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Massive Rice Offering in Wangdiphodrang in Zhabdrung Rinpoche's Time

Dasho Karma Ura*

A newly discovered book of 1679, perhaps the oldest extant land record, shows that there was a survey of taxable fields and taxable houses of Wangdi district (Shar mTsho brGyad kyi khral Zhing khral Khyim gyi Deb gTer) to collect rice taxes as fresh-harvest offering for blessing tithes (dbang yon thog phud).

At the end of the eight months' stay of the two Portuguese Jesuits - Father Estavao Cacella and Father Calbral - with Zhabdrung Rinpoche in Cheri in 1627, Father Cacella noted that Zhabdrung Rinpoche was famous for "his abstinence, as he never eats rice, meat or fish..." (Baillie, L. M. 1999). Yet rice became the main instrument of his political economy. The 3232 households of Wangdi district offered on an average 359 kg of rice every year, a breath taking quantity that might have made people gasp for air as they carried on their backs these offerings up to the dzong. Wangdi dzong can be imagined holding and rolling rice reserve from the 1,144,636 kgs of rice (quantity corrected for missing values) it collected every year as fresh harvest offering for blessing the paddy growers by Zhabdrung. One can picture dzong builders, pazaaps (*dpa' rtsal pa*), monks and officials by bags of rice and packs of dairy products seasoned in the well-ventilated Wangdi dzong. Ranks of high officials were evocative of food entitlements, like *tshogs thob* (meal entitled), *dro rgyar thob pa* (breakfast entitled), and *lto bzan dkyus ma* (ordinary food entitled) (Ardussi and Ura, 2000). The volume of rice collection also gives us an idea of the food supply available for the construction of gigantic structures like the Wangdi dzong in 1638.

A sprightly man named Wangchuck from Wache in Jena gewog of

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Wangdiphodrang turned up in this author's house in late 2010 to show two hand written copies of voluminous *pecha gutshem (dgu 'tsems)* that had back spine stitches and dog-eared edges that bibliophiles would adore. One copy had 327 folio-pages and the other, smaller in size, had 431 pages. There are minor content differences between them. The first copy of the document was written in *tshuyig* and stamped after every few pages with black seal with imprint of cross-dorji (*dorji ja dram*). The second copy was also in *tshuyig* with its text interspersed with stamps of red seal of "*Wang 'dus*" (ie. Wangdiphodrang). Each copy weighed approximately 2 kgs. I arranged, with the prompt help of Home Minister Minjur Dorji, for both the copies to be bought by the National Library of Bhutan where they are archived and safe from the ravages of rats, silverfish, fire hazard and negligent handling. It is fortunate that the family of Wache Wangchuck had kept these documents in their custody after Wangchuk got it from his grand-uncle who was the last *nyerchen* (lord steward) of Wangdiphodrang.

The document is titled "*don drub zhas pa sa mo lug los shar tsho brgyad kyi khral zhing khral khyim gyi deb gter gsal bai me long zhas bya bzhugs.*" It translates as "The treasure book of Female Earth Sheep Year that clarifies like mirror the taxable fields and taxable houses of the eight-parts of Shar". *Don drub* is synonym for sheep year in astrological lexicon (Astrologer Sonam Tenzin, 2012). This new source will be referred hereafter as *TB*, as abbreviation of the Treasure Book.

No measurement is neutral although it is often made to appear so: how it is done is absolutely driven by the purposes and ideology beyond the metrics themselves. *TB* begins by introducing its primary purpose as being an unchanging reference to stabilize rice tax collection. *TB* was intended to prevent "the sale and purchase of taxable fields out of which the respectful, happy, and faithful subjects offered harvest-fresh offerings, in return for blessing (*dbang yon thog phud*), to the unity of skillful and compassionate bodhisattvas of all directions, Palden Lama

Dudjom Ngagi Wangpo Choglas Nampar Gyalwa, (ie. Zhabdrung Rinpoche)." A brief translation of the rationale given in the document for Zhabdrung to collect the grain offering reads; "The grain offering was collected in order for the people to generate merits by supporting the noble community (monk body) and by making offering as vast as ocean to the three roots (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). The grain offering was collected also to turn the wheel of cloud-vast offerings without ever ceasing, according to the mandalas of secret tantra so that the sentient beings will gain two types of merits (*dmigs bcas bsod nams dang dmigs med yeshes kyi tsogs*) either immediately or indirectly" (*dgos dang brgyud*)."

