A Philosophy of Happiness: The role it can play in designing an adaptive organisation

Hendrik Nel Richards

orcid.org/0009-0000-5109-9272

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Supervisor: Prof Anné Verhoef

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DECLARATION

I, Hendrik Nel Richards, declare that this dissertation titled “A Philosophy of Happiness: The role it can play in designing an adaptive organisation”, submitted to the North-West University for the degree “Magister Philosophiae in Philosophy”, has not been previously submitted for any other degree or at any other institution of higher education. I furthermore declare that this is solely my work, and any work that is not mine has been credited and included in the reference list.

Signed  Date: 10 November 2024

DEDICATION

To my grandparents, Hendrik and Elizabeth Nel (deceased) who lived this philosophy of happiness without ever having to study it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere appreciation to my Supervisor, Professor A. H. Verhoef, who granted me the opportunity to explore the dual theme of a philosophy of happiness with the organisational development aspect of an adaptive organisation. His support and critique were encouraging throughout the process.

A special thank you to my university librarian, Anneke Coetzee who amazed me with consistent promptness in locating and sending me the resources I requested. Similarly, Petra Gainsford whose transcription and formatting skills pulled this study together and Dianne Richards who undertook the final editing and formatting.

My family support team at home, Katherine and Teegan Megaw who kept me focussed and motivated.

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the philosophy of happiness and its potential and implications for organisational change. Leveraging the well-known French philosopher Paul Ricoeur's principles of happiness offered an opportunity to shape the culture of an organisation so that it had a change map to follow from rigidity to adaptiveness. The aim of this study was to provide an alternative to the popular change management theories that focus mainly on structural change, or regard organisational need to change as an occasional occurrence that needed an intervention project – something with a beginning and an end. The journey to organisational adaptiveness was premised on Anné Verhoef's happiness types, which would provide a secure foothold for the application of Ricoeur's principles of happiness to explore the complex terrain of an organisation as a social system reinventing itself.

With the above as a focus, the study provides a foundation for an organisation to become a sustainable and resilient entity by transformation to a dynamic and responsive social system. This would be possible if the leaders and then ultimately the members of the organisation were to embrace Ricoeur's principles of happiness, for example, self-reflection, acceptance of human fallibility, respect and acknowledging life's complexities. It would be possible to do this through the adoption of Verhoef's happiness type, an *ethical way of living*. Which, I argue, is the cornerstone of a modern adaptive organisation because it encourages mutual respect, and in turn fosters collaboration, self-awareness and decision making which considers the interest of others and not simply those of the decision maker. Organisational adaptiveness requires flexibility, often referred to as agility, and best practice in organisational management equates agility with ability as a key competence. The type of agility we refer to is not confined to the ability to make quick decisions. It is the speed at which mistakes are admitted and corrections made, coupled with quickness to share ideas, recognise the humanness in self and others, encourage others to learn and respond to opportunities. This study therefore takes full advantage of Ricoeur's happiness principles as developed by Verhoef as it attempts to offer concrete design principles for an adaptive organisation. One in which happiness as a *by-product* has the potential to be shared by every member of the organisation.

Key terms: Happiness, Adaptive Organisation, Organisational Design, Management Practice, Organisational Change.

SUMMARY

Organisations generally may have to reinvent themselves if they have a medium to long-term history, to attract talent in the 21st century because the needs of the modern employee are not solely focussed on life-long employment and a pension at retirement. The need of the modern employee is meeting the challenge of work-life balance, and participating in own-job decision making, as two examples. Along with the modern employee, the customers are also undergoing a mind-shift in expectations. While employees seek opportunities where their goals are reasonably aligned with those of the organisation and they are respected as persons, today's customers are using digital advancements to provide them with quicker access to products and services, while also expecting tailored solutions driven by data access and the willingness and expertise of a supplier to execute. Coupled to employee and customer expectations, managers and their leaders talk about the need for greater flexibility and adaptability, but the truth is that most organisations are designed and managed in ways that discourage flexibility and adaptability. It is not surprising that most large-scale change efforts in traditional organisations fail to meet the expectations of their leader-groups, employees and their customers. This study will argue that what is required is not always a new organisational change model, or a more professionally managed change programme to respond to these expectations. Instead, what is required is for organisational leaders and managers to reflect on their demand for stability and predictability which is buried deep in the managerial psyche and reinforced by decades of theory and practice. This belief is proving to be the antidote for adaptability – or as Christopher Worley and Edward Lawler state, "the simple fact is that organisations have been designed for stability on the assumption that it is desirable and effective. To transform them into organisations that are *built-to-change*, organisations need to re-think several of their basic assumptions" (Worley *et al.,* 2006:19-23). These assumptions find expression in reductive management practices and the fostering of command-and-control management behaviour. In practice however, leader groups who operate under these assumptions believe adaptability suggests chaos and chaos by implication breeds anxiety. Because anxiety is not conducive to productivity; therefore, it should be avoided. This common line of thought results in leader groups taking either-or decisions, between stability and adaptability which is not helpful organisationally. The argument offered in this study is that to manage an organisation in the 21st century leader groups can build adaptive organisations that will accommodate the needs of people inside the organisation as well those served by the organisation. In turn this can lead to sustainability which generates stability. To accomplish this, I am suggesting we take a philosophical view of organisational adaptiveness. This will allow us to question assumptions and build a new framework based on good reasons. But is philosophy the way to approach such a project? Yes, because philosophy allows us to take

a step back, examine the current situation dispassionately, and ask the difficult questions. Where other disciplines may require rigid definitions, philosophy, as I have come to understand it, takes nothing for granted and can live with the dialectic. In our case, stability and adaptiveness.

The philosophical view encourages us to begin with a critical examination of what an organisation is. Is it a social system or a mechanistic system? I will argue for the view that it is a social system consisting of many interrelated subsystems. This systems approach will provide an understanding, for example, that changes in one subsystem will influence the functions in other subsystems. This suggests that organisational effectiveness is dependent on the optimal functioning of each subsystem and that over time the leader group should be able to recognise the three variables that also impact organisational effectiveness viz. causal, intervening and output variables. For the purpose of this study *causal variables* will be drawn through from the opening chapter to the last because a philosophy of happiness is located in this cluster of variables. In the paragraphs that follow I provide an overview of each chapter to illustrate the flow and development of the argument that will address the research question, *how a philosophy of happiness could be applied to the design of an adaptive organisation.* (Chapter one is the Research Proposal. We begin therefore with chapter two).

Chapter two is an analysis of organizations as a social system. In the process I examine the nature and purpose of work in organizations and, importantly, how organizations learn. This contrasts with how individuals *in* an organization learn. Exploring the organization as a social system, we will make use of a case study to build understanding of people and their behaviours, what elements constitute culture and how culture may impact the inculcation of a philosophy of happiness positively or negatively. This will contribute to determining how three of the eight *happiness types* developed by Anné Verhoef may be applied to the design of an adaptive organization. (Verhoef, 2024).

Chapter three examines how an organization may need to evolve to become an adaptive organization. I will lay the foundation of understanding what an adaptive organization is, followed by a discussion on the evolution of management practices (or styles). The significance of this is to determine whether a particular management style favours the assimilation of a philosophy of happiness into the organizational culture.

I will attempt to show how this could be achieved using a matrix in which we relate five *content domains of adaptability*, viz. mission, vision, purpose, values and culture to fourteen management principles relevant to today's world of work. Applying the matrix will support the argument that making a change to the *values* and *culture* of an organization will have the highest probability impact on employees of an organization to embrace the frequency of change. As the argument

unfolds in this chapter, an important principle will emerge, which is that it is not required that a forced selection be made between organizational stability and organizational adaptability. The unfolding argument will highlight the view that adaptability would lead to sustainability and sustainability promotes the stability of an organization. In this chapter the groundwork will be laid that will guide us into the last two chapters in which we will identify the types of philosophy of happiness suited to our project.

In chapter four, the three happiness types developed by Verhoef are identified, explained and analysed. They are, *happiness as an ethical way of life*, *happiness as meaning and fulfilment* and lastly *happiness as a by-product*. The relationship to the philosophy of happiness of Paul Ricoeur, a French philosopher, is canvassed. This presents an opportunity as well as an important challenge for defining happiness as a concept. As mentioned in the beginning of the Introduction, we approach the challenge of definition with a philosophical mind so that we do not become enticed to craft a too rigid definition. Using this approach, we are in a better position to deal with the project of defining happiness as a concept. Verhoef reminds us that happiness is "a dialectic between immanence (as something concrete to be found in our world and time) and transcendence (something on the horizon, something we can only aim for" (Verhoef, 2024:13). Having arrived at a satisfactory definition of happiness as a concept, we will locate happiness as a philosophy in the culture domain of the organization. This will make happiness part of the DNA of the organization. Finally, I will argue that Ricoeur's philosophy, of which the human longing for happiness is a part, serves as a solid foundation for building an organization that can be adaptive and resilient.

In the final chapter, the adaptive organization begins to emerge, designed along the principles of a philosophy of happiness, drawn from Ricoeur and developed by Verhoef. I facilitate this emergence with a model created to synthesize Ricoeur's happiness initiators with Verhoef's three happiness types. Because happiness is a "dialectic between immanence and transcendence" *(supra),* the synthesized content of the model cannot be considered as a comprehensive rendition of the thinking of Ricoeur or Verhoef, but it is deemed to be satisfactorily sufficient for our purpose. Evidence of this sufficiency of purpose is presented in the form of examples of how the model can be applied. Having previously established that a philosophy of happiness resides in the culture domain of an organization, we define culture and explain the role it plays in organizational effectiveness. It is necessary to do this because culture is an abstract concept and dynamic in nature.

By confining our understanding of culture to the purview of organizational behaviour, we can settle on a definition and role that culture plays in organizations based on the work of Edgar H. Schein,

who wrote prolifically on the subject. His work on the subject becomes the basis for this section of the chapter. Following on the development of an understanding of organizational culture, I offer a second model in which Schein's components of organizational culture are integrated with the elements of Ricoeur and Verhoef's philosophy of happiness. The purpose of the model, located in the final chapter, is to add an opportunity for practical application of the theoretical body of knowledge developed in previous chapters. Even though this paper was never intended to be a *how-to* document, by offering an application opportunity will serve as a form of validation of the theoretical and philosophical content of the paper. The essence of this study will be highlighted in the conclusion which will show that a philosophy of happiness as perceived by Ricoeur and developed by Verhoef, can play a pivotal role in the design of an adaptive organization.

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CHAPTER 1 THE PROPOSAL

1.1 Context to the Study

This study seeks to explore the possibility that a philosophy of happiness based on the work of Paul Ricoeur and critically evaluated in the research of Anné Verhoef, may help to design an adaptive organisation so that change may be more effectively managed and organisational sustainability be achieved.

Verhoef's research had a threefold purpose. First, he aimed to produce a clear and encompassing understanding of happiness. Second, was finding an overarching concept of happiness in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. Third, was to investigate how this concept of happiness of Ricoeur could contribute to the current understanding of happiness promoted by capitalism. (Verhoef, 2024:9). In this paper I will draw from the insights made by the author to formulate an understanding of a philosophy of happiness that can be used as a basis for thinking about business reorganization in a different way. In his research, which had both depth and scope, Verhoef makes the admission that *the literature of happiness is so vast that it is practically impossible to include everything in a map or typology of happiness* (Verhoef, 2024:25). However, what he provides us with is a succinct and well-crafted typology of eight categories of happiness representing the principle thinking on the concept of happiness found in the vast array of literature on the subject. From these eight categories I have selected three on which to focus as they have the highest probability of contributing to the resolution of the problem statement below.

The eight categories (Verhoef, 2024:27-46) are listed below and the three categories selected are highlighted.

1. Happiness as a mental state
2. Happiness as well-being
3. ***Happiness as an ethical way of life***
4. Happiness as luck
5. Happiness as the absence of pain
6. ***Happiness as meaning and fulfilment***
7. ***Happiness as a by-product***
8. Happiness as an impossibility

A brief explanation of the three selected happiness types follows.

Happiness as an ethical way of life.

This type of happiness is found in Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia.* The Greek term *eudaimonia* has various translations but they all converge on an individual living a good or ethical life. The implication is that it is not a selfish or self-seeking life of personal happiness, but one that realizes happiness with and for everyone (Verhoef, 2024:33). Aristotle had to consider the conundrum, whether happiness came only to the virtuous, or could only the happy be virtuous? His response was that the internal qualities of virtue and health were as essential as the external qualities of wealth and friendship, which suggested that a virtuous life and happiness are reciprocal. Despite this Aristotelian response still prompting philosophical debate, it is acknowledged that it laid the foundation for understanding that happiness is the outcome of ethical living (Verhoef, 2024:34). There is a further important point that supports the selection of this happiness type and that is its emphasis on the link between happiness and justice. Humans need to have an existential appreciation of justice in the societies and institutions in which they live and labour. For Plato, *happiness is conditional upon justice, that is, upon the proper structuring of the city itself* (Verhoef, 2024:34, quoting the French philosopher Alain Badiou).

Happiness as meaning and fulfilment

There is a definitive link between happiness and meaning in life (Verhoef, 2024:41). This view finds support from the feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed in her book, *The Promise of Happiness,* in which she suggests that the totality of life, which would include its meaning, its potential, values and ethics to live by, are hard to reflect upon without thinking about happiness (Ahmed, 2010:204). This view is developed further by Verhoef who argues that to find meaning and fulfilment in life can be a deeply satisfying experience to the extent that it *relativizes* a person's desire for happiness, especially when happiness is perceived primarily as a mental state of joy. This promotes the idea that happiness as a concept should be an all-encompassing term, one which contains the *meaning of life* as a category of its comprehensive understanding, so loosening the grip of the idea that happiness is all that matters in life (Verhoef, 2024:41).

Happiness as a by product

I stated above under the heading, *happiness as an ethical way of life*, that happiness is an outcome of ethical living. Logically this suggests that happiness can be considered a by-product "of a particular behaviour or activity. Verhoef, (2024:43) posits this view by quoting from AC Grayling's work, *The History of Philosophy*, in which the English philosopher John Stuart Mill avers that "*….by seeking the happiness of others, helping to improve mankind, or pursuing artistic*

or other goals that are worthwhile in themselves, happiness will attend these activities." (Verhoef, 2024:43). (On a cautionary note, this paper will not necessarily pursue a utilitarian philosophy, of which Mill was a proponent. It is merely his view of how happiness can be acquired that is acknowledged). I support the view that when we act or behave in a virtuous manner by relying on reason and not following one's own desires, that happiness attaches itself to the actor. Aristotle however does add another dimension to the attainment of happiness. He is firm in his view that ethical living must be augmented by philosophical reflection (Verhoef, 2024:45)

Having briefly discussed the three happiness types that will be used in this paper, the question to be asked at this point is, where does the philosophy of Ricoeur fit into these happiness types? Scholars have concluded that Ricoeur wanted to understand human beings in the fulness and completeness of their existence – of which happiness is a significant and crucial part. And because he worked on such a diversity of philosophical themes, disciplines and styles, his *philosophy of happiness* became meshed with his work on other philosophical themes. This also provided multiple entry points to the body of work of Ricoeur, making the exposition of a *particular* philosophy of happiness of Ricoeur a challenging one (Verhoef, 2024:52-53). Despite this caution, I would suggest that Ricoeur's view of happiness was influenced by his ideas on selfhood, narrative identity and ethical life. This would confirm my understanding that Ricoeur did not view happiness as an emotional state but rather as a teleological aspiration linked to self-realisation, living well with and for others in just institutions This is what he articulates in his work, *Oneself as Another* and I believe this statement illustrates how he connects personal happiness with social justice and moral obligation. (Ricoeur,1992:Ch9). Paraphrasing Verhoef's view of how Ricoeur approached happiness and its challenge as an overused concept, Verhoef avers that in order to deal with the common association of happiness as a psychological concept of joy or pleasure or satisfaction, Ricoeur reasoned that happiness was not one desire – even a noble desire that needed to be satisfied, instead happiness represented the totality of all human desires on a bodily, spiritual and intellectual level. Philosophically, for Ricoeur, happiness "remained something on the horizon and not something to obtain in a sort of satisfied state of mind" (Verhoef, 2024:142). This ties in with Ricoeur's thinking of happiness as suggested above in his work, *Oneself as Another.*

Concluding this part of establishing the context, I must add that I am not oblivious to some of the problems that are associated with the three happiness types selected for inclusion in this paper. It is the intention to deal with these problems in the actual study where they become relevant. In the next section of contextualizing the study, I discuss the adaptive business organization.

Creating an adaptive organization would require a shift from the reductive tendencies in business (over simplifying information or quantifying it) and embracing a different mind-set. A mind-set, or world view, which is transformative and enriched by a reflective response to societal and economic challenges in place of the simple stimulus configurations so characteristic of mechanistic responses to business performance and challenges. Restated, an adaptive organisation would be one that possesses the ability (competencies) to respond effectively to its external environment in a continuous manner My intention therefore is to encourage an adaptive leadership mind-set, one based on selected philosophical principles of Ricoeur and developed by Verhoef

I need to define a *business organization* to guide us further in this section. For our purpose a *business organisation* is understood to be a social system consisting of several interrelated sub-systems (Hersey, 1988:9). It is a formal structure, and the interrelated parts or sub-systems are arranged according to their purpose and staffed with people competent to perform in a particular sub-system. Business organizations are traditionally intended to be stable social systems. This fosters predictability and simplifies the management of people and things. This view by Hersey is confirmed forty plus years later by Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen and Clark when they refer to organisations as "dynamic social systems" and add that within these social systems, "communication plays a pivotal role in both their constitution and their operation" (Cooren *et al*., 2011:1149). Because the world in which we live does not attune to stability since our politics are often uncertain, eco-systems are evolving – often negatively, our social systems are frequently changing to accommodate our politics, and the economic system is sensitive to many unpredictable factors such as regional wars, pandemics, consumer spending patterns and population shifts, to name a few high-level impact factors. Mid-level impact factors that business organizations must contend with are new technology, mergers and acquisitions, competition or simply the need to explore new opportunities or divest from opportunities that are fully exploited. The organization must contend with all of this and one way to do this is for the business organization to become adaptive. This view is supported by the Austrian American management thought leader, *Peter F. Drucker* who in a study by Rao, M.S., explicates Drucker's view that we need to view organizations holistically and dynamically since they are both social as well as economic entities. Drucker believed that management, as a practice, *was an interdisciplinary subject, not confined to quantitative statistics in measuring profits as an outcome, but applicable to social missions and a catalyst for innovations to be delivered by people* (Rao, 2021:9).

In their book *Creating the Organization for the Future* (2023:125 *et seq.*) Jaworski and Cheung embark on a comparative analysis of the thinking of Drucker alongside that of Confucianism. In it they explain why Drucker urged business owners and managers to accept that *change, growth*

and responsiveness are essential for the survival and long-term success of a business organization but more effective when linked to *self-management and individual growth*. On a thorough reading of this part in their book, one can see the linkages to a philosophy of happiness which I will explore further in the study.

Continuing to develop an understanding of the business organization, we can broaden our definition to include an *adaptive* business organization. An *adaptive business organisation,* suggested earlier, is an organisation in which its leaders have deliberately architected the key work performance components in a way that they "promote appropriate behavioural change among individuals as a norm rather than the exception" (Lawler, 2006: Foreword). This paper will argue that it is an adaptive business organization that is best positioned to manage *change, growth and be responsive* while simultaneously facilitating and encouraging *self-management* and *individual growth.* I will propose a different approach to the current practice of accepting that any initiative intended to bring about a change in the organization is seen as an activity extraneous to the normal routinized management practices in the organization. Instead, what will be offered in the alternative is the adoption of an *adaptive mind-set* that can become institutionalized in the practice of management, and which anticipates and prepares the organization for the inevitable changes inherent in the socio-economic eco-system.

A case will be made that the design of an *adaptive* organisation can be based on a set of management values and principles drawn from a philosophy of happiness as discussed above. To augment this endeavour, I will draw on the works of *Hersey, Hall* and *Schein* as primary source material since their writing intersects with the philosophical tenor of my paper. If this can be achieved with a modicum of success, it may encourage a reconsideration of the current practice of designing organisations solely for *stability,* then subjecting them to change initiatives which are almost always followed by the resultant challenge of having to manage disoriented, discontented, and disconnected people.

Conclusion to Context of the Study

Change management is a systematic approach to dealing with the transformation of organisational goals, processes and technologies and I have been involved in this discipline for over two decades. The organisations worked with ranged in size and complexity from fifty employees in the financial services industry to over three thousand employees in the multi-modal transport and logistics industry.

In the public sector organisational change was introduced and managed in two sector education and training authorities (SETAs) and a cluster of technical colleges in Limpopo that needed to be merged racially and administratively following the creation of a democratic government in 1994.

