leadership strategies have a positive link to employee’s well-being. In the questionnaire, respondents feel that “Integrity” being symbolized in honesty and transparency of leaders partially affect different domains of their well-being (59.6% for satisfaction, 61.7% for feeling happy at work, 52.1% for being confident, and 45.7% for realizing their own potential). On the other hand, they felt it partially doesn’t affect feeling worried at school (48.9% n=46) or being frustrated (28.7% n=27).

“Inquiry” and positive questioning when the leader asks about what works rather than finding fault and asking about what doesn’t work is also found to relate to well-being. Employees feel safe and not threatened by the leadership which boost their own confidence and trust in their leader. The highest percentage for respondents felt it affects the most their satisfaction at work (52.1% n=49), their confidence at work (52% n=49), and the realization of their own potential (53.2% n=50).

“Inclusion”, the fifth strategy of Appreciative Leadership, is manifested in collaboration among all stakeholders. Inclusion empowers employees by inviting all stakeholders to co-author the future of the organization. It fosters a community of collaboration, acceptance, innovation, and belongingness. Respondents feel that this strategy affect the most their satisfaction at work (53.4% n=50). However, 26.6% (n=25) reports they feel “Inclusion” being represented by collaboration among stakeholders completely doesn’t affect their realization of their own potential.

Research has investigated the role of leadership in improving employee well-being. Leadership has a strong influence on employee’s well-being. Yukl (2013, cited in Stocker et al. 2014) states that leaders can affect well-being of employees as they have the power to decide about the punishment or reward within an organization. Employees are sensitive to acceptance or rejection at their workplace (Wong et al. 2013, cited in Stocker et al. 2014). Since weak relationship increase stress (Tepper 2000, cited in Stocker et al. 2014), flourished relationships would be assumed to have the opposite effect and thus promote well-being. Taking into consideration previous studies into leadership behavior and well-being and the answers of respondents in this research, there is an association between Appreciative Leadership strategies and teacher’s subjective well-being at school. The five different strategies create a relational leadership style that can affect the subjective well-being of employees.

What are the strategies of appreciative leadership that affect teacher’s well-being?

The last section of the questionnaire is concerned with how respondents rank the different strategies as they perceive their importance and effect on their subjective well-being. Respondents of the questionnaire ranked “Integrity” as the most important strategy affecting their subjective well-being at school. Although “Integrity” ranked third based on the frequencies of the repeated strategies throughout the AI Summit, the code/theme of trust was the most recurrent in the shared positive experiences. This supports the results of previous studies about the importance of trust in leader in promoting well-being. Leaders who develop a collective identity with employees and foster a culture of trust, credibility and integrity increase the psychological well-being of employees. Trust have a significant effect on the occupational safety and positive organizational psychology. Kelloway et al. (2012, p.45) report in their study that “employees’ trust in leadership mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being”.

“Inquiry” was ranked second in the questionnaire while it was the last in the frequencies of the AI Summit. Ranking second is more realistic as “Inquiry” is considered the most powerful tool for appreciative leaders for

“positive questions are keys to treasure troves of best practices, success stories, and creativity” (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom & Rader 2010, p. 28). Positive questions lay the foundation for a relational community where people feel safe to share how things function when they are at their best. Positive questions determine the direction the organization is heading as supported by social constructionism (McQuaid & Cooperrider 2018). “Inclusion” and “Illumination” ranked both in the fourth place as the least important strategies affecting teacher’s subjective well-being. This is contrary to the results of the AI Summit, where “Inclusion” had the most frequencies of reoccurrence throughout the shared experiences and discussions. “Illumination” which is basically all about highlighting best practices, recognition and appreciation was also identified in different studies as fostering a range of positive emotions (Basch & Fisher 2000, cited in Stocker 2014), and as being important for enhancing self-esteem which is associated with promoting psychological well-being (Orth, Robins & Widaman 2012; Pierce & Gardner 2004, cited in Stocker et al. 2014).

Moreover, Stocker et al. (2014) suggest that appreciation and praise provoke serenity which is categorized in Russel emotional circumplex as a positive low-arousal affect within well-being. Regardless of the ranking of the importance of AL strategies, the findings of this study confirm the association between the strategies of Appreciative Leadership and the subjective well-being of teachers.

Can Appreciative Inquiry enhance teacher’s well-being? And how can leaders improve teacher’s well-being at school?

Appreciative Inquiry has developed as an organizational development (OD) tool as well as a research method. Organizations have grown out of the one-way leadership that use deficit-finding approaches to manage change and development into an approach that highlights collaboration, communication and delegation (Reed 2007). During the Appreciative Inquiry Summit, the focus groups generated organization development plans and interventions to enhance teacher’s well-being at school. These plans were generated using the positive core shared during the second focus group. This positive core represents the positive stories and experiences shared by participants throughout the Summit. Studies show that AI drives positive change by its nature. The focus on positive questions and experiences sets the tone since the beginning. Reed (2007, p.23) mentions that different studies suggest that during AI cycles “people could be highly influenced by their expectations and those of others”. This can facilitate a positive culture within the organization. At the end of the AI Summit, participants were asked to fill out a reflection sheet that included 3 questions. The last question asked the participants of their opinion of AI as an OD tool to enhance teacher’s well-being. The AI summit participants shared several positive reflections about the simplicity of the method, its positive effects and generative possibilities and intervention.