TB ends by pointing out tersely the consequences of evading cash and commodity taxes (*skam khral* and *rlon khral*). The frequent reference to *skam khral* undermines our assumption that cash taxes were absent in those days, unless it meant something different. *TB* notes that "People living in evil times would attempt to be outside the purview of the taxation of the government of Choje Drukpa, by bribing the high officials with food and wealth (*pon la zas nor sgye bsud btang ste*) in some cases". *TB* goes on to say "in other cases, wealthy households, who could be in close and pleasurable company of the high officials, would be removed from the tax register. But the friendless poor could be crushed like mustard oil-seeds and driven into oppressed hardship." *TB* says that "there is nothing more intensely amoral than these activities in the relationship between officials and the subjects." Frauds and scams involving high officials and wealthy people were known then. *TB* declares that "Henceforth cases of evading cash taxes (*skam khral*), of changing commodity taxes into cash taxes by altering tax books, by adding or deleting, (*rlon khral skam khral la sgyur bai khrel yig bris bsub byed pa*) can bring harm to the perpetrators up to seven generations by the heart-blood drinking, oath-bound protectors of the teachings." Our world would be beautiful if we had an ethical tax system and there were divine multi-generational tax inspectors who have perfect memory of tax records over seven generations. *TB* ends by proclaiming, "The oath-bound protectors of the teachings of the Buddha would certainly save those with right attitude, faithfully serving the government of Choje Drukpa from unharmonious accidents in the present life." At the end, *TB* states that "the protectors of the teachings will surely assist the people in ultimately obtaining the profound enlightenment because of the grace of honouring the command and seal of Zhabdrung Rinpoche on the crown of their heads" (*mthar thug byang chub kyi go 'phang bla na med pa thob pai stong grogs mzad nyes pa zhabs drung rinpoche' bka' rtags kyi phyag rgya spyi bors bcings pai' mthu las bslu ba med*).

The dating of the document can be ambiguous because the document does not specify the exact *rabjung* or the sexagonal cycle. Female earth sheep year, the year when *TB* was written, can be any of the following years: 1619, 1679, 1739, 1799, 1859. But the larger context of history can be studied to find out which of these years can be the particular female earth sheep year. A comparative analysis of *TB* with other relevant documents also narrows down the date of *TB*.

So, when was it first written? The year 1619 is too early for rice taxation to have started in Wangdi district. It is barely three years after Zhabdrung reached Bhutan, and he would not have been able to organize systematic collection of rice offerings. On the other hand, he would have needed substantial supply to feed his militia that repelled a huge Tibetan invasion in that year. We cannot pretend to be able to judge the effect of a monk-statesman, who could accomplish such marvels, on mass psychology. He could have inspired a new level of philanthropy of rice. However, *TB* was most likely written in 1679 to document the land tax system that Zhabdrung started during his life, and updated in 1687. 1679 coincides with the second last year of the rule of the able expansionist administrator, the builder of six dzongs in the East, and a brilliant general, Minjur Tenpa (1613-81), who successfully commanded the Bhutanese forces in the war of 1675-79 with Tibet, but whom the fratricidal, unethically ambitious and scheming Kabje Gedun Chophel overthrew in 1680.

TB explicitly mentions that it was revised and updated in the earth female rabbit year (*sa mo yos lo*) in Punthang Dewachen Phodrang. Again, the *rabjung* is not specified, leaving us to define the year by understanding the greater context of history. Earth female rabbit year can be any of the following years: 1627, 1687, 1747, 1807, 1867. Considering that Punakha fortress was built in 1637, 1627 can be ruled out. We can also rule out 1747 or any later years for one reason. The biography of Desi Sherab Wangchuck (1797-1765) gives us different administrative divisions of Wangdiphodrang and a different number of households. Those administrative divisions are conspicuously silent in *TB*. In the biography of Desi Sherab Wangchuck, Tsirang and the villages and households under Tsirang *drungwog* were clearly enumerated. There is no mention of Tsirang *drungwog* or any village in Tsirang in *TB*. It seems that Tsirang was yet to be incorporated into the tax system at the time of writing *TB*. It can then be confidently said that *TB* was updated in Punakha dzong in 1687. A stronger reason still for proposing 1679 as the most probable date of *TB* is that it directly links harvest-fresh offering of paddy (*dbang yon thug phud*) to the blessings or empowerment given by Zhabdrung Rinpoche who is mentioned by his grand full title. We do not know when the passing away of Zhabdrung was made publicly known, but it is thought that it was kept secret for a long time, although Zhabdrung himself directed that the secret be maintained for 12 years. His state funeral *(dgongs-rdzogs)* was publicly performed only in 1754 (Ardussi, forthcoming Ch. 3). The direct emphasis on Zhabdrung in *TB* indicates that tax collection needed invoking his charisma and personal authority.