This study offered the opportunity to reflect on the approach adopted when I managed the change projects and whether, in hindsight, matters could have unfolded differently and more effectively if I had had a broader understanding and appreciation of organisations as potentially adaptive social systems and the role that philosophy could have played. How could matters have unfolded differently? I believe that I would have prepared the leader group to have a better understanding of the impact of change of a social system on the follower group. I would have effectively counselled the follower group how to manage the impact of change in their social, economic and psychological environment. Lastly, I would have been in a better position to "change-proof" the organisation by guiding it to become adaptive.

1.2 Problem statement

Organizational change is no longer an occasional occurrence across the corporate landscape. It has become embedded in the general management of people and processes and has also spawned a discipline known as *organizational design.* Organisational design is the leader activity of creating a requisite structure that promotes effective work through role design and role relationships (Olivier, 2013:9) It is not drawing an organogram Among the reasons supporting this phenomenon are, the need for efficiency improvement, addition to or modification of a service or product, downsizing, expansion into new markets and merging with or acquiring a new business. At a higher level the reasons could be regional wars (the Russian-Ukraine war and its impact on oil and gas production), the COVID pandemic (the rapid rise of e-commerce) or the failure of a key public utility (the Eskom crisis opening the market for Solar Power providers).

Traditional management practice has emphasized implementing and monitoring change at the structural level of an organisation. However, with the growing awareness of and interest in the behavioural element of organizations, there is the realization that decision makers and consultants need to understand and actively design organisations to manage *change,* encourage *growth* and build a culture of *responsiveness.* To achieve this, an understanding of how a philosophy of an ethical way of life, seeking meaning and fulfilment and philosophy as a by-product, can empower and support those managing organizations.

A metaphor for the role of philosophy in this project could be the biological role of cells when they take in substances from outside the cell (*endocytosis*) and when they shift substances out of the cell e.g. waste products (*exocytosis)*. This ongoing and deliberate process ensures the healthy

functioning of the cells. Applying this to an organization, we know that that there is new knowledge and insights available to enter the organization - consider Artificial Intelligence and social media as examples - When the organisation elects to absorb this new knowledge, it may result in old practices and ideas and processes being re-examined, discarded, or modified. In this way the organisation can choose to remain relevant, effective and adaptive.

This study will attempt to determine how best a philosophy of happiness as discussed in paragraph two above, can play the role of catalyst in stimulating organizational *endocytosis* and *exocytosis.* The focus, therefore, will be on the role a philosophy of happiness can play in designing an adaptive organisation.

1.3 General Research Question

In this study I will determine how three happiness types developed by Verhoef, within the purview of an overarching philosophy of happiness, could be applied in the design of an adaptive organisation.

1.4 Specific Research Questions

1. What is the current theory of organisations as social systems?
2. What management practices and aspects of organizational culture would need to be reevaluated in the design of an adaptive organisation?
3. What is the philosophical understanding of the three happiness types developed by Verhoef?
4. How could the basic tenets of the philosophy of happiness as distilled by Verhoef from the writing of Ricoeur be applied to our current epistemology of organisational adaptiveness?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To create an understanding of social systems in the context of business organisations and how they can be adapted.
2. To analyse current management practices that are appropriate for review according to the three happiness types and Ricoeur's happiness philosophy generally.
3. To determine the most effective way to apply the three happiness types of Verhoef in the creation of an adaptive organisation.
4. To explore ways how an adaptive organisation may improve the management of change in the world of work.

1.6 Research approach and design

The research will include a literature review with appropriate comment and critique for the purpose of taking a deductive view of how organisations can manage change in the world of work. This will require the study of several general principles pertaining to organizations as social systems as well as general principles of the philosophy of happiness from which I will then attempt to draw specific conclusions which could advance a theory of management conducive to managing adaptive organisations.

1.7 Research method

1.8 Literature study.

The study will require a conceptual and theoretical analysis of the relevant literature broadly encompassing the areas of:

- Organisations as social systems.
- The practice of management, decision making, culture and ethics.
- Happiness as a philosophical concept.
- The design of an adaptive organisation.

Concluding the research process will be a synthesis of the knowledge to answer the problem statement.

1.9 Ethical considerations

The proposed study will be theoretical; therefore, it is considered a no-risk study.

As required, I attended a one-day training session organised by the North-West University Faculty of Humanities on Ethics. The *Certificate of Attendance* dated 8 March 2024 is attached to this proposal as **Annexure A.**

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The proposed study will focus on the design of adaptive organisations to manage change in the world of work, using a philosophy of happiness as a catalyst in the process of design.

The literature included in the research will be limited to responding to the four research questions in paragraph 1.4 above.

1.11 Significance of the Study

The proposed study will attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge on managing organizational change that impacts the world of work in the 21st Century by taking a holistic view of organisational change showing that this phenomenon should not manifest as a purely mechanistic or functional activity.

1.12 Chapter Layout

Introduction: Provide context, introduce the problem and suggest a roadmap of how the study will unfold through to the conclusion.

Chapter 1: Context to the study

Chapter 2: Organisations as social systems. The nature and purpose of work in organisations.

Chapter 3: The evolution of management practices required for an adaptive organization.

Chapter 4: The three happiness types of Verhoef and their relationship to the philosophy of happiness of Ricoeur.

Chapter 5: The adaptive organisation. Its design and role as an effective alternative to managing organisational change underpinned by a philosophy of happiness.

Chapter 6: Conclusion: A synthesis of the ideas explored and justification for an alternative way of managing organisational change through an appreciation and discussion of a philosophy of happiness.

CHAPTER 2 ORGANISATIONS AS SOCIAL SYSTEMS: THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF WORK IN ORGANISATIONS AND HOW ORGANISATIONS LEARN

2.1 Introduction

Although the emphasis of this study will be to explore the possibility of a philosophy of happiness being a key enabler in the design of an adaptive organisation, it is important that we understand what is meant when reference is made to an *organisation.* A further delineation is made to differentiate types of organisations for example, non-profit organisations, religious organisations and sporting organisations being the most common. The focus in this study will be on *business organisations*. Characteristics that we identify in this study will be peculiarly pertinent to a business organisation and not to organisations in general despite obvious similarities.

In this opening chapter I will explore the composition of an organisation as a social system because as a social system it presents the best opportunity to position a philosophy of happiness in the domain of organisation culture. I recognise that an organisation is at the same time an economic system but that is not my focus in this paper. As with any system, there are sub-systems interacting with each other and differing in their nature and degree of influence or dependency upon another. “Empirically, social systems are conceived as open systems, engaged in a complicated process of interchange with environing systems” (Parsons, 1961:30). For our purposes, environing systems include, cultural and personality sub-systems which through expressed behaviours impact on the physical environment. The idea of an open system interchanging with environing systems implies the existence of boundaries and consequently the need for maintenance of these boundaries. “When a set of independent phenomena shows sufficient patterning within maintained boundaries over a reasonable period of time, we can say that a structure exists and then it can fruitfully be treated as a system” (Parsons, 1961:44-47).

As we broaden our study into the field of social systems, for the reason I stated in the paragraph above, it will be necessary to discuss how organisations learn in contrast to how individuals *in* an organisation learn. This is a natural extension of the systems model for organisations and to assist us a case study will be explored and analysed. In a social system, people and their behaviours are fundamental to the study and as I alluded to in the previous paragraph, people constitute their own environing system of culture and personality. The implication being that this environing system is dynamic and often unpredictable. We will discuss in some detail one such unpredictable aspect of human behaviour in the form of *groupthink* which has the potential to derail well-

intentioned systemic initiatives. A systemic initiative would be for example the inculcation of a philosophy of happiness within the organisational social system.

The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the nature and purpose of work which is located partly in the field of philosophy and partly in the field of management science and this, coupled to the social systems model, will contribute to determining how three of the eight types of philosophy of happiness developed by Verhoef (2024:27-46) could be applied to the design of an adaptive organisation.

2.2 Organisations as Social Systems

At the outset it is recognised that "a business organisation in which most managers and workers operate are social systems" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988:9). In turn, these social systems are composed of interrelated subsystems. These are the *human-social systems, the administrative-structural subsystems, the informational-decision making subsystem* and the *economic-technological sub-system.*[1] For our purpose it is the focus of these subsystems which are important. We examine the focus of each of these four sub-systems below.

The focus of the *human-social subsystem* is the motivation, behaviour and needs of the members in the organisation and on the leadership provided or required. It is also the harmonizing of individual roles, competencies and risks into group roles, competencies and risks. It is referred to as the *integrating subsystem.*

Authority, responsibility and structure is the focus of the *administrative-structural subsystem.* Simply stated, it is who directs whom to do what, when and why, and who is required to do what for whom. Referred to as the *implementing subsystem.*

The *informational decision-making subsystem* focuses on critical decision making and the type and depth of informational needs that must be met to keep the system functional. Referred to as the *innovating subsystem***.**

The principal focus of the *economic-technological subsystem* is on the work to be done, coupled with the cost effectiveness of that work toward the attainment of specific goals of the organisation. Referred to as the *producing subsystem*.

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[1] Paul Hersey and Douglas Scott identify these components of an internal social system in an article *"A Systems Approach to Educational Organisations; Do we Manage or Administer"*.

When viewed through the lens of a systems approach, it will become apparent that any change in one part of the system will initiate or necessitate a change in the other subsystems to a greater or lesser degree.

To explicate this model of Hersey and Scott, we examine the following general scenario. An organisation *implements* a decision to change a product design. By this act of implementing, work is scheduled, coordinated and controlled. These actions "ensure that the system works as it was designed to work" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988:10). In the *producing* role, there is an expectation for the achievement of results that meet the organisational standards and goal. In this role the "possession of functional knowledge in the appropriate field is paramount since the emphasis is on the activities inherent in the economic-technological subsystem" (Adizes, 1980:6). While the importance of *implementing* and *producing* are not in question, in a dynamic socio-economic environment a functioning system needs to respond to challenges in the form of opportunities (or threats) while it is in the process of implementing and producing. To achieve this response the organisation must act in an entrepreneurial fashion by generating a new set of actions to respond to the challenge. This *innovating* role "stresses the informational decision-making subsystem" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988:10). For the composite organisational social system to be continuously successful, the fourth subsystem, *integrating,* must play its role. Integrating is "the process by which several separate parts in an organisation have their actions merged into a group wide action" (Hersey & Blanchard 1988:11). This suggests that the risks and goals of the different parts of the organisation, become the risks and goals of the group and isolated entrepreneurial behaviour within the group, emerges as group entrepreneurship.

Adizes explains this phenomenon in his paper, *How to Solve the Mismanagement Crisis.*

> When a group can operate on its own with a clear direction in mind and can choose its own direction over time without depending on any one individual for a successful operation, then we know that the integrating role has been performed satisfactorily.

Adizes avers that whenever one of the four managerial subsystems is not performed in an organisation, a style of mismanagement follows (Adizes, 1980:6). There are, in the normal course of organisational life, several people each skilled in and performing in one of the subsystems even though their actions may be under the direction of a leader or leader-group tasked with an oversight or facilitative role. In concluding this descriptive narrative of an organisational social system and its component subsystems, I need to add one important comment made by Adizes when he argues that if any one of the four subsystems needs to be identified as indispensable to the organisation, then it will be the *integration subsystem*. The reason? The organisation can effectively outsource the subsystems, *implementing, producing* and *innovating*, but the

organisation must be able to *integrate* these outsourced subsystems to facilitate their working together in a positive manner.[2]

The human-social subsystem thus holds a unique position within the organisational social system. This aspect will receive further attention in the ensuing chapters, however at this point in the study we have outlined a systems model for business organisations and in the following section of the chapter we examine a behavioural phenomenon which is often evident wherever people congregate as a group to plan, decide, adopt or generally debate an issue which is important to them. Social psychologists have labelled this behaviour as *groupthink* (Hall, 1988:363) and I will continue to refer to the behaviour in this way.

2.3 What is Groupthink and why is it Important?

Groupthink is a behavioural phenomenon observed when concurrence seeking within a group overwhelms critical thinking and moral judgment. Why is groupthink important for us at this juncture? There are two reasons. First, when integration is activated as a functional role within the organisational social system, activation occurs via a collective of persons. Second, the objective of this study is to determine the role that a philosophy of happiness can play in designing an adaptive organisation. This implies that *people* in an organisation will need to consider, debate and decide before it adopts the theory I will postulate. The motivation for the organisation to move from a traditionally stable to an adaptive organisation will of necessity, need to pass through the psychological and intellectual filters of different ideologies and biases held by members of the decision-making group, which in turn is a fertile ground for the emergence of groupthink. Hence the need to evaluate groupthink as a psychological construct, the impact it can have on decision-making groups and by extension, on the adoption of a philosophy of happiness in the design of an adaptive organisation.

Background to the Research on Groupthink.

"How could we have been so stupid?" This was the question reportedly asked by President John F. Kennedy after he and a close group of top tier advisors had blundered in the Bay of Pigs invasion (Hall, 1988:363). Hall correctly states it was certainly not stupidity. The men who participated in that fateful decision represented one of the greatest arrays of intellectual talent in American political history at the time (Hall, 1988:363). Other explanations invoking behaviour

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[2] Adizes, I. 1976. *Ibid*

disturbances, such as temporary emotional stress precipitated by fear or anger, or social prejudice or biases, still leave the explanation for such a poor decision incomplete.

A social psychologist named Irving L. Janis whose work was included in a chapter to Hall's book *Models for Management* (Hall, 1988:363) stated that he had spent months in research, poring over hundreds of relevant documents, which consisted of minutes of formal meetings, records of informal discussions and personal letters written by members of the Kennedy advisory group and concluded that the members were victims of groupthink, as Janis labelled it. What the research of Janis shows is that groupthink is not a phenomenon prevalent when masses of people blindly obey an authority (perceived or real) and take decisions to destroy property or stone a man to death for holding a contrary religious view (Acts 7:59-60. The Jerusalem Bible). Groupthink occurs in the relative calm of a company board room or the political office of a president of a democratic government. Groupthink can also occur in a high-level meeting of church Cardinals or a meeting of the Body Corporate of a residential estate. Consequently, rioting or stoning individuals is not a prerequisite for the existence of groupthink. What then would be the antecedent condition for the manifestation of groupthink? The condition, analysed below, is selected for its relevance to the objectives of this study. It is distilled from the 1972 research by Janis and reported by Hall.

Norms. There is evidence found in a collection of social-psychological studies that a sense of normativity experienced by people in a closed decision-making group, raises the sense of acceptance by others in the group. Acceptance is considered a contributing factor to group adhesiveness. Janis postulates that "an increase in groupthink is directly correlated to an increase in group cohesiveness" (Hall 1988:365). Groupthink in the context of group cohesiveness involves the non-deliberate suppression of critical thought brought about by the internalisation of the group's norms. This is distinctly different from the deliberate suppression of critical thoughts due to external threats of social ostracizing for example. Accordingly, "the more cohesive the group the greater the inner compulsion is of each member to avoid creating disunity" (Hall 1988:365). What are the forces impacting a person or group in an organisation faced with the decision to turn a blind eye to a questionable practice or to leave unchallenged a questionable decision? Or less dramatically, support a culture change in the organisation? I suggest the following three forces based on my own observations and experience as an ex-member of several corporate decision-making groups.

1. **Fear of the unknown or fear of loss.** The fear is evident in not being able to imagine an organisation in any other form than the one that currently exists. In addition, the spectre of an organisation that will not reflect the *status quo* is often difficult for people to process much less embrace.

2. **Rationalising.** Adapting or changing may require a new skill set, a new process, cultural adjustment, budget, time and a degree of commitment that realistically the decision-making group does not have or cannot acquire, even if they were amenable to the idea.
3. **Stubbornness.** Located within every decision-making group will be one or more individuals who will routinely offer an apparently logical explanation for the rejection of a new idea or course of direction. Due to the apparent and inherent logic of the objection, it is generally assumed to be correct. *Edward de Bono* (de Bono, 1976:69) refers to this type of thinking behaviour as *arrogance*.[3] Since the logical consistency of the explanation appears to establish its validity, the person offering the explanation is disinclined to look any further or consider alternatives. Afterall, the argument goes, why would there be any good reason to consider alternatives since a logical explanation that fits the facts is on the table.

Should a core group of people in the group subscribe to or be under the influence of any one of the three forces, fear of the unknown, rationalising or stubbornness, the minority may, according to groupthink theory, be subjected to subtle social pressures by way of *domestication* (Hall 1988:368). This involves the application of two restrictions. First, the minority member or members are made to feel at home within the group – on condition that they do not express a dissenting view to anyone outside of the group. Second, they ensure that their criticism remains within the bounds of acceptable deviation. This effectively means that any fundamental assumption supporting the group's general direction would be left unchallenged.

2.4 What are the Remedies to Groupthink?

Janis extended his research to examine "the successful execution of group decision making" (Hall 1988:371). A summary follows of what Janis suggests should happen to avoid or minimize groupthink.

The leader of a decision-making group assigns the role of critical evaluator to each group member thus encouraging the members to prioritize the open airing of counter views or doubts. When key members of an organisation assign a project or task to any group, they refrain from voicing their preferences or expectations. Instead, they confine their input to problem identification, timelines and budget, if applicable. Within the context of the issue assigned, the group members are

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[3] de Bono, E. *Teaching Thinking*. In this work de Bono suggests that thinking is closely involved with the ego and to suggest an inadequacy in someone's thinking is interpreted as a personal threat on the ego. Adults he claims are more inclined to this reaction than children due to the stages of human development. Arrogance it seems manifests more readily as we grow older.

encouraged to invite an external expert to challenge and debate the groups findings or proposal. Prior to presenting their findings or proposal the group holds a second-chance meeting at which each member is given a final opportunity to voice any residual doubts. These must be dealt with or be included in the presentation as a sort of minority view or a general *caveat.* Janis is optimistic about the management of groupthink if organisations show a willingness to open themselves to input from skilled advisors when needed. (Hall, 1988:372).

What has been discussed in this section of the chapter is the complex dynamic operating within a social system and more particularly in the fourth subsystem named *integration.* It is in this human-social subsystem that the happiness philosophy will need to be located and find acceptance and expression because it represents the way in which things are managed in an organisation to prepare for this, we examine the nature and purpose of work and what it means when we refer to an organisation as a learning organisation.

2.5 The Nature and Purpose of Work and the Learning Organisation

In this section of the chapter, we discuss the nature and purpose of work and will use the discussion as an intellectual point of entry to a critical analysis of organisational learning. First, the nature and purpose of work. Our principal point of reference will be the extensive research undertaken by Elliot Jaques and Stephen D. Clement.

Jaques posits that work is inherently hierarchical with each level of work corresponding to varying degrees of complexity and responsibility. In addition, work consists of goal-directed behaviour which in turn is tied into leadership accountability (Jaques & Clement, 1994:39). Goal-directed behaviour is more ordinarily expressed as the execution of tasks. This must be executed within prescribed limits and the resources allocated. However, the attempt to define the *nature of work* is not complete without reference to the exercise of good judgment and decision-making which requires the application of an individual's cognitive capabilities when having to manage ambiguous and changing variables associated with each level of work (Jaques & Clement, 1994:40).

Moving from the nature of work to the *purpose* of work within organisations I will adopt an approach which extends to the terrain of philosophy primarily because it is complimentary to the objective of this study and because it will provide us with a point of entry to introduce the concept of the *learning organisation* a little further on in this chapter.

Jaques states that the purpose of work is for people to express their self-identity and role in the community by using the opportunities that stretch their capabilities to learn and to grow. He calls

this view, "*a natural initiative theory"* (Jaques & Clement 1994:71) and in Jones and Richter (1981), the singular theme emanating from the papers collectively edited by them, affirms the view held by Jaques that work which is meaningful, contributes to a psychological sense of life purpose. Suggesting that work that is perceived as either contributing to a greater good or making a positive impact, has the effect of building an individual's self-esteem. In addition, I would argue that by considering the notion of happiness as an ethical way of life we can also determine what is meaningful work. (Support for this view will be apparent in the ensuing chapters of this study). Participation in meaningful work will contribute to the alignment of individual and organisational values This in turn has the potential to enhance a person's sense of self (Jaques & Clement, 1994:69). In this manner a cycle of reinforcement is created. Now that we have an idea of the nature and purpose of work and the effect it can have on the internal eco-system of the organisation, we can explore the notion of organisational learning and determine how the concepts fit together.

Organisational Learning and Culture.