Conclusion

The findings of this research confirm the results observed in previous studies that leadership affect employee well-being. In this study, school leadership is found to influence teacher’s subjective well-being. It was observed that the strategies of Appreciative Leadership influence the different domains of subjective well-being for teachers. The use of Appreciative Inquiry confirmed this positive relationship and generated a set of intervention to be adopted by school community and leaders to promote teacher’s subjective well-being. The different strategies of Appreciative Leadership were ranked by teachers in the questionnaire and frequencies of codes and categories were calculated from the AI Summit content. “Integrity” ranked first as the most influential strategy affecting teacher’s subjective well-being while the theme of trust was the most recurrent theme in the AI summit. Integrity and trust were found to influence employee’s well-being in different studies (Kelloway et al. 2012; Pillai, Schriesheim & Williams 1999, cited in Verbraak 2014).

Worldwide, education is paving a parallel supportive path to academic attainment that focus on helping every student flourish. The first implication of the study is to highlight the importance of teacher’s subjective well-being for school effectiveness and student’s well-being. The second implication is derived from the relational

Appreciative Leadership and generative Appreciative Inquiry. They both have a fundamental role in enhancing teacher's well-being and designing interventions for this purpose.

The use of Appreciative Inquiry as a research and organizational development tool is considered a strength for this research. This novel approach is gaining popularity in educational organizations and research. Appreciative Inquiry and Appreciative Leadership both hold positive potential for developing the human capital within schools and the educational sector. Raising the awareness for teacher's subjective well-being is another strength due to the important role teachers play in student's life and well-being. Furthermore, investigating the effect of Appreciative Leadership five strategies on teacher's well-being adds to the strengths of this study as previous research investigated the effect of different positive behavior only.

This study has some limitations too. The small sample size of 94 questionnaire respondents is considered insufficient for measuring SWB (OECD, 2013). However, this can be overlooked as the study did not aim to measure teacher's subjective well-being but more how teachers perceive the relationship between Appreciative Leadership and their subjective well-being. OECD (2013) recommends measuring subjective well-being at workplace as it can be beneficial for decision and policy-makers. However, it recommends that the "data need to be collected with large and representative samples and in a consistent way across different population groups and over time" (OECD 2013, p.3).

Limiting the five strategies of Appreciative Leadership to few words or terms in the questionnaire is another limitation. Each strategy encompasses different themes and behavior. The researcher had to clarify the original terminology used for these strategies because the respondents were unfamiliar with this leadership style and its terminology. Time is considered another limitation to this research. There wasn't enough time to measure the effect of the interventions produced by the Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle. A pre- and post-measurement of teacher's well-being could measure the effectiveness of the approach and support or contradict the interventions and findings of this study.

The findings of the current study raise few important recommendations for further research and practice. The field of Appreciative Leadership and subjective well-being would benefit from further studies that measures well-being as an outcome of Appreciative Leadership strategies. Schools and governments need to focus more on teacher's well-being. This can be initiated by measuring teacher's well-being and moving forward from this point. Interventions and policies can be set through AI to assist teachers flourish at schools. This comes as the second recommendation and a fundamental one to develop the human capacity within schools and the human capital of any nation.

Raising the awareness of Appreciative Leadership at schools and organizations is as important as promoting well-being of teachers and comes as a third recommendation. Appreciative Leadership holds further benefits for the school community and effectiveness. Kelloway and Barling (2010) suggest that developing leaders with the intention of enhancing employee's well-being may result in promoting the well-being of leaders themselves. Appreciative leaders will find pride in their appreciative behavior and relational strategies that it might positively affect their own well-being. The fourth recommendation is linked to Appreciative Leadership but through raising the awareness of the positive power of Appreciative Inquiry as an intervention and a tool for organizational development. Current research is occupied with demonstrating the relationship between leadership, whether appreciative or not, and teacher's well-being. The field of research would benefit from a new approach to research that provides interventions that can be used to guide school leaders how to promote well-being of teachers and employees instead of framing a strategy or behaviour and investigating merely the relationship or correlation.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of other studies on the role of leadership in enhancing teacher's (employee) well-being. However, this study approaches teacher's subjective well-being through the strategies of Appreciative Leadership aiming to enrich the literature where it falls short. Thus, it seeks to raise the awareness of this new approach of leadership that is full of potential through highlighting potential within organizations. Appreciative Leadership "is grounded in the field of Appreciative Inquiry" (Orr

& Cleveland-Innes 2015, p.235). This means it comes with a positive stance searching for the strengths and the positive in individuals, systems, and organizations. AI was born to oppose the deficit-based approaches by creating relational human organizations. Thus, it holds a lot of potential for organizational development and for promoting well-being of teachers and school leaders as well.

This study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the use of Appreciative Inquiry by appreciative leaders to define what works best at schools, to dream of what the future can be, to design a path and plan to implement the dream, and to commit ourselves to this positive change and deliver it for the well-being of teachers at our schools. Furthermore, teacher's well-being highly affects student's academic and emotional well-being. Vision 2021 of UAE cannot find a better path to build the human capital, move forward with education and achieve a 1st rate educational system for the happiest nation than to enhance teacher's well-being.

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