Estimates of the population of Bhutan have so far not been found in old texts. What is usually found is counts of households known as *gungs* or houses (*mi khyim* or *khyim*) because households were the basis of tax. In fact, even if the occupying family came to an end through deaths or lack of issue, the house as a tax-basis continued through *tsa-tong* (*rtsa-stong,* literally empty root household) system whereby the tax of the empty house was paid by any family who took over its properties. *TB* lists the houses and vegetable plots in Wangdiphodrang at that time. The purpose of recording the number of houses or households in other old documents in general was related to taxation, distribution of *mangyed,* or enthronement gifts (*khri-ston gnang-sbin)* by the government (Ardussi and Ura 2000; Je Ngawang Lhundrup's biography of Tenzin Rabgay KMT 2005, p.159). But the counts of those household liable to taxation did not include households and families that were not paying taxes for one reason or other. *TB* also omitted such households.

Ardussi and Ura (2000) estimated the total population of Bhutan by going through the household data found in the passages related to the enthronement of Zhabdrung Jigme Dragpa I (1725-1761) in 1747. They also estimated total population for other years - 1796 and 1831- from additional sources. A fraction of the population was added to represent those who did not pay taxes and were thus not listed in the biography. However, I came across certain official agency who estimated past populations of Bhutan by absurd 'backward projections' at 3% a year, a logic that will show that Bhutan had no human being at a certain point in medieval period! His enthronement account is part of the biography of Desi Sherab Wangchuck (reign 1744-63). In that article, Ardussi and Ura also estimated the population of Wangdiphodrang in 1747, which is summarized here.

According to the biography, there were seven major administrative units of Wangdi districts: Shar (Dangchu) *drungwog*, Jena *drungwog*, Jargang Penlopwog, Gaseng *drungwog*, Naynying *drungwog*, Uma Penlopwog, and Tsirang *Drungwog* excluding Indians subjects. The total number of households under Wangdi including Tsirang *drungwog* was 3,701 under 36 different locations of major settlements by names. Tsirang *drungwog* was part of Wangdi district in 1747. The total number of households in

1747 is uncannily close to the number found in *TB* in 1679.

According to household level data found in *TB*, in 1679, there were 3,232 households in Wangdi who were paying yearly rice offering in various quantities to the government. When Tsirang *drungwog*'s villages are excluded to facilitate comparison, the household number in Wangdi district in 1747 was 3,566. Between 1679 and 1747, about 334 new households were established.

Like the rest of Bhutan, since 1679, the number of rural households had not increased significantly over three centuries in this district. The 2005 population and housing census found that Wangdi district had 6,227 households (p.47). Out of this total, 4,773 were rural households. In the special demographic dynamics of Bhutan influenced by several factors including monkhood, immigration had played a greater role than internal growth or decline. Once immigration from north or south ceased, population changed slowly.

On an average, each household paid 359 kg (257 dre) of rice as fresh harvest offering for blessing, as rice tax was known euphemistically. If a kilogram of rice is valued at Nu 60, the value of yearly rice offering by each household in Wangdi district was Nu. 21,590.

TB furnishes us detailed data to do certain estimation. At the aggregate level, the results show that 3232 households listed under 74 villages grew paddy in 26,693 terraces. The district of Wangdi as a whole had to pay paddy offering equal to 1,635,195 dre which is equal to 817,597 dre of rice, which is further equal to 1,144,636 kgs of rice, when a dre is multiplied by 1.4 to convert to a kg. The value of rice offering in the district as a whole was Nu. 68,678,220 when a kg of rice is costed at Nu 60.