Can organisations learn? When this topic is written about in the literature dealing with organisational learning it predominately examines how *individuals* learn within an organisational context (Cook and Yanow 2011: 355). These authors argue that apart from individuals in an organisation embarking on learning experiences – formal and informal – the *organisation* also learns. Not as individuals learn cognitively, but as cultural entities. For our purposes, a cultural entity is a social system in which is identified by a common set of values, beliefs and norms. Thus, the answer to the opening question is, yes, organisations can learn but we need to be clear what we are referring to.

I intend to pursue this distinction between how individuals learn and how organisations learn, because it will offer the opportunity to design an adaptive organisation based upon aspects of a philosophy of happiness. For now, we must test the claim*, can organisations learn?* Typically, the view that organisations do learn is founded on the notion that "learning is done by key individuals *within* the organisation and that this learning is usually linked to change that subsequently takes place within the organisation" (Cook & Yanow, 2011:356). This notion implies, explicitly or implicitly, that organisational learning and individual learning are similar, meaning cognitively, and I intend to refute this notion. I will refer to this as the *cognitive perspective*.

Although the cognitive perspective will continue to provide insight into how *individuals* learn and that is not being disputed, when the subject is *organisational learning* and the organisation is being understood not as an individual, meaning, the organisation is not being regarded ontologically as a cognitive entity, then my point of departure is that organisations can indeed

learn – not as cognitive entities, "but as *cultural entities"* (Cook & Yanow, 2011: 356). I find support for this view from scholars such as *Edgar Henry Schein*, psychologist and previously professor emeritus at the Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Prior to his death in 2023, he was regarded as a pioneering expert in organisational culture. To better understand what is meant by or implied by culture of an organisation, Schein (2017:9) states that,

> The concept of culture implies structural stability, depth, breadth and patterning those result from the fact that culture is for the group (the organisation) a learned phenomenon, just as personality and character are for individuals learned phenomena.

I will briefly analyse this statement of Schein before we continue the discussion of the organisation as a cultural and not a cognitive entity.

1. **Structural Stability.** Schein's use of the term *cultural* as a descriptor to explain something about an organisation, implies that the thing referred to is stable because it is being used to define the organisation. It is that *something* that continues to live on in the organisation even when members of the organisation leave. The members place a premium on this component of culture because it provides meaning and predictability. Significantly, stability does not mean static or entrenched or concretized. However, culture is at once stable as it is dynamic. This is a dialectic of the concept of culture. As new members or ideas are assimilated in the organisation, the cultural component makes a slow and sometimes imperceptible adjustment to ensure continued stability of the organisation.
2. **Depth.** Schein avers that the most basic assumptions of an organisational culture exist at the unconscious level of the group. They are therefore, "less tangible and less visible" (Schein, 2017:10). He also refers to the most basic assumptions within the organisation as the "cultural DNA of the organisation" (Schein 2017:10). These consist of the taken-for-granted beliefs that shape behaviour and thought patterns and are critical for organisational stability. Accordingly, in my view, they are resistant to change but not immutable. Changing these basic assumptions would take a comprehensive effort that may necessitate transforming the organisation entirely.
3. **Breadth.** I understand this to mean the pervasiveness of a cultural component. It covers how things are *done around here*. Why things are done one way and not another and what the organisation chooses to do and not to do. More readily modified than the basic assumptions in point 2 above.
4. **Patterning.** Because culture implies that organisational rituals, values and behaviours are tied or meshed into a coherent whole, it allows the organisation to express this unique *pattern as its culture.* Schein states that because humans need to make sense of their

environment and create order where they perceive disorder, “patterning creates a predictive view of how the organisation should and should not respond to the world” (Schein, 2017:11). I would further suggest that patterning is not a conscious act. It develops as the organisation grapples with the new or the unfamiliar in a way that is not iterative but rather evolutionary over time.

Having this understanding of culture, I conclude the discussion on the difference between individuals learning as a cognitive process and organisations learning as a cultural process. The *cultural perspective* of organisational learning refers to the capacity of an organisation to learn *not* by individual members within the organisation, but “by the aggregate of itself” (Cook & Yanow, 2011:360). In other words, when a group acquires the knowledge and attitude relative to its ability[4] to carry out is collective activity – that is organisational learning from a cultural perspective. Cook and Yanow state the above simply as *knowhow*, but I have chosen to express it in a didactic style since further on this will more adequately serve the purpose of this study when I attempt to explain the design of an adaptive organisation. The creation of an adaptive organisation will require organisational learning in a cultural perspective, not a cognitive perspective. Stated differently, it will not require a few key individuals to attend a training course on how to design an adaptive organisation. If that were the case, the net result of such a cognitive experience would result in the entire goal and purpose of effecting a cultural change being missed. An adaptive organisation is one which can absorb and respond with greater fluidity to the concomitant disruption caused by the iterative process of change. It could also decide *not* to change its essence and only change a part of itself.

A final point on how organisations learn is that organisational learning does not always imply observable change. If indeed there is to be any change, such change could take place at a near imperceptible level within the organisation. In fact, it may only be obvious to insiders of the organisation and perhaps to a cohort of outsiders who would have reason to be aware of the change. To give an example of what is meant here, I will briefly discuss an actual case study written up by Cook and Yanow. The case study will provide insight into cultural learning, and it will also illustrate the subtleness of one type of change. The historical data in the case study is summarized from *Cook and Yanow (2011:361-365)*.

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[4] In the late 1990s in this country, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) became the custodian of Standards associated with learning. Writers of learning programmes had to become familiar with learning outcomes and *skills, knowledge and attitude* (SKAs) became the components of learning outcomes. Assessors were trained to assess the competence of learners based on all three components. For our purpose the terms *skill* and *ability* are used synonymously.

2.6 Powell Flute Case Study

Most of the finest orchestral flutes produced in this century have been made in a style reminiscent of old world craftmanship. This is an important fact to bear in mind since it addresses the cultural aspect of learning directly. The three small workshops who shared this honour were located around Boston, Massachusetts. They were Wm. S. Haynes Company, Verne Q. Powell Flutes Inc. and Brannen Brothers. Our case study focuses on Powell Flutes which was founded in 1927. The musical instruments made by Powell Flutes are regarded as *the best flutes in the world,* and the idea of excellence was central to the identity of this company.

A flute making company is typically small with an average of twenty-five to thirty people. Apart from a secretary and a bookkeeper, all the people in the company work on producing flutes. An order book of Powel Flutes usually revealed a five-year waiting list, and the customer was almost always a member of a symphony orchestra or wind ensemble. In other words, flutes were not sold to retail outlets.

We must talk about the layout of a flute makers workshop because it represents an artefact of the inherent culture. There are areas designated for die cutting and casting, and for cleaning and polishing of the instruments and then storage. The heart of this workshop, where the creation of the flutes took place, occupied a central area and consisted of rows of workbenches stocked mainly with hand tools. The flute makers sat at these benches, side by side, performing the delicate and exacting work required to produce a flawless and aesthetically pleasing musical instrument to both the eye and ear. Powell Flutes had no formal training programme for would-be flute makers. They also did not have a written, standard operating procedures manual. (SOPS) Formal quality control of the final product was also non-existent. So how did Powell Flutes come to be recognised as the foremost flute maker in the world? At Powell Flutes it would take about two weeks to create an orchestral flute from beginning to end. At any one time there would be several flutes in production, but the number would be limited to accommodate the Powell creation process. This is a summary of how Cook and Yanow explained the process.

Each individual craftsman (or woman) was skilled in only a few aspects of the whole production process. The craftsman would typically work on his part of a flute – or on a small batch of flutes. When finished to his satisfaction, he would pass the flute to the next craftsman. The second craftsman would base his work on the former's. So sequencing was important. This continued down the line until the final product emerged. If at any point a receiving craftsman felt the work performed by the sending craftsman was not right, that person would return the work piece to his colleague to be reworked to their mutual satisfaction.

There was no manager or supervising craftsman to oversee the manufacturing process or, to mediate any disagreements that may arise between two craftsman who have a different view of the quality of the workpiece. As Cook and Yanow discovered, issues were dealt with between craftsmen as they always had been since 1927, through collaboration with one another. How would one craftsman typically communicate to another craftsman that the workpiece needed to be re-done? The authors reported that they would make comments such as, it *doesn't feel right*, or *this bit over here doesn't look right*. The first craftsman would then take back his piece and re-work it until both he and the second craftsman agreed that the piece had the right feel or the right look.

It is obvious that the language used in these interchanges is inexact and this could be attributed to, in my view, the absence of a formal SOPs or Quality Control Manual or process. This also represented another cultural artifact. Neither the physical dimensions, tolerances or parts placement had ever been made explicit and this manifested itself, again in my view, in the inexact language used by the flute makers in daily practice. Having said this, Powell Flutes developed an international reputation for product style, quality and consistent standard of production that ensured a sound and a look-and-feel sought after by the world's top flautists. Ultimately quality control was achieved informally but just as exact and demanding as any high-tech operation.

Apprentice Training. Once again, there was no formal programme as I mentioned earlier. A trainee flute maker would typically sit next to a master craftsman and be handed a piece of work similar to that being worked on by the master craftsman. And, just as the qualified craftsman communicated with one another, the master craftsman would guide his or her pupil in the same cryptic style of, *it doesn't feel right* or, *it doesn't look right*. When the trainee reached a point in his indenture where he could say these same words when handed a piece of work, then his apprenticeship was deemed to have been successfully completed.

The Brand. Cook and Yanow reported that their research found that the specialist music fraternity were firmly of the view that no two Powell flutes were exactly alike. Each had its own quirks – described as the flute's personality. Yet a knowledgeable flautist can recognise a Powell flute when he or she plays it by the look-and-feel and the unmistaken sound. This would support the claim that a Powell flute made 50 years ago had the same look-and-feel and distinctive sound as a flute made today.

This concludes the first part of the case study and provides us with the necessary background to develop our argument for organisational learning as a cultural endeavour.

2.7 Organisational Learning in the Flute Workshop: From a Cultural Perspective.

We must begin building the cultural learning theory that takes place in an organisation whereby a philosophy, for example, may be assimilated by the organisation. From our case study, a few key observations can be made. These are:

The organisation *learned* how to fulfil its purpose through the nature in which it constituted its work collectively. Meaning, there was no formal training or learning programme for *individuals* where knowledge was systematically imparted. Learning occurred through the inculcation of the apprentice in the culture of the organisation (how we do things around here) It is true that all flute makers in the workshop knew how to perform his or her part of the work, but the *know-how* required to make the whole flute, resided with the organisation. Why? because only the workshop "as a whole can produce the purposed output" (Cook & Yanow, 2011: 363) which was the purpose-built flute.

For fear that this observation may be moving toward a reductive view of the organisation in the case study, meaning where output is measured quantitively, I will restate the perspective that is being adopted. Although the purposed output is the manufacture of flutes, the *outcome* (a qualitative factor) is way more significant than the *output* (a quantitative factor). The outcome, as identified by the researchers Cook and Yanow, was that the product produced should be universally acknowledged as the "*best damned flute in the world"* (Cook & Yanow, 2011:364). This was in fact the case, and none were more so inclined to that view than the employees of the organisation as well as the many international flautists who declined to play any other instrument.

Hersey and Blanchard provide a more scientific management explanation for the perspective that I have just restated. These authors said that when determining organisational effectiveness, the common practice has been to focus on the evaluation of results reduced to numbers i.e. profit, loss, percentage growth, staff turnover and so forth. This is the reductive approach. They define this as *Output Variables* or *End-Result Variables*. However, there are two other organisational variables that precede the end-result variable. These are "*Causal Variables* and *Intervening Variables"* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988:131-135). Causal Variables include factors such as Leadership strategy, culture, management style and use of technology. Intervening variables include, morale, leadership skills and the quality of intra-organisational communication.

In the Powell Flute case study, I attempted to draw attention to the foundational *causal variables* as well as the *intervening variables* which play a key role in the quality of the *output variable*. A mistake made by many managers and their Executive Boards, in my view, is to focus time and attention on output variables without the realisation that to significantly affect an output variable

i.e. the flute, time and attention should be spent on the causal and intervening variables i.e. the philosophy and culture of the organisation and the way in which "leadership *expresses* the philosophy" (Hersey & Blanchard,1982:132).

In the case study we showed that the leadership of Powell Flutes, having established the work culture from its inception, subsequently exercised little day-to-day attention to the way in which *work was done around here,* the manner in which the flute makers *communicated* with one another and *decision making* in respect of quality which was *devolved to the lowest level* and not regarded as prerogative of the owner / manager. These causal and intervening variables embodied the culture of Powell Flutes which manifested in the output variable of a highly sought-after and iconic flute.

2.8 Part Two of the Case Study: An unexpected development.

In 1974, Powell, the owner of Powell Flutes, became aware of an event that took place in Britain. A man by the name of Albert Cooper, an independent flute maker, was making a small number of flutes on his own with a scale he had designed himself.[5] It came to Powell's attention because English musicians who had played Cooper's flute and were impressed with its tonality had communicated this to Powell who later assessed the Cooper scale, and it led him to consider making a Powell flute with a Cooper scale. In keeping with the culture of Powell flutes, Powell consulted with his employees (causal variable) and Cook and Yanow report that their immediate responses were captured in statements such as, *this will be new and foreign; changing the scale will change Powell flutes; totally unthinkable;* and then the ultimate comment, "*if the Powell flute is the best in the world right now, why change the scale?" (*Cook & Yanow, 2011:364). Powell, as owner / manager could have intervened with a directive or an attempt to persuade, but that was not within the culture of the organisation.

The intra-organisational debate continued for some weeks among the flute makers. Because Powell did not force a decision upon his team and by allowing them to reason through all the issues themselves, the unanimous decision was taken to build a Powell flute with a Cooper scale and offer it to Powell clients as an *alternative option*. This meant the original Powell flute would remain in production. (Intervening variable leading to an Output variable).

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[5] Scale, refers to hole placement, bore size and shape, all of which affects the tune of each note across the octaves. Information accessed on 24 August 2024 at *www.flutes.com*

Within less than a year, Powell, having acquired the Cooper scale, witnessed over 90% of the orders opting for the Powell flute with the Cooper scale. The workshop team came to view the Powell flutes with and without the Cooper scale, as consistent with Powell's standard of quality and style and expressed to the researchers that the Powell flute was *still the best there is.*

2.9 Organisational Learning from a cultural perspective when adopting the Cooper scale

The Cooper scale event precipitated organisational learning at two levels from a cultural perspective. The observable and the hidden. From a cultural perspective (the hidden) the workshop absorbed the innovative Cooper scale which in turn came to constitute a "significant shift in the history of flute making" (Cook & Yanow, 2011:365). Despite this historic shift in the creation of an iconic musical instrument, the essential style of the flute – the look-and-feel and the sound remained superior in quality to other flutes. Similarly, the culture in the workshop that served as the core enabler in the production process, remained uniquely *Powell.* The researchers noted that one workshop employee commented that "*we have only made the best, better"* (Cook & Yanow, 2011:365). The explicit changes (the observable) were the modifications done to the tooling that were required to produce the near imperceptible changes to the physical dimensions of the tube holes and constituted learning at a cognitive level since certain individuals had to learn how to re-tool the turning equipment to the tolerances demanded by the Cooper scale.

We can therefore argue that the changes were primarily at an internal or cultural level followed by secondary level changes cognitively. The most obvious change at a cognitive level was reflected by the acknowledgement by Powell of the integrity of the re-engineering required to produce the Cooper scale. Assembling the *new* Powell-Cooper flute remained entrenched in the culturally driven production process that had been established over decades and could once more demonstrate to the classical music world the superior competence of the Powell flute makers (output variable).

Notably, the final decision to produce a Powell flute with a Cooper scale was not a result of a conflict resolution process. The researchers found that warring camps were non-existent. Debate was lively and opinions were expressed freely and with passion, but the central issue on which everyone agreed was the "*identity of the organisation"* (Cook & Yanow, 2011:365). Accordingly, I would argue that the Powell workforce was wrestling with the philosophical question, *can we change without changing,* without necessarily articulating it as such.

The philosophical question above can be re-framed in more explicit terms, for example, can we (the Powell organisation) make a very deliberate design change and manage it organisationally,

(strategize about it, re-tool, implement it and sell it) without changing the Powell product, the brand, the identity and culture? This event in the life of the organisation was as much preservative as it was innovative. Powell Flute company was learning how to do something differently without becoming a different company or changing the essence of the Powell flute. Powell was not so much learning a new technology as learning collectively as an organisation how to "maintain its identity in the face of a significant new undertaking" (Cook &Yanow, 2011:365). And in contrast to many change management initiatives, there was no evidence of any "production reorganisation, restructuring of tasks, staff lay-offs, introduction of new policies or restating of the criteria for effectiveness" (Cook & Yanow, 2011: 365).

2.10 Reflections on Cultural Learning as a Causal Variable

Concluding this section of the chapter the following aspects on the cultural perspective of organisational learning can be noted as pertinent to this study. First. It is intuitively simpler conceptually, to view organisations as cultural entities than to view them as cognitive entities, primarily because learning takes differently. Second, organisations being human groups can be more readily understood as being *social structures* rather than being understood metaphorically as *mechanistic*

To conclude this chapter, we will integrate the key concepts discussed.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter started with a review of the theory of organisations as social systems and delved deeper into the topic by identifying the sub-systems of an organisation that operate in concert to give effect to the functioning of the social system. The sub-system titled, *Integrating,* which described the human-social aspect of this sub-system, was identified as a significant role player within the larger organisational social system. We have therefore answered part of the specific research question which required an analysis of organisations as social systems.

Following the path of critical analysis, we identified a phenomenon called groupthink, which had the potential to reduce the efficacy of the integrating sub-system. This is the behaviour, when evident, overwhelms critical thinking and moral judgment. The characteristics of groupthink as well as the way it may manifest itself was explored. This served as a caution to us not to simply assume that decision-making groups within an organisation are somehow naturally endowed with extraordinary capabilities and an emotional awareness of behaviours that may impede progress and deliver less than optimal results. The identification of groupthink as a phenomenon highlighted the dynamic that exists in social systems, not just in business organisations. More

importantly, by identifying this group dynamic we prepared ourselves to deal with a factor that is commonplace and has the potential of a deaccelerating effect on any attempt to inculcate a philosophy of happiness into the culture of the organisation.

We followed with a discussion on the nature and purpose of work. Appropriately the discussion located itself within the discipline of philosophy more than it did in the practical aspect of work and its outcome. With the purpose of work, we were led to consider the values embraced by individuals and those that are reflective of the organisation. It is within the nature and purpose of work that we found a repository as well as a platform for the management practices to be dealt with in chapter three. In the final section of chapter two we posited a view that organisations can learn separately from individuals *in* an organisation. The former is from a cultural perspective while the latter is accomplished cognitively. This is significant since a philosophy of happiness is introduced into an organisation by being assimilated through its cultural component. In chapter three we will deal with what management practices are needed for an organisation to be considered an adaptive organisation.

CHAPTER 3 MANAGEMENT PRACTICES REQUIRED FOR AN ADAPTIVE ORGANISATION WHERE A PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS CAN FIND EXPRESSION

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two we defined the concept of an organisation but more specifically, a business organisation. In a sentence, we understand a business organisation to be a social system consisting of several interrelated sub-systems (Hersey *et al.,* 1982:9). We also proffered the view that business organisations are "traditionally intended to be *stable social systems"* (Lawler *et al*., 2006:11). Lawler identified the six key factors that promote stability.

First, by its nature a business organisation needs to be *regulated*. Certain forms of business organisations more so than others, for example an organisation with its shares listed on a stock exchange is subject to greater regulatory compliance than an organisation whose shares are privately held.

Second, the *design of the structure* of an organisation tends to favour a pyramidic hierarchy. This design determines the *locus* of decision making, the direction of its flow and prescribes operational boundaries and accountabilities. All of this in turn fosters stability within the organisation.

Third, to promote efficient management of its resources and the production of its goods or services, organisations have a *pre-determined way of doing things.* Sometimes this is express, at other times it is tacit. Whether tacit or implied, it fosters stability.

Fourth, a business contends with *risk.* Risk, in this context, means the possibility of an event occurring that may impact the business of the organisation negatively. To effectively mitigate risks, contingency plans are implemented which provides for a more stable operating environment.

The fifth aspect promoting stability is the *act of planning.* Not all organisations have a sophisticated strategic plan (my view based on experience), but all organisations have an operational plan that at least sketches what needs doing and what resources are available to achieve a specified output. Having a plan, even a vague plan, lends a modicum of stability to the business organisation.

Lastly, and most importantly, for the purposes of this study is the *organisational culture*. Stability is infused in the organisation through the existence of a shared identity, belief, and values (Lawler *et al*., 2006:11-14). Culture, as we determined in chapter two implies structural stability because it defines an organisation. It is that *something* that lives on in the organisation even when current members of the organisation leave, and new members join.

In this third chapter we will attempt to explain how an organisation may need to evolve to become an adaptive organisation. Before we begin the process, it is necessary to explain what is meant by an *adaptive organisation*. In doing so we are going to avoid the temptation of selecting between two concepts. Either a stable organisation or an adaptive organisation. I will attempt to show that if an organisation is able to achieve a state of adaptability, then it will be sustainable. And if it were sustainable, then there will be a sufficiency of stability to ensure optimum functioning of the constituent parts. To reference a statement made in my comments on the Powell Flute company case study in chapter two, the organisation should be able to *change without changing*. This philosophical dialectic will serve as a golden thread in the remainder of chapter three.

To be considered an adaptive organisation is "to possess the know-how to facilitate the continuous evolution of managing a business which involves the day-to-day tactical changes that arise….and redesign a part of the organisation to accommodate any of these tactical changes" (Lawler *et al*., 2006:9). Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, an adaptive organisation is one which consciously addresses the following five content domains.

The first domain is the organisation's ***mission*****.** An adaptive organisation moves beyond what it offers in the form of a product or service and focusses on the core benefits and how it delivers value to the recipients of the product or service.

The second domain articulates the ideal future state (not purpose) of the organisation. This is the ***vision*** of the organisation. The question asked in addressing this domain is, what will the world look like when we are achieving our mission? Or stated another way, what impact will we have when our mission is being fulfilled?

For the third domain we move into the ***purpose*** of the organisation. And there is a simple but profound question that needs asking. Why do we exist? At a very fundamental level the answer to the question must inform us of the benefits that will flow to the community in which the organisation operates or, how society in general will benefit from the presence of the organisation. A meaningful or strong purpose determines how the organisation can help society to function. The difference between a mission and a purpose is the breadth of the focus. In a mission

statement we focus on the customer, in the purpose statement the focus includes the broader community that will be touched (impacted upon) by the activities of the organisation.

In the fourth domain we encounter what are considered as the *guardrails* of organisational behaviour. The ***values*** of the organisation. As we embark on our mission, led by our north-star – the vision, what set of principles and behaviours do we subscribe to that can guide everyone in the organisation? This would be a key question to ask when dealing with the fourth domain.

Finally, the fifth domain, ***organisational culture***, tells us how work gets done in the organisation. In other words, what are the rituals, norms and beliefs that shape task execution and communication. Not only in the present but also into the future. The summary overview with my additional comments on the five domains was adapted from Jaworski *et al*., (2023:11-13). I have proposed a view that an adaptive organisation is one which deliberately addresses the five domains above. The implication is that an organisation which is not adaptive, would in probably not deliberately address all the five domains, or if it does address one or more of the domains, fail to action them (live out what they claim).

I extend the domain summary above to an overview of the evolution of management styles that gained traction in organisations from the 1900s to the present time. A double *caveat* is that management *fads* are ignored and secondly, the styles cannot be allocated to time periods. What would be the significance of such an exercise? It would show whether a particular overarching management style favoured the conscious implementation of a majority or all the five domains and therefore indicate which management style favoured the assimilation of a philosophy of happiness into its culture by adopting it as a value.

3.2 The Overarching Management Styles. Its Origins.[6]

During the 1900s managing a business organisation was characterised by two fundamental management styles. The *scientific management style* and the *administrative management style* (Hall, 1988:395). Scientific management was evident in industry and adopted by organisations for the potential improvements in productivity. Scientific management could be defined as the act of focussing on the elimination of waste, work simplification, time and motion study, standardisation, and the analysis of workflow. An American, Frederick W. Taylor and his colleagues pioneered this approach as early as 1890 but only published in 1909. The overall effect was the simplification of work cycles and a reduction in the amount of learning required. The scientific management

[6] Accessed on 10 August 2024 at https://www.simplelearn.com followed by my analysis of each principle.

style was responsible for the emphasis management placed on the achievement of specific production targets, well-defined channels of communication between workers and management with decision making located exclusively at the top - with management. Accordingly, other than *purpose,* there is no evidence of the presence of any of the other five domains in this style.

Rensis Likert, an American social psychologist – best known for his Likert Scale – commented that the scientific management style created measurable dissatisfaction among workers due to pressure from management to "produce more and more*"* (Hall, 1988:396). There were reports of resistance to the input from industrial engineers (the implementers of this management style) that required workers to change their production patterns to shorten production times and improve efficiencies. An anecdotal comment illustrating this style and attributed to Henry Ford states, "*all that we ask of the men is that they do the work which is set before them, in the way we want it done"* (Hall, 1988:396). This elegantly sums up managements' view of worker relations when adopting the scientific management style. According to Likert's research, the problems attributed to the scientific management style would manifest for "decades to come*"* (Hall, 1988:396) and eventually demand the protection of trade unions against the pressure tactics of America's managers.

In Europe, Henri Fayol, a Frenchman, crafted the fourteen principles of management around 1916 and published them in a seminal work titled *"Administration Industrielle et Générale"* loosely translated as the *administrative management style*. His work formed the foundation of modern management theory, and it is widely acknowledged as "one of the earliest comprehensive theories of management still relevant today" (Poperwi, 2018:809). Unlike Taylor's theory which had its primary application on the shop floor, Fayol's theory applied to all levels of management with a focus on managing people, not necessarily focused solely on production outputs. In Fayol's work mentioned above, there are fourteen management principles which we will analyse to determine the extent to which they manifest any one or more of the five domains.

3.3 Fayol's fourteen management principles (Kumar, 2024)

(i) Division of work

To upskill a person, a single task should be assigned, not multiple tasks. When assigning the task, the ability potential of the person required to perform the task must be considered.

(ii) Authority

According to Fayol, this is a management attribute and needed to be balanced with the responsibility given to the subordinate. Too much of one or the other would, for either the manager or the employee, cause a frustrating working relationship.

(iii) Discipline

Organisations needed disciplined behaviour to operate effectively. Fayol's view was disciplined employees only functioned satisfactorily within an organisational culture of mutual respect. It is the managers who build that culture.

(iv) Unity of Command

Fayol argued that an employee should report to only one manager and thus have clarity of accountability.

(v) Unity of Direction

Employees work best and are prepared to collaborate with their peers if there existed a single objective or plan directing their work behaviour.

(vi) Collective Interest over Individual Interest

This principle of Fayol's promoted organisational goal supremacy over individual or personal goals of any one employee.

(vii) Remuneration

Fayol advocated for a fair wage for the work assigned. Under-remuneration (exploitation) would demotivate employees and may cause high performers to resign. Remuneration for Fayol included both financial and non-financial awards.

(viii) Centralisation

Fayol advocated a management hierarchy with each level having the requisite authority required to manage people at one level below and conduct work assignments.

(ix) Scalar Chain

Fayol suggested that there be clear communication channels between employees and their managers giving employees communication certainty in the event of referrals for assistance or feedback on assignments (accountability). He also favoured the drawing of organisational charts and publishing them in the workplace for all to access.

(x) Order

Fayol promoted the concept of the correct allocation of resources (labour, money, and materials) to the right place at the right time in the right quantity and their use to be managed and reported on.

(xi) Equity

In Fayol's view equity consisted of a combination of *kindness and justice*. If managers operated from such a perspective of equity, employee's morale would be positively impacted. This in turn would have a positive influence on productivity and facilitate key-employee retention.

(xii) Stability of tenure

Fayol argued for the adoption of deliberate management actions that would have the effect of minimising attrition. His view was that a stable workforce would lead to greater operational efficiencies and higher job satisfaction.

(xiii) Initiative

This principle addressed the issue of employee participation through a *collaborative* management style. Fayol argued that employees who felt that their inputs would be listened to, were more likely to take the initiative to share them.

(xiv) Esprit de Corps

In English, *team spirit*. Again, it was management's responsibility to create an organisational environment that fostered unity, collaboration, and participation by employees in decision making and task execution.

To appreciate the relationship between the five content domains and the fourteen management principles, I have created a *Domain Compatibility Table* in which the domains and the principles can be related to one another. The Table appears below and provides an overview showing which of Fayol's fourteen management principles, on the horizontal, relate to the five content domains of adaptability in column one.

Table 3-1: Overview of Fayol's fourteen management principles

FIVE CONTENT DOMAINS OF ADAPTABILITY	DIVISION OF WORK	AUTHORITY	DISCIPLINE	UNITY OF COMMAND	UNITY OF DIRECTION	COLLECTIVITY	REMUNERATION	CENTRALISATION	SCALAR CHAIN	ORDER	EQUITY	STABILTY OF TENURE	INITIATIVE	TEAM SPIRIT
MISSION	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
VISION					✓	✓					✓	✓		✓
PURPOSE					✓									
VALUES		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
CULTURE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.4 Analysis of the Domain Compatibility Table

By selecting a content domain in column one, say *Mission*, then moving across the row we find the ten *management principles* that are specifically related to, or included in that domain. Mission, we defined above as, *what and organisation offers in the form of a product or service with a focus on the core benefit to the customer who is the recipient of the product or service.* Applying the ten management principles selected it could therefore be said that in order for an organisation to achieve its *mission*, it would need to appropriately manage its workforce within an environment of mutual respect that encouraged appropriate behaviour, have a plan with a defined output and outcome, underpinned by the support from the workforce of the organisation's goal, who in turn were professionally managed by competent supervisors who ensured that all applicable resources were available at the time and place and in the manner required. This analysis covers the first six principles ticked against the domain *mission*.

The next four principles ticked would have the effect of a workforce exhibiting high morale, who wanted to stay with the organisation because *inter alia* their voices were heard, and they felt they belonged. In this example ten of the fourteen principles correlate back to *Mission.*

Using another example, the domain *Purpose* has one primary principle selected against it viz. *Unity of Direction*. This encourages an organisation to ask the question, "if we as the leadership of the organisation want to ensure that we are being true to our *Purpose,* which management principle must we prioritize?" The answer would be, to ensure that there is *unity of direction* among the leadership and the rest of the organisation in respect of both the knowledge of and the commitment to the organisation's *raison de'être*.

Hall states in his work, *Models for Management*, that in modern times there has been greater impetus towards a more *human relations* tendency in the manner people are managed in organisations (Hall, 1988:397). This view finds confirmation from other research, for example Poperwi who asserts that "the principles of management (of people) are the ideas that form the basis of management" (Poperwi, 2018:809) and Jaworski and Cheung aver that the emergence of purpose-led organisations has truly emerged since around 2005. By 2021 when Jaworski and Cheung published their work, it contained a clear message of a people centric approach to management (Jaworski *et al*., 2021).

However, Hall cautions that the volume of research into the nature and consequences of this tendency is still small but growing. He nevertheless feels confident that there are early indicators showing more organisations, notably industrial businesses, willing to move toward Fayol's administrative management style (Hall, 1988:397).

For our purpose, we will focus on the domains four and five – *Values* and *Culture* – as these domains together find expression through all of Fayol's management principles. Optically it may appear an obvious observation, but it is not from an analytical viewpoint. Had we replaced Fayol's fourteen management principles with Taylor's scientific management principles, the comparative analysis of Table I would look quite different. We need only to consider the definitions of each of the domains to appreciate this. I am suggesting in this section, that what we see in the *Domain Compatibility Table* is an emerging pattern of a modern management trend that is foundational for adaptability, being compatible with, and expressive of Fayol's administrative management principles. Does research support my view of an emerging trend? Hall lists eleven studies indicating a trend, albeit small in number, toward a more employee centric approach to managing in organisations (Hall, 1988:398).

Concluding the analysis of the information contained in the *Domain Compatibility Table* above, I suggest that making a change to the *values* and the *culture* of the organisation will have the highest probability impact across all fourteen of Fayol's management principles. This in turn, will have the most impact on the employees and their *psychological readiness* to embrace change. *Readiness,* in this context, defines as "followers' willingness to perform a particular task or adopt a new process or embrace a new concept that would impact his work or his position in the organisation (work identity)" (Hersey *et al.,* 1988:174-175). A particular management style is required to effect such a change in the two domains mentioned above. We will explore that area after a summary of what we have covered.

Up to this point we have isolated the adaptive organisation's five content domains and then in matrix format correlated the five content domains to Fayol's fourteen management principles. When we analysed the matrix by matching the content domains with the management principles, we could see how Fayol's management principles support an adaptive organisation. What we now need to do is to determine a *management style* that would have a high probability of success in expressing these management principles within the scope of one or more of the content domains. In the following section I attempt to develop a hypothesis that a particular set of management styles – or practices – present the highest probability of success in effecting a change in one or more of the content domains, thus making it possible to introduce a philosophy of happiness into the organisational culture. This has specific relevance if the organisation is diverse in its employee profile as most South African organisations are.

3.5 Identifying the Management Style best suited to an Adaptive Organisation

My objective in this section is to select the appropriate channel through which to introduce a philosophy of happiness into the culture and value depository of an organisation as it seeks to

become an adaptive organisation. I will locate the project in the cluster of Likert's *causal variables* (Hersey *et al.,* 1988:132) discussed in the second chapter of this study which means we focus on the last two of the five content domains in the *Domain Compatibility Table* above viz. *Values* and *Culture.*

Research undertaken by Andreas Hundschell, Julia Backman, Amy Wei Tan, and Martin Hoegl, variously located at Schools of Management in Germany and Australia will be used as the foundation for this section. The researchers collected data from 111 multinational teams to investigate the influence of *leader inclusiveness* (a management style) and *resilience capacity* of multinational (multicultural) teams during periods of transformation or simply managing challenging work environments. They also assessed the *organisational diversity climate* of each team to determine the effect of these factors on the *performance the team*. I will give a critical analysis of their work below as I develop the hypothesis.

3.6 Research by Hundschell *et al.*: A critical analysis

When referring to *team resilience*, we apply a capacity view to the team. This means that the definition of team resilience is "a team's capacity to cope, recover and adjust positively to difficulties" (Hundschell *et al*., 2024:1). This definition suggests that teams can possess team resilience capacity at any time and not only when facing a challenge. Accordingly, it fits well with the purpose of this study because multicultural teams have, in the normal course of events, at least two routinised challenges to deal with. First, the fact that the composition of the team is culturally diverse presents its own challenges and secondly, the task that the team needs to execute also presents its own inherent challenges.

We discuss *leader inclusiveness* next. The researchers describe this concept as "a vital social *resource* that is required to support *team resilience*" (Hundschell *et al.,* 2024:2). It is important for us to ascribe particular significance to *leader inclusiveness* because I consider it to be pivotal in the content domain of adaptability since it traverses twelve of the fourteen Fayolian management principles, and it is located in the *causal variable* cluster. This makes it critical to our study.

It would be helpful to understand *resources* in the context used by the researchers. It includes "objects, personal characteristics, conditions and energies that are valued in their own right or are valued because they function as conduits to the achievement of other valued resources" (Hundschell *et al.,* 2024:3). Indicative of the nature of resources is the principle that in an organisational context they need to be either judiciously employed, conserved, or replenished. This would suggest that *resilience capacity* is *team property,* a resource that develops from team experiences – input – that subsequently influence team behaviours – output.

A pertinent question arises here. What could either help or hinder resource utilisation or creation? The answer is found in the factors that constitute the organisation's *causal* and *intervening* variables. We will recall that these are *inter alia*, leadership skills and styles, management's decisions, organisational philosophy, and policies. Add to this employee morale, nature of decision making and problem solving, and we have the elements that "constitute an organisational environmental context from which personal resources are used, created or replenished" (Hersey *et al.*, 1988:132).

The last element is the *organisational diversity climate*. This refers to "the shared perception that employees have of the organisation's human capital practices and general manner in which work is divided, performed and rewarded and the extent to which underrepresented employees are socially integrated into the work environment" (Hundschell *et al.*, 2024:2). We should note that organisational climate is different – but related to – organisational culture. Culture encompasses the "why" behind people behaviours, while climate describes "how" employees experience life in the organisation daily. A conceptual model of what is stated above, may look like this:

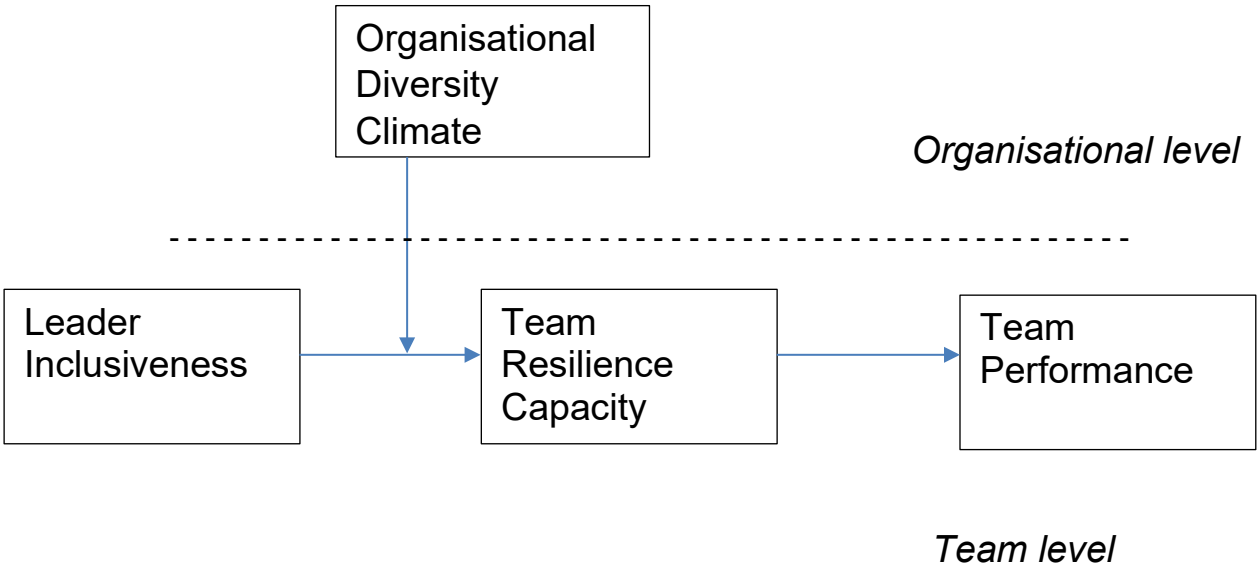

Figure 3-1: Conceptual model

(Hundschell et al., 2024:3)

In this model the *organisational diversity climate* influences the effect that *leader inclusiveness* has upon *team resilience capacity*, which determines *team performance*. Leader inclusiveness includes "those behaviours that value the unique contributions of all team members, embrace a diversity of perspectives and is essential for managing diverse teams" (Hundschell *et al.*, 2024:4). However, it is also an essential antecedent for ensuring the adaptability of the organisation.

I make the following assumptions on how this model operates in practice. Leader inclusiveness, which consist of behaviours that promote the inclusion and appreciation of all team members' contributions, does not operate in a vacuum. Leader inclusiveness can only become operative within an organisational climate that values diversity and in which employees perceive the organisation to promote fair employment practices. We therefore see organisational diversity climate acting on leadership inclusiveness which, if positive, will have the effect of developing team resilience capacity. We defined this earlier as the team's ability to cope, recover and adjust positively to difficulties. In this way the model links together contextually relevant team resources – organisational climate and leader inclusiveness – to the development of team resilience capacity. This in turn "translates into team performance" (Hundschell *et al*., 2024:3).

Despite the apparent logic of the model in Figure 3.1, Hundschell *et al.,* cautions that we still "lack empirical research explicitly examining the impact of leader inclusiveness on team resilience" (Hundschell *et al.,* 2024:4). To my mind this should not deter our attempts to draw a reasonable conclusion of a *causal nexus* between the resource of inclusiveness and the consequence of resilience. I state this because, guided by the importance of resource alignment, it is posited that leader inclusiveness serves as a "viable contextual support resource that enriches team relational resources with the consequential enhancement of resilience capacity" (Hundschell *et al.,* 2024:4).

A last point before concluding this section on the model analysis. Apart from the perspective of *relational* resources attached to a team, there is also the perspective of *informational* resource attached to the team. This perspective explains the situation when team members display a willingness to communicate in ways that enable them to understand and integrate their diversity of knowledge and insight and in doing so, harness their diversity to further build resilience. This quality we observed among the employees of Powell Flutes, the case study

Hypothesis. Leader inclusiveness is positively related to team resilience capacity when operating in an enabling organisational climate. And since leader inclusiveness is located in the cluster causal variables, this cluster serves as the appropriate repository for a philosophy of happiness as a key value when designing an adaptable organisation.

Conclusion

The heading of this chapter indicated that we would identify the management practices (or styles) that are required for an adaptive organisation. There was a *caveat* included in that whatever management practices we identified, they were required to offer the best opportunity to embrace a philosophy of happiness and assist in assimilating it into the culture of the organisation which in turn would support the creation of an adaptative organisation.