We do not know the acreage of rice cultivation in the district at the time of Zhabdrung Rinpoche or nearly three decade after his passing away when *TB* was drawn up. *TB* does not give data on area by such measures as *langdo*. It however meticulously records the number of terraces owned by a household head who is mentioned by name along with his or her house and vegetable plot. It would seem that the acreage and output of rice were higher compared to today's level. The fields left fallow today due to breakdown of irrigation channels brought from intake heads far away; lack of labour; competition from Indian rice; absorption of rice fields into urban lands; and relatively higher wages in non-farming sectors; are the bases for this observation. One could physically verify whether the numbers of terraces mentioned in TB are still being farmed both at village and district level.

Total rice production of Wangdiphodrang in 2010 according to the Ministry of Agriculture statistics was 7,645,000 kg of paddy (DoA 2010, p.7) which is equal to 3,822,500 kg of rice. For crude estimation, I assumed that 2010 paddy output level to hold for 1679 in Wangdi district. When the rice offering of 1,144,637 kg that is recorded in dre equivalent in *TB* is divided by 3,822,500, about 30% of the rice production in 1679 was offered to the government of Zhabdrung. That amount of rice could be sufficient to feed 3000 persons a year.

Top five		
Village	**Househoder**	**Kgs of Rice**
Zarmading	Lamkey	1,680
Samdrugang	ShakangPhuntshog	1,540
Mesokha	NorbuTshering	1,400
Jhala	Gyalwang	1,400
Rumed	NamgayTshering	1,330

Lowest five		
Village	**Househoder**	**Kgs of Rice**
Nyishokha	ThrungThrung	28
Mangtsikha	Karpo	28
Gaygar Karma Nang	Delek	28
Gaygar Karma Nang	TsheringDrukpa	28
Sakar Chen	PhuntshoTshering	14

Maximum offering by a household was 1,680 kg of rice (worth Nu 100,800) and the minimum offering by a household was 14 kg of rice (worth Nu 840). Top five and lowest five individual patron-tax payers from Wangdi district in terms of yearly rice offering are shown in the above Table.

Villages who made maximum amount of rice offering were in descending order of amount; Rumed, Zarmading, Samdrugang, Ula, Phakhatsemdong, Rutoedkha, Draphug, Phu and Jala. The villages which had the maximum number of terraces were in descending order; Kunzaling, Nishokha, Jala, Neynyingnyingpa, Gaylingdrongtoed, Kashi. The correlation between the quantity of rice offering and the number of terraces owned by a household was not strong. R^2 between the amount of rice offering and terrace number was weak: $R^2 = .29$. There was no proportionality. It seems size of offering was dependent on motivation, and not land size. But the number of households in a village and the number of terraces in a village were strongly correlated; $R^2 = .85$. These two variables went together.

It is instructive to compare more information found in *TB*, pertaining to 1679, and data on landholding today. Land titles have increased from 3,232 to 7630 over 333 years. *TB* shows that in 1679, out of 3,232 households in Wangdi, 82.5% of householders in whose names paddy land titles occur were male while 17.5% were female. Land records in 2012 show a near reversal in the way landownership is recorded in Wangdi district. In Wangdi district at present, men have 29.2% of the land titles in their names while 70.8% of land titles are held by women. In the country as a whole, land records in 2012 show that 53% of land titles are held by women and 47% are held by men. Women in Wangdi are mistresses of rice terraces, an unbeatable record in at least one aspect of gender equality.

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Note

Due to concerns over space and propriety, the data set containing records of 3232 households in 74 villages of Wangiphodrang from the recovered 1679 tax record could not be included in this edition for publication. However, in the interest of wider dissemination of original research sources, the meticulously managed data will be uploaded on the publication section of our website www.bhutanstudies.org.bt. The following table shows aggregate data at the level of the 74 villages. Limitations in the data include apparent missing information and in some instances, possible errors due to the difficulty in reconciling old measurement units. This is especially true in case of the information on the number of terraces.