At the outset, we needed to ensure an understanding of two concepts. A stable organisation – what it entailed, and an adaptable organisation and what it entailed. A basic list of six factors that are commonly used to demarcate a stable organisation revealed that stability, in an organisational context, could either be considered as an end in itself, or it could be acknowledged as a consequence of sustainability requirement. When stability is sought after as an end in itself, it loses opportunities for flexibility and purpose. However, when it is considered a consequence of sustainability requirement, then stability underpins adaptability. This principle was confirmed when we acknowledged that there should be no forced selection between stability as a concept and adaptability as a concept. Adaptability, we argued would lead to sustainability and sustainability guaranteed the stability of the organisation.

To position adaptability in its organisational context, we identified five key content domains of mission, vision, purpose, values, and culture which serve as repositories for the characteristics constituting the domains. Our focus was the last two domains of values and culture, for two reasons. First, because our primary research objective is to locate a philosophy of happiness in these two domains since they are the most suitable repositories for any philosophy. Second, Fayol's management principles resonated most effectively with these two domains. Confirmation of this latter statement was found in relating our theory back to the causal variables as referenced in Hersey *et al.* This critical organisational variable housed the two content domains of adaptability, viz. values, and culture, which in turn related to all of Fayol's management principles.

What we needed to achieve was a working hypothesis that would guide us into chapters four and five where we would respectively identify the types of philosophy of happiness suitable for our project and then apply the philosophy and the management principles in designing an adaptive organisation. But we still needed a more encompassing view of an adaptive organisation and this we achieved through the creation of a conceptual model of how the organisational diversity climate consisting of the appropriate values within a supportive culture had the best effect on leader and management styles and, how this in turn, built adaptability through the nurturing of a resilient team. Resilience being understood as the "capacity to cope, recover and adjust positively to difficulties" (Hundschell *et al*., 2024:1). We could then formulate our working hypothesis which would guide us in chapter four where we will discuss the three happiness types proposed by Verhoef and how these happiness types relate to a philosophy of happiness extracted from the writing of Ricoeur.

CHAPTER 4 THE THREE HAPPINESS TYPES OF VERHOEF AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS OF RICOEUR

4.1 Introduction

This study seeks to explore the possibility that a philosophy of happiness based on the work of Paul Ricoeur and critically evaluated in the research of Anné Verhoef, may help to envisage an adaptive organisation so that transformation and routine adaptations can be effectively managed. In the previous two chapters we discussed business organisations as social systems and followed this with a critical analysis of the types of management practices that would present the highest probability of successful introduction of a philosophy of happiness into an organisation. In this chapter we now critically examine a selection of the happiness types identified by Verhoef in his doctoral thesis[7] so that their appropriateness for introduction into the culture of a business organisation can be evaluated.

It is worth a pause here to reflect on the three clusters of variables that we discussed in the previous chapters viz. Causal Variables, Intervening Variables and Output Variables. There is a linear relationship between these three clusters "in that the level or condition of the intervening variables is produced largely by the causal variables and in turn has influence upon the end-result variable" (Hersey *et al*., 1988:132). Organisational *culture* as well as organisational *values* resort in the first cluster, Causal Variables, because causal variables are regarded "as stimuli" (Hersey *et al.,*1988:132*)*, this is where we will locate the three happiness types that I discuss extensively below. I begin with a brief examination into the challenging task of defining happiness as a concept.

4.2 Defining happiness

We all have an idea what it is: sometimes it is a particularly good and clear idea, like pleasure or joy, but to present a neat and satisfactory definition of this concept seems to be an ever-elusive enterprise. Something that leaves us baffled as with Augustine's commentary about time.[8] With

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[7] Verhoef, A.H. 2024. *The significance of Ricoeur's notions of happiness, unhappiness, and chance for contemporary philosophy of culture and religion*. Vrije Universiteit. Amsterdam. A revised version of this thesis will be published by Bloomsbury Press in 2025.

[8] Augustine wrote in Book XI of his confessions: "What, then is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled" (1961:264)

these preliminary remarks, Verhoef (2024:14), cautions us that it is not going to be a simple matter defining happiness. He then guides us through territory traversed by both ancient and modern scholars who attempted to define happiness only to experience its inherent illusiveness. Verhoef declares that “the different ways in which the different disciplines (theology and positive psychology) understand happiness highlight the need to clarify what happiness means” (2024:15) and he then asks the question, “how can philosophy contribute to a better understanding of happiness? What would a good and sound philosophical definition of happiness be?” (2024:15) The scope of this study does not allow for the proper and comprehensive analysis of Verhoef’s contribution to craft a definition of happiness from a philosophical understanding. What I will offer is a summary of his discussion which will serve as a *helicopter view* of the terrain that Verhoef covers.

4.3 Summary of the discussion on defining happiness by Anné Verhoef

Verhoef draws attention to what he calls, “the crisis of happiness” (2024:16). This is attributed to the radical changes that the history of the concept of happiness has experienced over the last century and more recently. For example, recent changes are located in the discipline of positive psychology where the definition of happiness has moved in the direction of “well-being or human flourishing” and “includes emotions of joy, pleasure and satisfaction and posited as the norm and ideal in our society” (2024:16). The consequence of this is that society perceives unhappiness, misfortune and being sad as undesirable. A significant and recent contributor to this situation is social media where “performative happiness” (2024:16) has become the norm. This means people on social media platforms are unwittingly pressured to post only their achievements, enjoyable eating moments and exciting travel experiences – to name a few.

From the perspective of this study and its research objective, I acknowledge the current human capital mantra in organisations that happiness of employees is the new “performance indicator” in the workplace (Verhoef, 2024:17). However, this is not the direction in which I am headed. Happiness measurements among employees tend to focus on the self-proclaimed existence or absence of positive emotions at work such as job satisfaction and feeling recognised, while I am viewing happiness through a philosophical lens and exploring the concept at a deeper level, viz. the organisational culture level.

Because of its significance to the goal of this study, I am pausing here to add my own observations based on research undertaken in preparation for this study, as well as my own experience as an organisational development practitioner for over twenty years. The focus of my observation is linked to Verhoef’s allusions to the modern human capital management’s tendency to use the concept of happiness as a performance indicator. I concur with Verhoef’s identification of this

tendency as problematic, and while acknowledging that this human capital management tendency has its roots in psychology, we cannot escape the suggestion that workplace environmental management with its aim to increase productivity has a strong manipulative element inherent in it. This is my professional view as an organisational development practitioner. Having said this, I am conscious of a sense of naivety that may be inferred in my observation. Business organisations exist for a commercial purpose. They are established for and accordingly managed to generate profit. Any other purpose, for example the promotion of clean air or a reduction in the pollution of our oceans, is ancillary. No matter whether these ancillary endeavours are enshrined in a company policy document or simply a lived behaviour. If the business entity cannot generate a profit, it becomes unsustainable and when it becomes unsustainable it ceases to exist. No amount of altruistic ancillary activity (corporate social responsibility) can rescue it from its inevitable demise. Accordingly, I am largely identifying with Verhoef that there is an undisputed need to develop an understanding of the happiness concept that can transcend the *voices and influences* of powerful institutions or societal forces that may seek to assign a reductionist quality to happiness. One of the ways that it may be possible to transcend this tendency is to locate happiness as a philosophy – not a psychology or a theology – into the culture of the organisation. And then again not as an activity or even a strategy, but as part of the culture and the value system of the organisation. The question now is what *type* of happiness are we referring to? At this point we can un-pause the overview of Verhoef's summary and return to follow it to its conclusion.

The challenge of "a philosophical study of happiness is to be able to say we can and must dream about such an inclusive and life-affirming happiness despite these forces that keep denying and destroying it" (Verhoef, 2024:20). This would, in my view, make our appreciation of happiness broader, deeper and more enduring. This quotation from Verhoef can serve as a springboard to reach a definition of happiness while it serves simultaneously as a prophetic insight of the road ahead. I will first focus on the etymology of happiness next to give perspective to the adoption of a definition of happiness.

4.4 The Etymology of the word happiness

The noun happiness is derived from the root word *hap* which in turn originated from the old Norse word *happ*: and its meaning is defined in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary as "luck," "chance" or "fortune."(Stevenson *et al.*, 2011:649) The suffix – *ness* was added to form the noun "happiness," which means a state or condition of having good fortune. Although the meaning of happiness has evolved over time when considered from a psychological perspective, for example, being understood less as the experience of good fortune and rather more as an internal state of

positive emotion and well-being (Seligman,2002:18). This *positive emotion* is expressed in the words such as joy or delight or contentment. Verhoef shares an array of eighteen synonyms for happiness all of which exclude the root meaning of happiness, being *happ*. “Without this dimension of happiness viz. luck or chance, something crucial is lost, something of the unpredictability, uncontrollability, impossibility and possibility of happiness” (2024:22). For our study, we will follow Verhoef’s argument which contends that happiness should not only be understood as an emotion, because if it does then it resorts in the realm of psychology and to some extent analytic philosophy only. Instead, something of the quality of “the etymology of the word should be kept intact” (2024:22) which would then allow for a more comprehensive appreciation of the concept of happiness and its implications.

Moving on from this brief etymological exploration of happiness we examine the terms used by Greek philosophers which will add to understanding of the meaning of the term. The word *eudaimonia* in Greek, captures this understanding of the concept happiness. The Greek *eu* means good or well and *diamon* means god, spirit, or demon, so that we can translate “*eudaimonia* as, having a good guardian spirit or good divine power. This contrasts with the Greek word *eutychia* which was used to refer to good fortune or luck” (2024:23). Referring to a previous statement made to keep the etymology of the word happiness intact, we examine the element of *chance* and the role it plays in our analysis of the term. Verhoef states that chance refers to the randomness that befalls a person (2024:23) however it is not possible to determine whether such a random event will be either good for us or bad for us until the moment it occurs. This randomness therefore implies the absence of any form of prediction or foresight, natural or divine. Having said that chance is an unpredicted concept, it is acknowledged that some philosophers reject this concept on the premise that everything that happens to us has a cause and could have been predicted (Verhoef referring to the ancient philosopher Philo and later the Scottish philosopher David Hume (who lived in the 1700s). For our purpose we can accept the basic notion of chance as referring to “random events or things that befall us – those events over which we have no control” (Verhoef 2024:24). At this point we must mention the concept of fate – sometimes used interchangeably with the concept destiny – which Verhoef reminds us is different from fate. “Destiny consists of those events that will necessarily happen to a particular person or thing in the future” (2024:24) whereas fate consists of those events which are believed to be “predetermined by nature or by a supernatural power (God) and are therefore inevitable” (2024:24).

It is important when analysing a concept such as *happiness*, that we also turn our attention to its antonym viz. *unhappiness.* In fact, some philosophers argue that it is essential in trying to understand the meaning of happiness that we spend an equal amount of time and industry on

understanding unhappiness. Schopenhauer (1788 to 1860), a German philosopher, is one example of a scholar who presented his philosophy about the concepts of will, desire, suffering, and the fleeting nature of happiness and that understanding and experiencing unhappiness is essential to any understanding of happiness.

To return to the work of Verhoef, this slight diversion emphasizes his point that it is no mean feat to attempt to analyse and define the concept of happiness that is universally accepted. It is also one of the main reasons that prompted Verhoef to design a typology of happiness that could serve as a "map of the different fields, schools of thought, trends and disciplines in the happiness research fields" (2024:25). This is a more practical approach and will also serve the purpose of my study. In contemplating the design of a typology of happiness, Verhoef seems to have laid down *ground rules* (Verhoef, 2024:25).

> First, not to oversimplify or to generalize too much,
>
> Second, acceptance of the notion that happiness is really an overarching term for a very large domain,
>
> Third, the realization that within this domain there existed certain specific views and perceptions of happiness which occasionally overlapped one or the other and at other times excluded the other, and
>
> Fourth, acknowledgement that happiness sometimes refers to the most inclusive notion of the concept or, at other times may refer only to specific parts of the concept of happiness.

I acknowledge that Verhoef does not refer to these factors as ground-rules, but I have taken the liberty to call them as such because I consider them important advice to follow when attempting to analyse his typology. He also provides an apt analogy that encapsulates these *four rules*. Just as *music* is an umbrella term for a range of different genres of music (Classical, Country, Rock etc.) happiness can beneficially be considered the umbrella term for the "diverse types of categories of understanding of happiness" (2024:25).

4.5 The Happiness Typology

Before listing the eight categories of happiness it would be appropriate to sketch the background that preceded the creation of the typology. Verhoef firstly gathered the different fields of understanding of happiness. These included sources from the happiness sciences, psychology, theology, philosophy, and religion. This was followed by a broad literature review traversing psychology, philosophy – from ancient to the more modern – and the analytic philosophical tradition. My study does not call for a detailed, critical analysis of all eight categories, but only the

three types I have selected to build a hypothesis on. I nevertheless list all eight happiness types for completeness.

4.6 The Eight categories of happiness and the selection of three

A cautionary note at the outset. The categories of happiness cannot always be clearly separated and sometimes there may be an obvious overlap in meaning. The eight categories are listed below, and the three categories selected for their potential to contribute directly and specifically to my study are in bold.

1. Happiness as a mental state
2. Happiness as well-being
3. ***Happiness as an ethical way of life***
4. Happiness as luck
5. Happiness as the absence of pain
6. ***Happiness as meaning and fulfilment***
7. ***Happiness as a by-product***
8. Happiness as an impossibility (Verhoef 2024:27-46)

A brief explanation of the three selected categories that in my view beneficially contribute to the design of an adaptive organisation follows.

4.7 Happiness as an ethical way of life

This type of happiness is found in Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*. The Greek term *eudaimonia* has various translations but they all converge on an individual living a good or ethical life. The implication is that it is not a selfish or self-seeking life of personal happiness, but one that realizes happiness with and for everyone (Verhoef, 2024:33). Aristotle had to consider the conundrum whether happiness came only to the virtuous, or could only the happy be virtuous? His response seemed to suggest that a virtuous life and happiness are reciprocal. This in my view, laid the foundation for understanding that one form of happiness is the outcome of ethical living (Verhoef, 2024:34). There is a further crucial point that supports the selection of this happiness type and that is its emphasis on the link between happiness and justice. Humans need to have an existential appreciation of justice in the societies and institutions in which they live and labour. For Plato, *happiness is conditional upon justice, that is, upon the proper structuring of the city itself* (Verhoef, 2024:34). I need to capture my understanding of Plato’s statement and show how it

applies to the general purpose of this paper. I suggest that Plato's view that happiness is conditional upon justice, can be found in the expression of modern organisational justice. This latter form of justice calls for fairness in making decisions, moderated interpersonal workplace treatment of all and equity in resource distribution. These factors I would place under three composite headings viz. procedural justice, interactional justice and distributive justice. Plato's insight suggests that an organisation's success (however that may be defined) also the well-being of its employees, is dependent on the requisite structuring of roles, the location of decision making at the appropriate level of work and just allocation of accountabilities. Therefore, as a just city creates a flourishing society, so justice in organisational leadership, fairness in rewards and ethical decision making contribute to a thriving organisation. We can move on to the second happiness type.

4.8 Happiness as meaning and fulfilment

There is a definitive link between happiness and meaning in life (Verhoef 2024:41). This view finds support from the feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed in her book, *The Promise of Happiness,* in which she suggests that the totality of life, which would include its meaning, its potential, values and ethics to live by, are hard to reflect upon without thinking about happiness (Ahmed 2010:204) Verhoef further argues that to find meaning and fulfilment in life can be a deeply satisfying experience to the extent that it *relativizes* a person's desire for happiness, especially when happiness is perceived primarily as a mental state of joy. (Recall my mentioning earlier the overlapping of the meanings of the different types). It promotes the idea that happiness as a concept should be an all-encompassing term, one which contains the "meaning *of life* as a category of its comprehensive understanding" (Verhoef, 2024:41).

4.9 Happiness as a by-product

I stated above under the heading, *happiness as an ethical way of life,* that happiness is an outcome of ethical living. Logically this suggests that happiness can also be considered a by-product of a particular behaviour or activity. Verhoef posits a similar view by referring to the English philosopher John Stuart Mill who said that ....*by seeking the happiness of others, helping to improve mankind, or pursuing artistic or other goals that are worthwhile in themselves, happiness will attend these activities* (Verhoef, 2024:43) Here happiness could be considered both a by-product and as a goal. (On a cautionary note, my study will not necessarily pursue a utilitarian philosophy, of which Mill was a proponent. It is merely his view of how happiness can be acquired that is acknowledged). However, Mill does not stand alone in history as a proponent of the view that happiness is a by-product. He stands with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Boethius, Spinoza, and Kant who in their unique way, posit the view that when we act or behave in a virtuous

manner by relying on reason and not following one's own desires, that happiness attaches itself to the actor.

4.10 Ricoeur and the happiness types

Having briefly discussed the three happiness types that will be used in this study, the question to be asked at this point is, where does the philosophy of the French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur fit into these happiness types? Ricoeur wanted to understand human beings in the fulness and completeness of their existence - of which happiness is a significant and crucial part. He also needed to understand the vital forces which played upon their lives. Those internal and external events and changing circumstances that befall all of humans. And because he worked on such a diversity of philosophical themes, disciplines and styles, his *philosophy of happiness* became meshed with his work on other philosophical themes. This also provided multiple entry points to the body of work of Ricoeur, “making the exposition of a *particular* philosophy of happiness of Ricoeur a challenging one” (Verhoef, 2024:52-53).

Referring to the vastness of the terrain of happiness mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is to be expected of the eight happiness types, that “not one of them can be understood as the best understanding because there is something unsatisfactory and challenging about each understanding of happiness” (Verhoef 2024:27). We are also reminded that no attempt was made to prioritize the types, hence the order in which they are listed above is irrelevant for the purposes of understanding the types. The “primary aim is to motivate the need for a philosophical, overarching conception of happiness” (Verhoef 2024:27). What follows under the appropriate headings are problems identified that may need to be dealt with when considering the happiness type.

4.11 Happiness as an ethical way of life: Problem

The association of living an ethical life and experiencing happiness is an obvious problem. Verhoef asks the question, “Is there happiness in the ethical act?” (2024:35). His question prompts further examination, whether happiness must then be considered as a by-product of an ethical act or even an ethical way of life? This naturally raises a teleological assumption about our purpose as humans. “Are we, as humans at least, intended to fulfil a purpose or task (ergon) in order to reach an ultimate goal (telos)” (2024:35) and is that good? Verhoef maintains that these questions do not necessarily lead to clarity because if we grasp at the notion of happiness as an ethical way of living, then we reduce happiness to morality and we lose the other qualities of happiness like positive emotions and a sense of well-being. The solution is then not to *equate* happiness with living ethically, but instead to understand happiness to *include* ethical living. This

allows for an understanding of happiness to be more encompassing in dimension and assist us to navigate the happiness terrain more effectively by not succumbing to the temptation to seek a kind of morality at the expense of a balanced life.

4.12 Happiness as meaning and fulfilment: Problem

Although there is a definite link between happiness and meaning in life, this relationship has often been questioned in a "post-truth, postmodern, nihilistic, neo-capitalist world" (Verhoef 2024:42). The arguments emanating from these schools of thought vary and include for example, the promise or belief that there is no meaning to life and that should a person acknowledge this, it will bring happiness.

For those striving to find meaning in their lives, it can become such a single-minded pursuit that the terms selfish and narcissistic could be attributed to such an effort. In this way we may rob ourselves of the "freedom to care for others" (Verhoef 2024:43). Ironically, such behaviour may eventually rob us of life's opportunities to care for others – and in so doing we miss an opportunity to experience happiness. The final type of happiness we critique is happiness as a by-product.

4.13 Happiness as a by-product: Problem

When we explained happiness as an ethical way of living above, it was acknowledged that to a greater or less extent, that happiness was a by-product of an ethical way of living. Sky Cleary observed:

> *Happiness is a side effect of being actively engaged in our lives, throwing off our stifling and restrictive security blankets, and reaching outside our cozy cocoons to explore our existence and rebel against injustices* (Cleary, 2022:223).

The challenge with this happiness type is that we are not defining happiness *per se*, instead we are stating how we can obtain it. Immediately we are faced with a duality of issues here. First, when there is an absence of definition, happiness is perceived as a positive emotion and a state of well-being or even "as contemplation" (Verhoef, 2024:45). It therefore brings in its wake all the problems associated with the first two types of happiness, and it is also "opposed to unhappiness and not inclusive of it" (2024:45). Contemplation may include some consideration for the element of unhappiness – even if it initially sounds like something that will simply come upon us as a by-product of our actions. Take for example the views of two historical philosophers. Aristotle the doyen of ancient Greek philosophy and Immanuel Kant, an influential figure in modern Western philosophy. Aristotle's view was that we should aim for happiness and that we can achieve it

through a virtuous life. Kant on the other hand suggests that we not *focus* on happiness but live the ethical life and accept “the possibility that happiness may befall us” (Verhoef, 2024:45).