Village	Mean paddy offering (in *Dre*)	Total paddy offering (in *Dre*)	No. of *thram* holders	Male *thram* holder	Female *thram* holder	Missing sex information	Total no. terraces	Missing information on no. of terraces
Russmad	1,147.32	47,040	42	40	2	0	340.0	1
zar ma sding	1,129.17	27,100	24	21	3	0	332.0	0
bsam 'brugsgang	1,098.52	29,660	27	25	2	0	248.0	0
dbu la	1,008.70	23,200	23	21	2	0	271.0	1
Pharkhatshemgrong	999.07	42,960	45	34	9	2	459.0	0
Russtodkha	893.33	40,200	48	43	4	1	435.0	0
Bragphug	890.50	35,620	40	30	10	0	511.0	0
Phu	825.00	66,000	80	64	16	0	496.0	0
rgya la	815.93	48,140	61	51	10	0	804.5	1
Nassgor	813.33	12,200	15	12	3	0	108.0	0
Bkrashissdingkha	780.91	17,180	22	19	3	0	200.0	0
nasrnyidsnying pa	750.89	67,580	90	81	9	0	803.0	0
Mangphadkha	715.65	16,460	23	20	3	0	164.5	1
Smalrdogyang	695.33	20,860	30	25	4	1	253.0	1
grab can kha	684.44	49,280	73	60	13	0	395.0	2
mangrtsispo tog	676.00	20,280	30	22	8	0	196.0	1
Spanggsarkha	650.00	16,900	27	18	9	0	136.0	1
Gdung	643.19	36,662	57	42	15	0	340.5	0
yulgsar gong ma	642.25	46,884	73	54	19	0	438.4	0
smal so kha	620.38	32,260	52	39	13	0	325.0	1
Stongzhol	600.69	34,840	58	46	12	0	343.0	0
dga'sengkhastod	592.91	39,132	66	58	8	0	379.0	0
mos pa sgyidkha	564.71	9,600	17	15	2	0	102.0	0
Mangrtsikha	553.48	38,190	69	60	9	0	444.0	3
yulgsar 'og ma	542.78	19,540	36	29	7	0	237.0	0

Village	Mean paddy offering (in *Dre*)	Total paddy offering (in *Dre*)	No. of *thram* holders	Male *thram* holder	Female *thram* holder	Missing sex information	Total no. terraces	Missing information on no. of terraces
lhakhang can	536.36	5,900	11	11	0	0	67.0	1
khyong se kha	536.09	24,660	46	33	13	0	512.5	0
Spyankakha	532.68	43,680	82	74	8	0	480.0	1
Domkha	512.00	23,040	45	26	19	0	584.0	0
Amdpalkha	498.67	22,440	45	36	9	0	509.5	0
Phangyer	491.15	29,960	62	35	27	0	575.0	0
lung bar	480.47	20,660	43	42	1	0	508.0	0
Shingsngon	464.00	51,040	110	92	18	0	640.0	2
Dgoncung	460.00	2,300	5	5	0	0	32.0	0
Aaumkharstod	457.22	32,920	72	54	18	0	670.0	0
dbu ma khasmad	450.70	19,380	43	33	9	1	243.0	0
Kabzhi	447.41	24,160	54	32	22	0	714.0	1
nagsri bar	431.94	26,780	62	57	5	0	586.0	2
then 'bag kha	429.73	15,900	37	33	4	0	381.0	0
Tingngag	426.67	8,960	21	21	0	0	87.0	0
Kongphir	426.29	14,920	35	25	10	0	309.0	0
Kunbzanggling	424.11	38,170	90	85	5	0	919.0	0
sbi nag sbug	421.38	24,440	58	54	4	0	505.0	0
Spanggshong	414.63	11,195	28	25	3	0	180.0	0
rte'uskyeskha	407.75	3,262	8	7	1	0	109.0	0
Bsamgtansgang	407.27	4,480	11	11	0	0	121.0	0
lenkha'Isbi	404.52	29,530	75	61	14	0	644.5	2
Aomchensgang	402.86	14,100	35	24	11	0	385.0	0
Garbzhikha	399.51	16,380	41	36	5	0	412.0	0
Duthul	399.05	8,380	32	24	8	0	128.0	7

Village	Mean paddy offering (in *Dre*)	Total paddy offering (in *Dre*)	No. of *thram* holders	Male *thram* holder	Female *thram* holder	Missing sex information	Total no. terraces	Missing information on no. of terraces
bang legs kha	391.11	3,520	9	8	1	0	58.0	0
Ngagwa	381.40	16,400	43	38	5	0	424.0	0
Dgonsde	377.31	25,280	67	57	10	0	592.0	0
Gyedglinggrongsmad	362.94	24,680	69	55	14	0	678.0	0
Chassbagkha	360.00	10,440	29	29	0	0	273.0	0
Darrgyassgang	359.29	10,060	28	23	5	0	280.0	1
Nyishogkha	354.52	29,780	84	71	13	0	846.5	0
Gyerglinggrongstod	354.12	24,080	70	57	13	0	757.0	0
Aathang	346.67	10,400	30	25	5	0	273.5	0
Risbikha	316.67	1,900	6	5	1	0	22.0	0
sadkar can	286.40	14,320	51	47	4	0	369.0	1
Sgalsbrags	285.71	12,000	42	38	4	0	318.0	0
Sgangrgyab	283.41	11,620	42	30	12	0	503.0	0
Khyimsagling	277.89	5,280	19	16	3	0	143.0	0
amphalpa'Idbyarsa	271.67	3,260	28	22	6	0	82.5	12
Gtsangra	270.86	9,480	36	35	1	0	249.0	1
Stagsha	264.62	10,320	40	36	4	0	254.0	1
lo pho	240.40	6,010	25	21	4	0	200.0	0
dgassgardkar ma nang	240.20	24,020	100	88	11	1	630.0	0
rkar ma sgangkha	235.74	11,080	48	38	9	1	245.0	1
Lommtsho	235.56	2,120	9	8	1	0	80.0	0
Thed	210.00	1,680	8	7	1	0	-	8
shang stag	198.95	11,340	58	36	22	0	285.0	1
sbag lam kha	156.36	1,720	12	6	6	0	68.0	1

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GNH, EI and the well-being of Nations: Lessons for public policy makers, with specific reference to the happiness dividend of tourism

Dr Shaun Vorster*

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Happiness is one of 15 emotional intelligence (EI) competencies identified by Hughes, Patterson and Terrell (2005:18–19; also see Seligman, 2002; Bar-On, 1997; Bar-On, 2000). Contemporary EI literature largely focuses on the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels of EI, and their interconnections and interdependencies with the organizational/firm levels. Much emphasis is placed on the relationship between EI in the workplace (for example employee satisfaction/happiness) and organizational performance (for example company culture, return on equity, and efficiency) (Hughes et al., 2005; Goleman, 2000; Rajagopalan, 2009; Amy, 2007; Prins, 2006; Jackson-Palmer, 2010; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2004).

The individual-organizational level of analysis, though important, ignores the national and/or global level of analysis (exceptions include Donnelly, 2004; The Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998; Pankaj & Dorji, 2008). In this essay, it is argued that Buddhist economics and literature on gross national happiness (GNH) can inform our understanding of the relationship between happiness at individual and societal levels.

1.2 Research objectives and potential contribution of the study

This paper has two objectives: firstly, to conceptually explore the theoretical underpinnings of GNH and how it relates to societal EI and, secondly, to evaluate within this theoretical context the happiness dividend of the tourism economy, with specific reference to ethics, the

labour market and environmental sustainability. As such, the paper

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responds to a question posed by Goleman (2008): "Can there be an emotionally intelligent society?"

From a public-sector leadership and management vantage point, the paper draws conclusions on the measurement of societal well-being/happiness, and generates policy recommendations to optimize happiness – in aggregate and at individual levels – in the tourism sector.

1.3 Main argument

This study is informed by emerging thinking on the more inclusive measurement of societal well-being by applying Buddhist economics (Tideman, 2001), the experiment of operationalizing GNH in the Kingdom of Bhutan (Tideman, 2004; Veenhoven, 2001; Bates, 2009; Miller, 2010; Donnelly, 2004), as well as a 2009 report on GNH by Nobel laureate economist Prof Joseph Stiglitz (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009).