The experience and understanding of happiness as a by-product displays the complex nature of happiness and the need to be “open to the illusive nature of it” (Verhoef 2024:45). What has become clear up to this point is that it would most certainly be a fruitful exercise to continue to think about happiness philosophically. This is what I will attempt to do within the limitations of this paper via Verhoef, as he navigates us through Paul Ricoeur’s understanding of happiness to see if it is at all possible to find solutions to some of the problems we have just discussed. Because happiness is a concept and the eight-fold typology seeks to explain the wholistic nature of the concept, we can expect the final section of this chapter to touch upon any number of the eight typologies.

In preparing to build on our understanding of Ricoeur’s philosophy of happiness, it is important to restate the general research question that this study is structured on viz. It seeks to explore the possibility that a philosophy of happiness based on the work of Paul Ricoeur and critically evaluated in the research of Anné Verhoef, may help to envisage an adaptive organisation so that transformation and routine adaptations can be effectively managed Accordingly, we will be mindful on two counts.

First, we must examine Ricoeur’s philosophy of happiness by viewing it through the lens of the general research question above. The research question must assist in making a course correction should we drift too far off course. Second, it is feasible that we may not cover the entire discourse presented by Verhoef as he explicates Ricoeur’s philosophy of happiness. Accordingly, it would be helpful to lay down guiding principles developed by Verhoef. First, “not many of Ricoeur’s writings focused specifically on happiness” (Verhoef 2024:52) this fact notwithstanding, “happiness and our longing for it are a fundamental part of Ricoeur’s philosophy” (2024:52). Second, Ricoeur is described as someone “who tries to understand human beings within the social and vital forces that play in on them” (2024:53). In other words, Ricoeur wants to understand human beings in the fulness or completeness of their existence – something of which happiness is then a crucial part. Verhoef identifies another scholar, Olivier Abel, who states that “the entrances into Ricoeur’s body of work are manifold because he has worked on a great diversity of philosophical themes, disciplines and styles” (2024:53). Our understanding is therefore that Ricoeur was a prolific scholar who contributed to the body of knowledge about happiness, not as a *philosopher of happiness*, but rather as a human being determined to understand his fellow humans within the broadest of social contexts and in circumstances traversing evil, suffering, guilt, human fallibility and fragility. In each of these circumstances the

bass note of happiness can be heard. Sometimes softly, at other times sufficiently audible to resonate with those who choose to listen.

In the next section of this chapter, I have selected three aspects from Verhoef's discussion on Ricoeur's philosophy of happiness to lay the foundation for a philosophy of happiness that can serve as a catalyst for this thesis project. It is the need for real-world happiness based on Ricoeur's understanding of *negation.* Followed by a discussion of Ricoeur's *philosophical anthropology and happiness* which may assist us in our understanding of what it means to embrace the fullness of being human. The final aspect is *respect and happiness* which should contribute to our understanding how to live practically and ethically in the context of organisational life.

4.14 Negation. The need for real world happiness

In this section Verhoef makes use of Dr Alison Scott-Baumann's work on Ricoeur to gain a better understanding of Ricoeur's complex thinking on the subject. Scott-Baumann, in her book – *Ricoeur and the Negation of Happiness* which Verhoef refers to, advocates for what she calls, "real-world happiness" (Verhoef, 2024:56). Scott-Baumann applies this Ricoeurian notion in a sociocultural manner when she cautions that society should be more circumspect about how it categorizes groups of people in the negative, for example to manage society's own happiness agenda, certain groups of people may be *wished away* to overcome society's own unhappiness. We therefore "wish away the negatives we have created, instead of valuing them for the sake of society's own happiness" (Verhoef, 2024:56). Examples of these *negatives* could be based on race, sexual orientation, religion, education or simply by not being members of a preferred economic or social class.

Scott-Baumann suggests that in our obsessive desire for happiness (as an emotional feeling of well-being) if we want to dissociate ourselves from that part of society which we determine or believe induces unhappiness in us, we become victims of negating negation. In other words, refusing to embrace that which induces our unhappiness. The logic is simple. "We believe that if reject/negate certain phenomena, we will be happier than if we accepted (the phenomena) as a part of our lives" (Scott-Baumann 2013:136). Verhoef provides insight to the emergence of a two-fold problem which is associated with this *negating of negation.* First, he avers that humans "love to hate the negatives we create for ourselves" (Verhoef 2024:57). The caution that manifests here is that as members of a diverse society we need to "be careful what or who we create as a negative" (2024:57). The immediate risk if we fail to heed the caution is electing to live a life isolated from our fellow countrymen. The second part of the problem is that it would "be beneficial to challenge the negation of negation, as a part of our perception of happiness since we run the

risk that if we do not challenge it, we lose part of ourselves" (Verhoef 2024:57). I tend to agree with this statement since it embodies the EQ factor of self-acceptance and respect for the humanness in others. Scott-Baumann points to Ricoeur's understanding of negation and emphasizes that Ricoeur believed that negation must be considered in the real world, where we live out our daily lives, since happiness demands it, and it is in this context "Ricoeur's philosophy creates the possibility and motivates action, both willed and suffered" (Verhoef 2024:57). Meaning I can be one with myself (happy or unhappy) and be one with others – none excluded, and one with a suffering world. In this manner, both happiness and its negative, unhappiness, can be embraced as an empowering and positive force. We discover who we are while simultaneously being enabled to acknowledge the real-world famine, excesses, triumphs, and despair which does not simply reside *out there,* but also in each of us (Scott-Baumann 2013:147). I conclude this first of three parts with an apt quotation from Verhoef, "an affirmation of life is needed to develop an encompassing understanding of happiness, however – one that recognises unhappiness as part of the fulness of being human" (Verhoef 2024:58). "It is the inclusion of unhappiness in relation to happiness and Ricoeur's strong affirmation of the fulness of life, which is crucial (*ibid* p65).

4.15 Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology and happiness

Pellauer and Dauenhauer described Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology as the major theme that unites his writings in the following way:

> Ricoeur came to formulate this as the idea of the "capable human being". With it he seeks to give an account of the fundamental capabilities and vulnerabilities that human beings display in the activities that make up their lives, and to show how these capabilities enable responsible human action and life together. Though the accent is always on the possibility of understanding human beings as agents responsible for their actions, Ricoeur consistently rejects any claim that the self is immediately transparent to itself or fully Master of Itself. Self-knowledge only comes through our understanding of our relation to the world and of our life with and among others in time in the world (Pellauer *et al*., 2024).

To Ricoeur, scientific positivism was not the answer to an understanding of happiness because it would be too "reductionist and simplistic" (Verhoef, 2024:66). Scientific positivism as used here by Ricoeur implied a kind of rigid epistemological stance that tended to reduce knowledge to empirically verifiable facts, resulting in the neglect of the interpretative dimension of human understanding. His non-reductionist approach was important if happiness was to be understood in its full sense. For Ricoeur human existence was an affirmation, yet it was also a paradox, in

that as humans we were *capable* but at the same time *fallible* “Why and how do we affirm life, our actions and our desires?” (Verhoef 2024:66). I posit that this is all about saying *yes* to the fullness of being human. It also means that we embrace the paradox mentioned earlier by acknowledging that even though we can be creative and have the capacity for reason and act morally, we are fallible and therefore at risk of exercising bad judgement through poor reasoning and coming up short morally. “This totality of life as a mystery is for Ricoeur one of *Pathétique of Misery”* (Verhoef 2024:66). The important point for us is that we must live with this complexity or dialectic, because it is neither a tragedy or a sad part of life which we must escape from – it is part of life, “in fact it is fundamental since it serves as an existential tension that remains throughout our lives, and it is part of being human” (Verhoef 2024:66). The way we can manage this type of complexity is to think dialectally about our existence as humans. This is a Ricoeurian act – to hold two opposing themes in a dialectical tension. Not feeling constrained to choose one or the other but rather thinking and acting in a manner which keeps the opposing themes in balance. We only need to reflect how routinized our inner “negotiating, mediating, thinking, experiencing is” (Verhoef 2024:67) to realize that life is to live successfully within this internal dissonance. Verhoef reminds us, referencing Ricoeur’s *Fallible Man,* that to be in this *Pathétique of Misery* does not mean to be miserable. It is merely the “description of the ontic characteristic of human beings” (Verhoef 2024:67). Lastly, in concluding this part on the philosophical anthropology and happiness of Ricoeur, I need to mention a further paradox and that is one of *fallibility and happiness.* Ricoeur regards happiness, which he sees as the realization of a human’s endeavours aligned to ethical principles, as something that we all aspire to, but with the knowledge that our attempts may be thwarted by our human fallibility. Happiness, it would appear for Ricoeur is the “infinite totality and aim of all humanity” (Verhoef 2024:67) and while we all live or act with the limitations of our character, we must live in a way that takes the aspirations of those around us into account – with the totality of their own characters because, in my view this serves as an expression of our humanity. In doing so we will be mediating a sort of middle ground between our needs and the needs of others which is “the challenge to live in relation with others and their notion and understanding of happiness, as well as our own” (Verhoef, 2024:68).

4.16 Ricoeur’s Respect and happiness

Ricoeur stated that the “first aspect of being human is about how we understand the world and the second aspect is about how we live practically – and ethically – in the world” (Verhoef, 2024:72). We recognise the first aspect from its transcendental nature, in other words the imagination. It is the imagination that mediates the finite view of the object with the infinite understanding of that object in the *objectivity.* This needs an explanation to grasp the importance of the statement. Ricoeur is addressing himself to the fundamental human challenge of how

people come to know and understand the world. Ricoeur seems to draw on Kantian philosophy when he suggests that the transcendental imagination is a cognitive faculty that processes or synthesize sensory data and concepts to help us form rational and reasonable experiences of our world (Kant, 1781). I understand the term transcendental to imply that the mind combines the empirical – what is sensed, with the conceptual – what is thought. However, for Ricoeur it is not confined to processing sensory data, but also about linking the infinite and the finite dimensions of human understanding. Thus, as an individual I can move from the concrete and immediate – the finite, to reflect on the more abstract concepts – the infinite. Verhoef would appear to confirm this understanding when he states, “On the one hand there is thus the finite perspective I have, with the desires of my body, my habits – my character. On the other hand, there is happiness as the infinite pole of humankind’s totality of meaning and destiny” (2024:72). “These two poles need to practically mediate for us to act and to live, and for Ricoeur this takes place through *respect* (Verhoef ibid). “Respect, in this sense, is the recognition and appreciation of the human quality in each individual person that takes place and is shown by somebody” (2024:72). For Ricoeur, respect is what makes humans recognised as humans, and therefore it becomes the task of every individual to see this ‘humanness’ in self and in others. Ricoeur calls this act the “project of the person” (2024:73). I not only identify with my personhood in this way, but I become enmeshed with my own ‘humanness’ when my finite character, with all its desires, reconciles with the infinite nature of happiness which I experience in my interaction with others. This is that moment in life when a “fragile synthesis between character and happiness takes place – through respect” (Verhoef, 2024:73).

Importantly, for this study specifically, Ricoeur sponsors the notion that this form of “reconciliation through” respect should also be a part of our institutional opportunity and “argues for example that it is in the *interesse* – the being with, that the wish for a good life finds fulfilment. It is as citizens that we become human and the wish to live within just institutions signifies nothing else” (Verhoef, 2024:73). For Ricoeur then, respect is a very practical notion. In the concluding paragraphs below, we will attempt to tie together the three concepts of happiness of Ricoeur with the selected happiness types developed by Verhoef.

4.17 Conclusion

This chapter opened with the statement of intent which was, to explore the possibility that a philosophy of happiness based on the work of Paul Ricoeur and critically evaluated in the research of Anné Verhoef, may help to envisage an adaptive organisation so that transformation and routine adaptations can be effectively managed. We confirmed that a philosophy of happiness would resort in the cluster of Hersey’s organisational variables (Hersey *et al.*, 1988:320) viz *causal*

variables since this cluster served as the repository of philosophy, values and culture that underpinned the actions (behaviours and decisions) of an organisation.

This led us to the task of defining *happiness* which Verhoef had cautioned was not going to be a simple one (Verhoef, 2024:14) We traversed the areas of the superficiality of social media, the manipulation that lay at the root of capitalistic efforts to advance consumerism and that failure to own things, eat things, visit places and live in places could result in unhappiness. Admittedly this was promoted more by implication than by overt expression. At this point our focus turned to the etymology of the word *happiness* which allowed for a more dispassionate look at the concept. Inherent in the etymology of the word happiness, was the allusion to the idea of *chance.* Verhoef has a definite view on this aspect of an inherent definition of happiness containing an element of chance. Hand-in hand with an element of *chance*, Verhoef edged closer to a more comprehensive and, in my view, philosophical understanding of happiness by advocating for an appreciation of the concept of unhappiness to understand happiness. Significantly it was not that happiness must perforce of definition *exclude* unhappiness, but rather that there should exist an understanding of this broad, overarching term, Verhoef's cautions echoed again the difficulty in attempting to pursue a universally accepted definition of happiness and that it was this reality in part which prompted his development of the eight typologies of happiness. From the eight I selected three that would serve as the pillars to build a hypothesis. The three happiness types were.

- Happiness as an ethical way of life
- Happiness as meaning and fulfilment
- Happiness as a by-product

This first happiness type could be related to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* with various translations of the term converging finally on an individual living a good or ethical life. The second type provided a definitive link between happiness and meaning, and we found support from the feminist philosopher, Sara Ahmed, who suggested that when we speak of the totality of life, we speak of its meaning, its potential and values and ethics to live by. That, she says, would include happiness (Ahmed, 2010:204). Finally, happiness as a by-product. John Stuart Mill, an English philosopher, gave a good summary of this type of happiness when he said that by seeking the happiness of others, helping to improve mankind, pursuing artistic or other goals that are worthwhile in themselves, will ensure that happiness will attend those activities (Verhoef 2024:43).

Ricoeur's thinking on happiness led us to the understanding that happiness is not the possibility of the satisfaction of everyone. Happiness is not the abstract idea of a good society in which

everyone is satisfied. Happiness is the subject of a difficult task: coping with the consequences of an event and discovering, beneath the dull and dreary existence of our world, the luminous possibilities offered by the affirmative real. This explanation summed up the view of Ricoeur (Verhoef, 2024:142).

A critique of each of the happiness types concluded the section and also prepared the way for an examination of Ricoeur's understanding of happiness – but with the knowledge that Ricoeur was not to be regarded as a *philosopher of happiness* since not many of Ricoeur's writing focussed specifically on happiness (Verhoef, 2024:52). However Verhoef progressively reveals how Ricoeur, as a philosopher reveals how we, as humans, long for it and that it was this aspect of revelation of the human longing for happiness that become a fundamental part of Ricoeur's philosophy. I stated earlier in this chapter that we must confine ourselves to examining Ricoeur's work on happiness through the lens of the research question. Accordingly, I selected only three aspects traversed by Verhoef with respect to Ricoeur's philosophy of happiness which were.

The need for a real world understanding of happiness based on Ricoeur's understanding of negation,

Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology and happiness, and lastly,

Respect and happiness.

Each one of these three aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy undergird the three happiness types developed by Verhoef and in chapter five we will attempt to synthesize them into the *causal variable* of an organisation and entrench them as part of the values and culture of the organisation. For now, the essence of the three aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy could be summarized by stating that Ricoeur believed that our humanness was only found in the humanness of others and that it was not at all appropriate for our own well-being to selectively exclude groups of *others* to establish our own happiness. In addition, it was the institutions that humans live and work in that were required to be just institutions, promoting a sense of inclusiveness and collaboration of effort through respect. It was respect that allowed us to find self-recognition and self-appreciation through finding these qualities in others. It was this act which inferred humanness to humans. In chapter five we conclude this study by integrating the happiness project with the schema of an adaptive organisation.

CHAPTER 5 A PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS. ITS ROLE AS A CAUSAL VARIABLE IN THE DESIGN OF AN ADAPTIVE ORGANISATION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 concluded with the statement that the three aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy of happiness, viz. negation, philosophical anthropology and happiness and respect, and must be integrated into the causal variable of an organisation so that the philosophy of happiness can be assimilated into the culture of the organisation. The way I have chosen to do this, is through a process I will call *philosophical synthesis*, bringing the three aspects of Ricoeur's philosophy of happiness, and combining them with Verhoef's three happiness types. The final product should be suitable for assimilation into the causal variables cluster of an organisation. The causal variable cluster we will recall "represents the stimuli that act upon the organism (intervening variables) which in turn creates certain responses (output variables) of the organisation" (Hersey *et al.,* 1982:131). The causal variables embody the "culture, values and climate of the organisation" (Schein 2017:17). Once we complete the synthesis, I will build an understanding of organisational culture. The final section of this chapter will be the development of a theoretical blueprint for the design of an adaptive organisation utilizing a philosophy of happiness as the core element of the design process.

5.2 A Philosophical Synthesis of Ricoeur's Happiness Initiators with Verhoef's three Happiness Types

To visually explore the logic of what we are about to embark on, a model has been created showing how the input from Ricoeur and the input provided by Verhoef have a relationality that can facilitate the synthesis. The model appears below.

Table 5-1: A Philosophical Synthesis

Verhoef ↓ / Ricoeur →	Negation of Happiness	Respect and Happiness	Philosophical Anthropology of Happiness
Happiness as an ethical way of life	• Capacity for self-reflection • Establishes ethical living in humility • Recognises human fallibility • Recognises own moral shortcomings	• Character as the finite pole • Character is manifestation of personhood • Respect recognises intrinsic worth of self/others • Respect is fundamental to a life aligned to ethical principles	• Human existence marked by a fundamental paradox – we are simultaneously capable and fallible • Recognises fragility of human will and decision making
Happiness as meaning and fulfilment	• Capacity for self-reflection • Accepts life's complexities • Recognises own limitations • Recognises life's potential	• Happiness as the infinite pole • Transcends immediate circumstances • Respect recognises imperfections that shape character • Respect is tied to moral autonomy	• Understanding of happiness tied to narratives we construct of our lives • Happiness is an aspiration – needs re-negotiating due to our human limitation
Happiness as a by-product	• Encourages a resilient form of happiness • Builds a more enduring form of happiness	• Respect synthesizes character – finite pole, and happiness – infinite pole • Respect helps to make decisions in own as well as others best interest	• Happiness is not a static state – but a dynamic process of navigating life's complexities

4.6.5 Analysis of the Philosophical Synthesis Matrix

Along the x-axis, I have placed Ricoeur's three aspects of happiness selected for this study. Verhoef's three happiness types appear vertically on the y-axis. This configuration provides us with nine cells of related content, three cells per row and three per column. Due to the vastness of the happiness project, the content cannot be considered a complete rendition of the attributes found at the intersecting cell of each key factor from Ricoeur and Verhoef, but it is satisfactorily sufficient for our purpose. What the matrix content is intended to represent is a practical expression of the characteristics flowing from Ricoeur's thinking relative to an aspect of happiness

and Verhoef's happiness type. When viewed holistically, the matrix could represent a composite explanation of a Ricoeurian viewpoint on three aspects of happiness, related to Verhoef's three happiness types.

I discuss an example of how the matrix may be applied. If we select Verhoef's *Happiness as meaning and fulfilment* (column 1, row 2) and it is our desire to understand this particular happiness type through the lens of Ricoeur's *Negation of Happiness*, we see that happiness as meaning and fulfilment will require that a person develop the capacity for self-reflection – which means a person takes the time to increase his or her understanding of who they are in terms of their values and why they tend to think or act or feel the way they do. In psychology this is referred to as *metacognition.* This is a critical faculty to develop because the 21st century work force is diverse in race, gender and sexual orientation and laws exist to control prejudicial treatment of persons based on this diversity. Self-reflection places a leader/decision maker in the position to transcend basic legal criteria dictating the treatment of workers, by providing an opportunity to see people through the same lens that the leader sees him or herself.

To use a second example from reading the matrix, we could select *Happiness as a by-product* on the y-axis, and in the column headed *Negation of Happiness* on the x-axis, we find two elements. One is a *resilient form of happiness;* the other is *a more enduring form of happiness.* This suggests that when people take the opportunity to reflect on the philosophical aspect of negation of happiness, they will grow in the realization that our (at times) obsessive drive for happiness propels us to want to dissociate from that part of society which we believe induces un-happiness in us. Should a person, however, choose to face the world and their own existence with negation – as opposed to trying to negate the negation – that person could be open to experiencing happiness together with its negation (unhappiness) and thus experience a more resilient form of happiness which is also more enduring.[9]

A third example. We select *Happiness as an Ethical way of Life* and cross-select with Ricoeur's *Philosophical Anthropology of Happiness.* In the selected cell we read that our human existence is marked by a fundamental paradox – we are at once capable and at the same time we are fallible. Pellauer *et al.,* (2024) states that it is this theme which unites the thinking of Ricoeur as he attempts to "give an account of the fundamental capabilities and vulnerabilities that human beings display in the activities that make up their lives, and show how these capabilities enable

[9] Scott-Boumann. 2013:147; Verhoef 2024:57

responsible human action and life together".[10] *Responsible human action* is the basis of living ethically and it is in managing the paradox of capability and fallibility that we come to embrace what it means to be fully human (Verhoef, 2024:66). When we move to the next point in the cell, we read that it is the fragility of the human will and our decision making that we should acknowledge as humans. This immediately inserts a sense of humility into the analysis, and we find support for this point in the first cell under *Negation* where we read that ethnical living is established in humility. The conclusion that can be drawn from this third example is that happiness could realistically be the by-product of an ethical way of life if we understand that our humanness depends on the appropriate sense of humility being shown as we navigate our own fragility and recognise the same endeavour in others, especially when we are called upon to make decisions.

To conclude this section in which I attempted to compare and integrate the thinking of Ricoeur relative to Verhoef's three happiness types, we can summarize as follows. Within the philosophical framework of Ricoeur, *negation* can be viewed as a support for ethical living through the promotion of self-awareness and humility, which is the bedrock of ethical living. Ethical living in turn acts as a causal stimulus for a more resilient and enduring form of happiness. This is easily coupled with the element of *respect* which helps humans to orient themselves ethically and in doing so, facilitates the making of decisions that are not only in the decision maker's own best interests, but considers the well-being of others. For Ricoeur respect is a practical as well as an ethical concept. This theme continues when we examine Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology which we understood through the analysis of the matrix to be an emphasis of the interaction between the capability of the human and the fallibility inherent in his or her being. Humility immediately reveals itself and we discover that happiness is indeed not a static state, but a dynamic process of navigating life's complexities. In the next section of this chapter, I seek to build our understanding of how organisational culture embraces a philosophy of happiness as a causal variable that can influence the design of an adaptive organisation. This is necessary if we are to pull together the threads of culture and happiness.

5.3 Organisational Culture. What is it and what role does it play in the organisation?

Culture has been the subject of research in the fields of sociology, anthropology and psychology, becoming more popular as a research subject and yielding more than "54 different meanings and conceptualizations" (Verbeke *et al*., 1998:303). Culture as an abstract concept and dynamic in

[10] Pellauer, D. & Daunhauer, B. 2024. Paul Ricoeur. The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.

nature, shares some of its challenges with the concept of happiness which Verhoef reminds us "is something we all have an idea of …. but to present a neat or satisfactory definition of this concept seems to be an ever-elusive enterprise – something that leaves us baffled…" (Verhoef, 2024:14). This challenge of defining a concept which is so critical to the effective functioning of societies and organisations must not deter us from making a genuine and thoughtful attempt at positing a definition of culture.

To locate this project of defining culture in the context of the scope of this paper, we will confine the research within the purview of organisational behaviour and development. To begin, we must first acknowledge the pioneering work of Anthropology, which was "the first discipline to study the belief systems of types of communities of people and eventually identified several different culture aspects" (Gutterman, 2023:1). The definition that emerges from the anthropological approach typically defines culture as "a set of common understandings around which action is organised and finds expression in language whose nuances are peculiar to the group" (Gutterman, 2023:2). What can be deduced at this point, is that culture is implicit in social life – emerges over an extended period – appears as individuals interact with one another and organise themselves as identifiable social groups. Narrowing the definition down to the fields of management science and organisational behaviour, it becomes evident that "organisational culture is seen as an explicit product of the choices that a group of people make with respect to accepted behaviour as they interact with one another, key stakeholders and with the boarder social environment" (Gutterman, 2023:2). For our purposes, we can summarize our understanding by stating *that organisational culture includes the values and norms that serve as the framework for the organisation's management systems, and the specific management practices together with the behaviours that reinforce those values.* This would include all observable forms such as rules, policy, standard operating procedures symbols and ceremonies and the choice and application of technology. It would also include the not-so-obvious aspects such as method of problem solving, socialization practices and styles of leadership and conflict handling. Falling into this latter category we can include how individuals collaborate with one another, how they react to unacceptable behaviour and the ability and willingness to adapt and innovate in the face of changing conditions (threats). What we have just described in some detail, can be summed up in a definition by Edgar Schein when he states, "*culture is a learned pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions and behavioural norms that manifest themselves at different levels of observability"* (Schein et al., 2017:1). The work by Schein will be the principal source for this section of the chapter.

With the challenges I mentioned earlier for writers to agree on a generally accepted definition of organisational culture, it is not entirely unexpected that there may also be in the literature more than a single *model* to explain organisational culture, and indeed there is. The three culture

models that have garnered the most scholarly attention, are the three-level framework developed by Schein, the cultural dynamics model of Mary Jo Hatch and Dauber's model, by David A Dauber. Both Hatch and Dauber are academic researchers in the field, while Dauber was known to focus his work on writing critiques of culture models developed by other authors, Hatch's Dynamic model is fundamentally a Schein model with the introduction of a dynamic relationship between Schein's three levels.

In this paper we will use Edgar Schein's three level framework model primarily because of its wide application by academia, business organisations and management consultants who specialize in organisational culture analysis. The Schein model appears below in table format for ease of reference during the remainder of this section. The model contends that organisational culture is comprised of three major components identified as artifacts, articulated beliefs and values and underlying assumptions. According to a research article it is the variation and different combinations of these three components that help to define an organisation's culture (Limeade Institute, 2020).

Table 5-2: Components of Organisational Culture

Components of Organisational Culture	
Artifacts	There are four major categories of artifacts: (1) symbols (natural/manufactured objects, physical settings) (2) organisational language (jargon, slang, gestures, humour, slogans), (3) narratives (stories, myths, legends) and (4) practices (rituals, taboos, traditions).
Articulated Beliefs and Values	Articulated beliefs and values are the strategies, goals, and philosophies of an organisation (articulated justifications). There are five key characteristics of organisational values: (1) they are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end-states/behaviours, (3) transcend situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance.
Underlying Assumptions	Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (ultimate source of values and actions). Challenging basic assumptions produces anxiety and defensiveness because they provide security through a sense of identity and a level of certainty.

Analysis of the Components of Organisational Culture by Schein

Artifacts. This level is sometimes referred to as *cultural forms* and includes the tangible behaviour patterns that are repeatedly seen within an organisation. It also includes the type of technology employed, where it is deployed as well as the way the members of the organisation communicate with one another and with outsiders to the organisations.

Articulated Beliefs and Values. At this level the espoused values describe the desired outcome that the leaders of the organisation wish to achieve through the activities of the members of the organisation. Schein considered this level to have an important influence on how decisions are made within the organisation and the level of risk that an organisation is willing to take on board. This would "imply some degree of structural predictability in the organisation" (Schein, 2017:9).

Underlying Assumptions. This level is "the most difficult to assess" (Gutterman 2023:7) because the elements of culture at this level are invisible to the average person interacting with the organisation since they reside within the members as sub-conscious rules and norms. Certain researchers posit that it is at this level the organisation's "tacit core beliefs reside" (Gutterman, 2023:7). Schein adds further comment to this level of his by stating that "basic assumptions…. are generally non-confrontable and non-debatable and hence are extremely difficult to change" (Schein, 2017:21). A final comment on the three-level model is a caution that it is important to differentiate the observed and experienced artifacts from the articulated values and from the underlying assumptions that ultimately drive behaviour.

Before concluding this section, it must be stated that not all groups have a culture in the way that it is defined here. If there has been constant change of membership of the group and, consequently, the group has not learnt to do anything together, then it will not be able to claim to have a *culture.* Schein confirms this view when he explains that a group that has "a shared task, a more or less constant membership, and some common history of learning together, will generate a culture" (Schein 2017:29). In addition, if a smaller group of people are part of a wider group of people in an organisation, then it is possible that the smaller group may have its own sub-culture "while being nested in the culture of the organisation" (Schein 2017:29). This observation highlights the existence of macro cultures which may be constituted of micro or mezzo -cultures, dependent upon the size and influence of the sub-group. In the same way that it is important to differentiate between artifacts, articulated values and underlying assumptions, it is important to differentiate between micro, mezzo and macro cultures.

5.4 Summary

Concluding this section in which we posed the question, what is culture and what role does it play in in the organisation? We can state the following. Culture, consisting of its artifacts, articulated values and underlying assumptions, is primarily about the values people care about and respond to consciously and subconsciously. In other words, values tend to be all over the organisational map. To make sense of culture content, a perspective must be gained of the complex cultural landscape, and this requires the adoption of a model for the structure of organisational culture.

We elected to adopt Schein's model of the structure of culture (Schein 2017:17-29).[11] The model assisted in analysing culture at several different levels viz. Artifacts, Articulated Beliefs and Values and Basic Underlying Assumptions. The role played by the concept *culture,* is the shaping of perceptions, thoughts and feelings pertaining to the work environment and how we respond to stimuli. The role of culture also finds expression in how organisations manage change and make decisions, and through all this, culture provides a degree of consistency. Lastly, we recognised the existence of sub-cultures that were nested within a larger, composite culture and that it was important to identify the existence of sub-cultures and to recognise their role in the functional life of the organisation.

In the next section of this chapter, I will locate Verhoef's three happiness types that were integrated with Ricoeur's three-part happiness philosophy in Schein's model of components of organisational culture. This should help us in the design of an adaptive organisation, which is our purpose.

5.5 Locating Verhoef and Ricoeur in Schein's Culture Model

When analysing Schein's culture model, see Table 5.2 above, *articulated beliefs and values* are positioned on the second level in the model, appearing to manage the polarities of *underlying assumptions* and the more overt *artifacts.* While underlying assumptions represented the elements of culture largely invisible to the average person and artifacts the opposite, articulated beliefs and values represented the conscious beliefs and values that people in an organisation hold and express. In Schein's view, this middle level "implied some degree of structural predictability in the organisation" (Schein, 2017:9). Accordingly, I would suggest that expression of these conscious beliefs and values first by the leadership of the organisation and then adopted by the members of the organisation, will shape their approach to work and how they interact with one another and others generally.

Turning our attention to the philosophical synthesis of Verhoef's three happiness types with Ricoeur's three-part happiness philosophy, we notice two characteristics on a closer reading of the elements captured in the cells. The first characteristic is that most of the elements would manifest at Schein's second level of his cultural model, viz. the level of *articulated beliefs and values.* The second characteristic is that the remaining elements resort at Schein's first level which are *underlying assumptions* – the deeper or sub-conscious level where "core beliefs reside"

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[11] Chapter 2 of Schein's work, *Organisational Culture and Leadership* is focussed on the structure of culture.

(Gutterman, 2023:7). It may aid the analysis of Verhoef, Ricoeur and Schein if we visually display the contents in table form once again. Descriptor for Artifacts will intentionally be omitted since it is not relevant to this exercise.

Table 5-3 Comparison of Verhoef, Ricoeur and Schein

Schein's Components of Organisational culture	Verhoef and Ricoeur's Elements of a Philosophy of Happiness
Artifacts	
Articulated Beliefs and Values	• Act ethically personally and professionally • Respect of self and others • Recognise fallibility in self and others • Recognise moral shortcoming in self and others • Accept intrinsic worth in self and others • Recognise fragility of human will and decision making • Acknowledge human capability despite our fallibility • Practice self-reflection and encourage it in others • Recognise life's potential as well as own limitations • Construct honest narrative of own life • Accepted that there cannot be enduring happiness without acknowledging unhappiness • Make decisions in own as well as in others' best interest
Underlying Assumptions	• Respect synthesizes character (the finite pole) and happiness (the infinite pole) • Happiness becomes a sub-conscious awareness as a dynamic process of navigating life's complexities – not a static state. • Character is forged in the crucible of life and becomes the manifestation of personhood

Analysis of the Comparative Table

A point to take cognisance of is that each of the elements alongside Schein's articulated beliefs and values, begins with a verb. This was deliberate in constructing the sentences to imply initiating action on the part of the actor. The second point, is that it should not be construed that it is a minimum requirement for a person (leader of an organisation) to execute all of these acts every day, in every situation, failing which they will not benefit from the inculcation of an appropriate set of values and norms that are required to experience and transmit a resilient and enduring form of happiness. At the risk of minimizing the significance of any one or more of the elements, I would aver that if a person in a leadership position in an organisation consciously and deliberately articulated just three of the elements in a consistent manner, that person would begin to experience what Verhoef describes as a life with meaning and fulfilment, which in turn

would lay the foundation for an enduring and resilient form of happiness for the person. The three elements I propose in support are:

- Act ethically personally and professionally.
- Respect of self and others.
- Practice self-reflection and encourage it in others.

Another reason for selecting the three elements is that the practice of respect-of-self and others – coupled with self-reflection, will, in my view, open the actor to recognising own fallibility, moral shortcomings, intrinsic worth, human fragility and several other elements listed in the table, dependent on the situation. This suggests that the content of the table is not as mechanistic as it may appear. I acknowledge that someone else may select a different set of elements, but that only serves to confirm the validity of all the elements listed in the table. Continuing with the discussion on the content of the table, Schein highlights how leaders in organisations can embed their beliefs, values and assumptions. He differentiates between primary embedding mechanisms and secondary mechanisms that reinforce the primary mechanisms (Schein, 2017:182-183).

The primary mechanisms that are available to embed beliefs, values and assumptions.

- What leaders pay attention to, measure and control on a regular basis.
- How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises.
- How leaders allocate resources.
- Deliberate role modelling, teaching and coaching.
- How rewards and status are allocated.
- What the recruitment, selection, promotion and termination principles are.

The secondary mechanisms that reinforce and support the six primary mechanisms above.

- Organisational design and structure.
- Organisational systems and procedures.
- Rites and rituals of the organisation.

- Design of physical space, facades and buildings.
- Stories of important events and people.
- Formal statements of organisational philosophy creeds and charters.

Identifying the mechanisms that are available to the leadership of an organisation who elect to adjust or change their belief system and current value cluster, is considered important, because if the current leader belief and value system does not align with the philosophical elements of Verhoef and Ricoeur as stated in this study (or another similar set of beliefs and values) the creation of an adaptive entity may not experience a high probability of success. The probability of success will be low if the existing belief and value system is one that emphasizes control over empowerment, power-based hierarchy over requisite hierarchy,[12] theory X orientation over theory Y orientation[13] and one-way communication style over two-way communication style.

5.6 Summary

In this section, I located Verhoef and Ricoeur in Schein's culture model. I showed that the elements that constituted Verhoef's and Ricoeur's philosophy of happiness fitted effortlessly into Schein's first two levels of Cultural Components viz. *Underlying Assumptions* and *Articulated Beliefs and Values.* When recording the happiness elements, I deliberately utilized a verb at the beginning of each sentence to emphasize the requirement that action was a prerequisite that preceded any intended re-alignment of a belief and value system. Referring to the research conducted by Schein, I included the primary and secondary embedding mechanisms as illustration of what was required of the leader cohort when and if they decide to re-align the culture of their organisation. With this, we are well positioned to discuss the design of an adaptive organisation based on a philosophy of happiness by Verhoef and Ricoeur. I begin immediately in the next section with this task.

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[12] According to Elliot Jaques' Requisite Organisation Theory, a management hierarchy is requisite when the organisation is structured in a way that optimally aligns roles and responsibilities with the capabilities and developmental stages of employees (Jaques, E. & Clement, S.D. 1994:113-120. *Executive leadership: A practical guide to managing complexity.* Blackwell Publishing. USA).

[13] Behind every managerial action are assumptions about human nature and behaviour. Theory X assumes humans inherently dislike work and try to avoid it. Theory Y assumes that the expenditure of physical and mental effort in work, is as natural as play or rest (McGregor, D. writing in *Models for Management: The Structure of Competence.* 2nd ed. by Hall, J. 1988:11-26).

5.7 Design of an Adaptive Organisation

In this final section of the chapter, I will resist the temptation to offer a menu of steps that should be followed – often referred to by researchers as the *n-step method*, and I will not propose the use of the *architectural model* of attempting to create an organisational structure depicting what an adaptive organization should look like diagrammatically. The tenor of this paper has been mainly philosophical and theoretical, and I must continue in that vein. However, this should not be interpreted as entirely impractical, since the principles that have emerged in previous chapters and that will emerge in this chapter can be fruitfully referred to in the implementation of a design initiative. In support of this qualification, I will be referring to a publication by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2016). Their book is unique since it is based on an in-depth study of a cultural change program that encountered serious difficulties and challenges. The lessons learnt from a journey that the authors describe as not entirely successful, but one replete with insights and ideas for doing things differently. In fact, after the publication of the work, two organisational consultants, Norbäck and Targama, followed the remedial path recommended by Alvesson and Sveningsson and successfully managed a culture change initiative over a two-year period at a Swedish hospital. (Alvesson *et al.,* 2016:193). Norbäck and Targama subsequently published a paper documenting their own successful culture change work at the hospital[14] having avoided the pitfalls identified by Alvesson and Sveningsson. We are using the fundamental principles extracted from the book to map out the design process of an adaptive organisation from which we will see emerging, a philosophy of happiness espoused by Verhoef and Ricoeur. I support my choice in using the five principles extracted from a *not entirely successful* project because "it is more common and perhaps too easy to produce suggestions where the positive outcome is already present in the words used to accomplish this" (Alvesson *et al.* 2016:188). Using examples of successful cases can often confuse the action and the outcome, and the emerging statements become tautological. One last *caveat* prior to discussing the five principles of implementing a cultural change initiative. It is acknowledged that there is no easy or universally valid truth in the business of organisational culture change. However, I have found that following a roadmap of principles, combined with a solid knowledge and experience of organisational culture and re-alignment work in general, leaders of business organisations – and their consultant advisors – derive benefit from their endeavours.

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[14] Norbäck, L-E. & Targama, A. 2009. Det komplexa sjukhuset: Att leda djupgående förändringar i en multiprofessionell verksamhet. Lund. Studentlitteratur.

4.6.6 The Five Fundamental Organisational Design Principles

The five principles which follow have been adapted from Alvesson *et al.* (2016:188-192), with my comments and observations based on my own experience interspersed where applicable.

(i) **Framing Context.** The first principle requires that the leadership do not consider themselves as an elite group that are required to impose transformation on everyone else in the organisation. The leader group must *self-reflect on their ideas, values* and *beliefs,* avoiding the temptation to think that they have already transformed, and it was now a matter of getting the rest of the organisation to follow. It is important to proceed from the experience of the existing culture and then work with moderate and realistic aims and not create an unbridgeable gap between reality and the idea. Lastly, culture re-alignment is a long-term process and a slow-moving phenomenon. Persistence is key and effort moving forward must be sustained.

(ii) **Organizing Change Work(ers)** Working with culture change calls for the integration of *conceptualization* and *implementation* and *on-going follow-up* work. It is therefore important to manage and clarify roles and relationships among those that are engaged in managing the culture change work. People must know who they are (self-identity) in the context of the work. Meaning that they are known for their display of emotional maturity. The success of the initiative will inevitably hinge upon a broad group of people having a similar view of what the work is about, meaning singularity of purpose. Lastly, there is a strong unitary sense called for of those viewed as promoting cultural change because they will be regarded as symbolizing the cultural change. Congruency between verbalizing and acting is key.

(iii) **Content** It is not uncommon for the leader group or any other sub-culture within the organisation to identify and then defend the *self-evidently good* in the existing way things are done and decisions made. Cultural change requires a mind-shift and therefore it calls for a sober critique of some dominant, existing orientation and the proposal of an adjustment or alternative of something potentially controversial. For example, promoting the idea of *quality customer service* is a given in any organisation and is not capable of motivating a mind-shift. However, suggesting that the benefits inherent in a traditional hierarchical system of management be examined is more likely to stimulate interest and debate. Especially among the younger team members. Obviously, it is important to stay within the theme of the culture change undertaking. Alvesson and Sveningsson focus a significant amount of attention on *meanings*, rather than *values.* Their research of a large culture change initiative over some years that did not yield the outcome desired, suggested that “a one-sided focus on values

invokes a preference for ideals rather than what is realized and what people mean" (2016:190) and they suggest that many writers on change in organisations may spend too much time and over emphasize credos and values that reach beyond the everyday lives of employees that trigger aspirational ideals and motivate them to action. In the alternative they argue that what is required instead is the clarification of the *meaning and understanding* of the basic elements of the organisational culture that needs re-thinking. I would suggest that this means a different question needs to be posed. Instead of asking, "How would the future look for us if we change x?" ask, "What is going on here?" or, "What do we think is wrong with this place?" When clarifying problematic assumptions and wishful thinking, it tends to stimulate self-critique, and some root cause analysis can take place around meanings.