Traditional economic metrics, such as gross domestic product (GDP) and jobs created, by and large ignore the higher-level dimensions of societal needs (for example the need for leisure time, the quality of employment/decent work, and the intrinsic value of the natural environment to humans). Consequently, in national statistical accounts and government policy reviews, the full "hierarchy of society's needs" (Maslow, 1970) is often poorly reflected. Though conventional economic metrics have their place, they provide only a partial view of the broader societal balance sheet that should be informing our assessment of happiness. GNH, on the other hand, encapsulates non-quantifiable values and social connections at the individual, national and global levels. The concept is broader than the materialistic economic paradigm, which reduces individuals to rational economic-value maximizers.

Against this background, and with a specific focus on tourism, important recommendations are made for the journey towards developing and assessing the emotional and social intelligence of nations, or self-actualization at societal level.

1.4 Points of departure and definitions

This essay is based on a normative assumption, namely that happiness is a desirable societal goal. In the literature, happiness is variably described as a "competency" and "an indicator of all of our emotional intelligence" (Hughes et al., 2005:111), an "enduring state of mind" (Veenhoven, 2001:10), a "state of well-being and contentment" (Bracho, 2004) and an "intangible emotion" or "subjective experience of positive affect" (Donnelly, 2004:348).

Most definitions of happiness share the idea that happiness is not an end destination, but a journey that surpasses that which is quantitatively measurable. Happiness is often used interchangeably with 'satisfaction' or 'contentment.' Bracho (2004:430) argues that contentment, i.e. "a feeling of inner joy of satisfaction," is the "defining characteristic of happiness." At societal level, 'subjective well-being' is often used interchangeably with happiness (Inglehart, Foa, Peterson & Welzel, 2008:264; Powdthavee, 2009). Well-being encapsulates "a more external dimension," while contentment relates to "a more internal one" (Bracho, 2004:430). In short, "happiness can be described as the sum of satisfaction with the life domains," where satisfaction is a factor of individual as well as broader societal values (Donnelly, 2004:349).

Because it is influenced by objective materialistic and subjective social, physical and psychological motivations, it is clear that our assessment of happiness should involve both quantitative and qualitative indicators.

1.5 Structure of the paper

This introduction is followed by a substantive discussion, which is structured into three sections. Section 2 tracks the history and evolution of the concept and measurement of GNH. Section 3 applies these theoretical perspectives to the tourism policy domain. Finally, in Section 4, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for public policy made.

2 'Gross National Happiness' and Emotional Intelligence

2.1 Moving beyond GDP metrics

Various authors have suggested moving beyond GDP metrics in assessing societal well-being, also considering social, psychological, developmental and environmental goals (see for example Stiglitz et al., 2009; Veenhoven, 2001; Porritt, 2005; Layard, 2006; Frey & Stutzer, 2005). It is argued that, in their search for a meaningful life, people increasingly long for a "better balance between the material and non-material sides of their lives" (Porritt, 2005:50). In this regard, Stiglitz and colleagues (2009) remind public policy makers: "What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted."

Various institutions have consequently integrated social and human development with measurement tools, "not least the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2010) and the Canadian Index of Well-being (Canadian Index of Wellbeing, 2011)" (Vorster, 2012). As far back as 1776, in its Declaration of Independence, the USA included "the pursuit of Happiness" as an inalienable right, along with "Life" and "Liberty" (United States of America, 1776). In Bhutan, the notion dates back to a 1729 legal code that required legislation to promote happiness (Bates, 2009).

Two recent initiatives have provided new momentum to the pursuit of measuring societal happiness, namely: (i) the operationalization of a political commitment to GNH in the Kingdom of Bhutan, and (ii) the commissioning of a report on the measurement of human well-being by French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

2.2 Linking GNH and societal EI in the Kingdom of Bhutan

GNH has found very concrete expression in the Kingdom of Bhutan, where it is a political vision, a government objective and a constitutional imperative, and has been operationalized through measurement (Bates, 2009). The GNH index of Bhutan strongly reflects the spirit of Buddhist economics, or "humanized economics" (Tideman, 2001; 2004). Pankaj and

Dorji (2004:377) elaborate on this: "GNH is the overall guiding principle for the development of Bhutanese society and the economy. GNH is essentially a summarization of the basic tenets of Vajrayana Buddhism, which embraces harmony and compassion." In the Buddhist paradigm, "happiness is not simply sensory pleasure," but "an innate state of mind" (Tideman, 2004), which strongly distinguishes it from Western rational economic models built on individual utility maximization.