(iv) **Tactics** Under this heading the authors Alvesson and Sveningsson discuss the way people could be guided to gain the most traction for the adoption of a new or adjusted culture. Based on their case analysis of the less-than-successful culture change venture, the authors argue for a people-managing process that releases input into both the central group who are committed and driving the change work, as well as to other sub-groups who can convince, contribute and inspire larger groups of people of the progress. These latter groups must regularly report back into the central group to facilitate modification of information. My understanding is that Alvesson and Sveningsson are essentially promoting the idea of a managed top-down intra-organisational communication system with a feed-back loop of bottom-up report back and adjustment. The process repeats itself in an iterative manner.

Another tactic suggested by the authors is the thoughtful use of *emotions* and *symbols.* Again, my understanding is that messages need to be formulated to appeal not only to reason, but also to emotion and imagination. This would call for a higher level of enthusiasm to drive the message home and, in their words, "make it stick". My view is that such messages should not only be written, but verbal and even converted to audio-visual media to capitalize on the engagement of more than one of the human senses available to "encode, consolidate and recall messages" (McDermott *et al.,* 2024*)*. The tactic here is to make use of as many media forms as possible to give input, drive progress and answer questions and concerns.

(v) **Process** The last of the five design principles deals with the concept of *sense-making*. This means that a culture change effort needs to be grounded in the people's experiences in a positive sense within the context of the organisation. The authors advise against the replication of *n-step* methods published in management self-help

books or from the playbook of another organisation. The interpretation here is that one organisation's situation and its people is unique and the process that worked in one situation will not necessarily work in another. Next, learning and adapting are crucial in the process of review and revising. Culture change does not follow a rationally decided design. Which means that the adoption of a model which requires the strict apportionment of tasks in planning and implementation will inevitably prove problematic. A research article published in a McKinsey & Company journal appears to confirm this when the authors stated that a culture change model "should be comprehensive in that it touches strategy, structure, people, process and technology, and be iterative but that not everything can be planned up front" (Brosseau *et al*., 2019). The five design principles proposed here support the content of our model of Verhoef-Ricoeur-Schein developed earlier in this chapter and provide an approach to those who elect to embark on a culture change journey in their organisation. In the next section I examine the extent to which structure and culture correlate and why it is important that they do.

5.8 Organisational Structure and Organisational Culture. How they correlate.

In this section I will demonstrate why organisational structure and organisational culture belong among the concepts with the "highest explanatory and predictive power in understanding the causes and forms of peoples behaviours in organisations" (Janićijević, 2013:36). The consequence is that these two concepts are often used in research as independent variables in explanations of numerous phenomena found in organisations. Discussing these two concepts and their relative influence on one another is important for this paper since both organisational structure and organisational culture determine the behaviour of the people in the organisation as initiators of action and responders to events or circumstances. What is organisational structure?

Organisational structure is defined as a "relatively stable, either planned or spontaneous pattern of actions and interactions that organisation members undertake for the purpose of achieving the organisation's goals" (Janićijević, 2013:37). This definition was settled on after a literature review revealed six definitions of organisational structure which, although concurring on a basic level, emphasized different attributes. The most succinct of the alternative definitions was offered by Wolf who stated, "structure is the architecture of business competence, leadership, talent, functional relationships and arrangement" (Wolf, 2002:2). Whichever definition is ultimately selected, it is important to understand that organisational structure is not to be equated with an organisational flow chart or organogram. An organogram is the diagrammatic representation of duties, accountabilities, titles and the people assigned those duties and identified by a job title.

An underlying principle of organisation structure is purposefulness. Purposefulness of structure implies that it is "a rational instrument in the hands of those leading the organisation" (Janićijević, 2013:37). Thus, structure is used by those charged with leadership to direct the course of activities in the organisation towards realizing its objectives. In turn, "rationality of the organisational structure is ensured by its differentiation and integration of individual and collective activities" (Lawrence et al., 1967:3). By differentiating is meant the distinguishing of the various components of operational activities e.g. division of labour and job design and distinguishing of the various managerial activities e.g. who decides what and who reports to whom. Our purpose now is to determine the overlay of culture and structure and the locating of a philosophy of happiness in the design of an organisational structure. Therefore, the question that now arises is whether a philosophy of happiness as envisaged by Ricoeur and articulated by Verhoef can be added to the culture domain of an organisation and if it can, is it able to play a role in the design of an organisational structure that would make the organisation more adaptive?

The first aspect demanding attention is whether *any* organisation would be able to assimilate a Ricoeurian philosophy of happiness into its culture. I would argue no, not *any* organisation. The reason for this view is that not all structural configurations present an accommodative location for a philosophy of happiness to be absorbed and then find expression through the articulated beliefs and values. The reason is that organisations that require a command-and-control structure to function effectively, such as the military or law enforcement agencies, would need another approach to effect a culture change. Having stated this with a sense of experiential confidence, I will temper my assertion by allowing for the possibility that *any* organisation *can* adopt a principled position and accept into its culture Verhoef's happiness type, *an ethical way of life* (Verhoef, 2024:33). Although this philosophical understanding of life is historically Aristotelian, Verhoef explains that an ethical way of life does not only include *eudaimonia* as a goal, but also relationships. In other words, to have good and meaningful relationships are part of an ethical way of living (Verhoef 2024:33).

Of the variety of organisational configurations, the least problematic to effect a cultural change through the introduction of Verhoef's happiness types – an ethical way of life and living a life of meaning and fulfilment – would be where the leader (or leadership), makes that commitment personally. The underlying assumption here is that *leadership role modelling* plays a key role in the process of organisational culture change since they (the leadership) embody the culture of the organisation and if there is to be a shift in culture, the leadership must articulate it. It will be recalled that leader role modelling was earlier identified as a primary enabling mechanism to effect culture change. This is also confirmed by researchers Koh and Boo who stated that "Top management sets the organisational climate for and serves as a referent group to employees.

Any discrepancy between employees' internal standard of ethics and their perceptions of top management will result in a moral conflict and cognitive dissonance" (Koh *et al.,* 2004:679). The authors go on to say that a higher level of ethics is expected to be associated with a higher level of job satisfaction (Koh *et al.,* 2004:680). How the leadership express the role-modelling is always situational. In other words what works in one organisation may not necessarily work in another organisation, also, what works as effective leadership role modelling in one organisational configuration will not necessarily work in another configuration. This has been my experience in managing change in organisations. One thing remains a constant however, and that is the need to clearly communicate a vision of the desired future. Employees must understand why the change in culture is needed, what is expected of them and how it will affect them in the execution of their tasks and the relationships they have – and will develop – with colleagues, customers and suppliers. Because it is our purpose in this paper to design an adaptive organisation using specific philosophical criteria, we can assume that what we are currently working with an organisation which is not considered adaptive. If our aspirational intent is an adaptive organisation, then the strategic apex (leadership) would find it beneficial in acquiring organisational-leadership skills in at least the following three areas. Learn to distil and express a compelling purpose; apply the general principles of adaptive organisations and thirdly, shape the organisational culture to match the organisational structure.

Having articulated a clear purpose to embrace Verhoef's happiness types and embed the philosophy in the organisational culture by inter alia, articulating it in the day-to-day actions and decision making, the next element that requires attention is the alignment of systems and the selection of an organisational structure to institutionalize the culture change. Systems (policies and procedures, IT, Human Capital and Finance) must support the new articulations of ethical practice, respect for personhood and the worth of self and others when making decisions – which may not always result in the best decisions from a reductionist view i.e. the financial bottom line, but they are decisions that do not contradict the underlying philosophy. These attributes we immediately recognise as emanating from Ricoeur as we stated them earlier in this chapter.

One of the most challenging aspects of moving from a traditional to an adaptive organisation is the change or shift in the mindset of the organisation's members. To build adaptability, long held underlying assumptions about the value of stability will need to be appropriately confronted and individuals assisted to embrace flexibility, innovation and continuous learning. These attributes will be required if the organisation is intent on owning its philosophy of happiness within its cultural domain. If it does, the organisation will most likely change to working through smaller networks of empowered teams, make more rapid decisions and track consequences, not for punishment, but for on-going learning. It will call for "collaborating with one another, rather than competing and

also embracing suitable technology" (De Smet *et al.,* 2018:6). I am acutely cognizant of the reality that an adaptive organisation requires a new and fundamentally different type of leadership generally found in older, more conservative and autocratic type organisations. However, this does not dissuade me from believing in the innate ability of people to embrace a philosophy that may be larger than their vision of themselves. The final action required to establish the philosophy in the cultural domain, is the creation of a regular feedback loop, from the leadership to the organisational members and from the members back to the leaders for reflection. An organisational feedback loop requires regular monitoring, reinforcement and readjustment to any structural aspect of the organisation that appears out of alignment.

5.9 Conclusion

Reflecting on what has been discussed, it is hoped that the picture that emerges is that the culture of an adaptive organisation differs from a more traditional organisation. Leaders in an adaptive organisation are required to lead by example, not by exercising their positional power. To partner with employees rather than succumb to the need to control them. They can accomplish this if the *strategic apex* embarks on self-change before launching the cultural/structural change in the organisation. In the experience of De Smet, it would appear that "the key enabler to a successful adaptive transformation is to *help the leaders*, particularly the senior leaders, develop the mind-set and capabilities to design, build and lead an adaptive organisation" (De Smet *et al.,* 2018:25). In the final section I have argued that organisational culture and organisational structure are in a causal relationship with each other. Therefore, I am prepared to make a dual assumption. The degree of compatibility between culture and structure will determine (a) the sustainability of the organisation and (b) the relative happiness level of the organisation members. In support of this dual assumption, I confirmed in this section that structure influences and "shapes culture and eventually institutionalizes it" (Janićijević, 2013:43). Conversely, an established culture embedded over a long time will determine the way in which an organisation is structured (Janićijević 2013:42). When culture and structure are not aligned, cognitive dissonance takes place among members of the organisation and this in turn will impact the relative degree of adaptiveness of the organisation. Happiness as a by-product in the organisation is therefore dependent upon the degree of alignment of culture and structure. When individuals perceive and experience that the way they work and relate (culture) is supported by the systems that are in place (structure), they are more likely to feel engaged in their work, committed to organisational goals and satisfied in their jobs. "When a supervisor and a subordinate work together in the pursuit of common goals they find satisfaction in the effort expended" (Hall, 1988:281). I will translate these feelings of engagement, commitment and satisfaction into a single descriptor viz. *happiness,* in the form described by Verhoef as "happiness as meaning and fulfilment" (Verhoef

2024:41). This leads to a second happiness concept, that is based on the principles of Ricoeur. By adopting Ricoeur's principles of self-reflection, acceptance of human fallibility despite human ability, and respect, an organisation can build a culture supportive of ethical decision-making and self-awareness. This would in turn support a moral foundation encouraging ethical behaviour and intra-organisational collaboration which is essential for an adaptive organisation. De Smet's research revealed that transformation is made possible when both leaders and their teams work together to create the agile organisation of the future (De Smet, 2018:21). I will argue therefore that people in an organisation experience a more resilient and sustainable happiness when they feel respected and trusted and sense that they are a part of a collaborative work environment. This type of happiness can be enhanced when employees have the requisite autonomy to make appropriate decisions that align with their personal values to a satisfactory level of sufficiency. This is referred to in management science as a *motivator*, a termed ascribed to Frederick Herzberg and well canvassed by Hersey and Blanchard where they conclude that a job that contains *motivating factors* (recognition, challenge, degree of autonomy and development) instil feelings of job satisfaction, which is a form of happiness as meaning and fulfilment (Hersey et al., 1988:64). I sum up what has been discussed with these two statements. Adaptive organisations require individuals who are appropriately empowered to take ownership of their roles through a requisite organisational structure and a suitably aligned organisational culture. When this occurs, individuals experience happiness as a sense of meaning and fulfilment which is also resilient and sustainable over time.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The aim of my study was to determine what role the three happiness types developed by Anné Verhoef and supported by Paul Ricoeur's understanding of happiness, could play in the design of an adaptive organisation. Emerging from this aim were aspects that needed further clarification and to do this, I relied on the discipline of philosophy to question and analyse these aspects to avoid the pitfall of assumptions and rigid definitions.

The first aspect I examined was the *organisation*. It was necessary for my study to choose how I viewed an organisation. I elected to view an organisation as a social system which was primarily driven by a collection of shared norms, values and beliefs that shaped its identity and the behaviour of its members. I adopted two additional perspectives of an organisation, the first was its ability to grow and adapt in response to environmental changes, and the second was its ability to learn as an organisation (in contrast to the members *in* the organisation learning). This provided a holistic view of the organisation as an open social system delving deeper, I highlighted an important phenomenon in the human-social subsystem that had the potential to derail critical decision-making opportunities during formal moments of human interaction. This phenomenon was *groupthink*. Groupthink I stated, was an observable behaviour within a group when critical thinking and moral judgement was overwhelmed, resulting in poor or less than good decision-making by the group. Since the design of an adaptive organisation would require group decision-making, this was an important aspect to consider as well as the ways to overcome it.

The second aspect I considered was the organisation as a cultural entity as opposed to a cognitive entity. This was specifically in the context of organisational learning, an important quality if the organisation intended to become an adaptive one. This also served as a precursor to an understanding of culture as a *causal variable* in an organisation. Recognising that culture was a powerful phenomenon and would play a pivotal role in this study, I turned to Edgar H. Schein, a noted scholar in the field. What I gained from his research and writing was that organisational culture embodied the following key qualities. Culture invariably had an element of *depth* to it since it existed at the unconscious level of a group. Schein referred to this aspect of culture as the "organisational DNA" (Schein 2017:10). Together with depth, culture displayed *breadth*, meaning it was all pervasive since it determined how things were done in the organisation – or not done. Another key quality of culture was allowing the organisation to express its own unique *pattern* of rituals, values and behaviours when responding to its environment or "when it chooses not to respond" (Schein 2017:11). For this study organisational culture was of critical importance since it provided an understanding of how organisations learn and provided the location for a philosophy of happiness. This understanding recognised happiness as a concept in its comprehensive,

philosophical sense as embodying *happiness*, *chance* and *unhappiness* (Verhoef 2024:144-145). Culture, as a causal variable in an organisation was therefore the only location for this understanding of happiness, since it is intended to provide predictability, depth and breadth to the organisation and motivate members of the organisation to pattern their behaviours according to its precepts. This understanding of organisational culture and that it serves as a repository for a philosophy of happiness, prepared us for the transition into a discussion on the management practices (or styles) that would be requisite in an adaptive organisation.

In chapter three I discussed the requisite management practices for an adaptive organisation and identified the work of Henri Fayol as source reference for fourteen management practices which have come to be considered appropriate for organisations in the 21st century because they embody a people-centric focus. His management practices were tied into the five content domains of an organisation which I refer to further on in this paragraph. Another important point made in this chapter, was that it was not required, neither advised to choose between an *adaptive* organisation and a *stable* organisation. My argument was that an adaptive organisation was a sustainable organisation, and this socio-economic reality would result in a sufficiency of stability. This argument was supported by the view held by Lawler *et al*., that an adaptive organisation was one that "possessed the know-how to facilitate the continuous evolution of managing a business …and redesign any part of the organisation to accommodate the tactical changes required (2006:9). A further distinguishing feature of an adaptive organisation was that it consistently addressed all five of the content domains, *vision, mission, purpose, values* and *culture* and by addressing I implied that it was managed according to these content domains. This raised the question about the type of leadership that would be best suited to manage in this manner – especially with the assimilation of a philosophy of happiness into the culture of the organisation. I argued that a style referred to as *leader inclusiveness* was the most appropriate and harboured the highest probability of successfully building *team resilience* while also managing *organisational diversity*. This style of leadership would manifest in behaviours by leaders that allowed individuals members to feel *respected* and *included* in the life of the organisation. This leadership style integrated with Verhoef's happiness types viz. *happiness as an ethical way of life* (2024:33). However, an ethical way of life is not always easy to define let alone to follow. Verhoef tells us it is a lifelong task and aims at the highest good, since "it is not a selfish type of happiness, but aims to realize happiness with and for everyone" (2024:33). In this study my focus was on philosophy as a way of organisational life – on an ethical way of living in the organisational environment and by establishing just institutions and ultimately the creation of just societies. In this way I intended to achieve *happiness as a by-product* (another of Verhoef's happiness types). This endeavour was central in the following two chapters, four and five.

After working through what Verhoef called the “crisis of happiness” (2024:16) which he attributed to the radical changes in the history of understanding the concept of happiness over the last century, we asked the same question asked by Verhoef, how can philosophy contribute to a better understanding of happiness? (2024:15). This culminated in several realities that emerged as I sought to answer the question. First, happiness should not be understood as an emotion, if it did, then it resorted under the umbrella of psychology. Secondly, the etymology of the word happiness needed to be kept intact (2024:22). This implied that something of the dimension of happiness needed recognition viz. *luck or chance* since this meaning was inherent in the root word *happ*. Third, happiness could not be comprehensively appreciated without spending an equal portion of time and industry on its antonym *unhappiness*. This absorbed much of my research time and rightly so. By adopting a philosophical view of the concept of happiness I needed to acknowledge that in society’s attempts (and by implication an organisation) to develop its happiness agenda, certain people and aspects of life that made us unhappy were being “wished away” (2024:56). I realised that this negating of the negation (of happiness) was deeply problematic. Ricoeur addresses this dilemma succinctly when he reveals his philosophical understanding of happiness as one that allows for unhappiness to be a part of happiness in a kind of dialectical tension (Verhoef: 2024:145). Understanding the role of unhappiness in this manner placed the concept of happiness in the realm of philosophy and saved us from wrestling with the concept as a psychological or even theological construct.

Having positioned happiness philosophically we concluded the study with a sound theoretical approach to design an adaptive organisation with a philosophy of happiness located in the DNA of the organisation viz. the organisational culture. We pulled together the threads of a social system being managed by a leadership style of inclusivity, using management practices that were essentially people centric based on a value system of respect, humility and reflection. This I proposed, laid the foundation for the design of an adaptive organisation, for today’s generation.

To conclude, I address the limitations of this study. I acknowledge that there is a paucity of research currently that could prove or disprove my conclusions, but in defence of the overall veracity of my arguments, a research paper published by Harvard Business School and authored by Amy Edmonson and Cat Huang in 2024, effectively validates my general research and conclusions since they report on and analyse a case of organisational culture change of an international company, effectively employing my proposed recommendations for culture change (Edmonson et al., 2024:3-22). Unfortunately, this paper was published after the conclusion of my mini thesis. This is study nevertheless offers an opportunity for further research. Second, this study takes place in the context of Africa and no work by an African philosopher was researched.

This was primarily due to time constraints, and I believe that it would be fruitful to reconsider my research from an African philosophical perspective.

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ANNEXURE A: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)

Faculty of Humanities Ethics Office for Research, Training and Support
Tel: 018 285 2457

Email: Erhabor.Idemudia@nwu.ac.za

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 016 103 4446
Email: Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

04 October 2024

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on **03/10/2024**, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: A Philosophy of Happiness: The role it can play in designing an adaptive organisation.

Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof. A. Verhoef

Student/Research Team: H. Richards (24910406)

Ethics number:

N	W	U	-	0	1	0	3	7	-	2	4	-	A	7
Institution				Study Number						Year			Status	

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: Single study

Commencement date: 03/10/2024 **Risk:** **No risk**

Expiry date: 03/10/2025

Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:

- *The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the BaSSREC:*
  - *annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and*
  - *without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.*
- *The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study*

leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the BaSSREC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.

- *Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.*
- *The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.*
- *In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:*
  - *request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;*
  - *to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;*
  - *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
    - *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
    - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
    - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
    - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via BaSSREC-Admin@nwu.ac.za.*

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof E. Idemudia

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

ANNEXURE B: CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

NWU®

Faculty of Humanities

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

This certificate is awarded to

Hennie Richards

In recognition of attending the Faculty of Humanities' Ethics Training Session on Friday, 8 March 2024

Professor Mirna Nel
Deputy Dean Research and Innovation
Faculty of Humanities

Professor Susan Coetzee van Rooy
Deputy Chairperson: ECLM

Professor Erhabor Idemudia
Chairperson: BaSSREC, HSSREC and EMELTEN-REC

8 March 2024
Date

ANNEXURE C: PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Certificate of Editing

The mini dissertation submitted by

Hendrik Nel Richards NWU student no. 24910406 with the title

A Philosophy of Happiness: The role it can play in designing an adaptive organisation.

Has been edited for English language usage on 5 November 2024

Signed by Editor. 

Petra Gainsford