Bhutan's GNH index does not measure aggregate societal happiness alone, because that would once again 'aggregate' individual happiness without consideration for the 'distribution' of happiness. Rather, the index assumes that there is a threshold for individual happiness that makes it worth quantifying, and therefore has a bottom-up structure, reflecting the subjective assessments of well-being by the citizenry (Bates, 2009:11).

Bates (2009:11) identifies nine dimensions of Bhutan's GNH index, namely "psychological wellbeing, time use (whether respondents feel that they have sufficient time for various non-work activities), community vitality (strengths and weaknesses of relationships and interactions within communities), culture (diversity and resilience of cultural traditions), health, education, environment (perceptions and ecological knowledge), living standards, and governance (perceptions of equity, honesty, and quality)." Ura (2008) stresses that the measured dimensions "were selected on normative grounds, and are equally weighted, because each dimension is considered to be relatively equal in terms of equal intrinsic importance as a component of gross national happiness." The point of departure is that development should be pursued in a way that creates equilibrium between these dimensions (Pankaj & Dorji, 2004:378).

The strong overlap between these GNH indicators and those employed in the range of EI assessment models (for example Hughes et al., 2005, and Bar-On & Parker, 2000) needs little elaboration. In Bhutan, happiness is, in the words of Bracho (2004:431), "the defining yardstick of human realization." The GNH indicators are all about the journey towards self-actualization and emotional intelligence at a national societal level.

In this respect, Porritt (2005:53, 324) relates societal well-being/happiness to Maslow's hierarchy of needs and to sustainable development, where the latter includes "interdependence, empathy, equity, personal responsibility and intergenerational justice." Layard (2005) adds that societies with the highest GDP are not necessarily the 'happiest' societies, and that happiness ultimately depends on external and intrinsic values. Donnelly (2004:349), in turn, stresses the correlation between happiness and "Quality of Life" indicators such as social capital, while Ura (2008) brings ethics into the equation.

2.3 Measuring GNH: Towards a more inclusive balance sheet of societal well-being

In the report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (the 'Stiglitz report'), it is argued that narrow GDP metrics should be supplemented by quality-of-life and sustainability indicators (Stiglitz et al., 2009:8). The argument is that "GDP is an inadequate metric to gauge well-being over time, particularly in its economic, environmental and social dimensions" and, whereas "[c]urrent well-being has to do with both economic resources, such as income, and non-economic aspects of people's life," they argue that future happiness "depends on whether stocks of capital that matter for our lives (natural, physical, human, social) are passed on to future generations" (Stiglitz et al., 2009:11). Porritt (2005:53) similarly argues that it is the quality of GDP that is important, and that an "increase in levels of consumption" does not automatically translate into an "increase in wellbeing."

Stiglitz and colleagues (2009) consequently identify eight dimensions of well-being that could be measured, namely "material living standards; health; education; personal activities, including work; political voice and governance; social connections and relationships; environment (present and future conditions), (and) insecurity, of an economic as well as a physical nature."

Clearly, in so far as we do consider material economic well-being, it is not only the quantity of economic growth that is important, but also the quality of economic progress (for example social inclusion, community life, leisure time and human social capital). That is why Porritt (2005:319) argues that, if happiness is the ultimate objective, "we will need to be monitoring people's wellbeing and happiness just as closely as we measure income and gross domestic product." In the same vein, Veenhoven (2001:5) stresses people's interaction with the natural environment as a key to happiness. Burns (2008:127) also underscores the "positive links between nature and human well-being" because of "the benefits of nature for our physical, psychological, social and spiritual well-being."

In respect of the social and psychological EI dimension, Stiglitz stresses that happiness has objective and subjective dimensions, and that "the full range of factors that make life worth living" go beyond the objective and material, and extend to factors "that are not traded in markets and not captured by monetary measures" (Stiglitz et al., 2009:58). Therefore, "cognitive evaluations of one's life, happiness [and] satisfaction," in other words "resources with imputable prices, even if individuals do make trade-offs among them," are important (Stiglitz et al., 2009:16, 144).

The Stiglitz report also extends the GNH analysis to the intrinsic value of tourism and leisure, arguing that hedonistic experiences are a legitimate, yet incomplete, proxy for 'happiness in life.' The imperative of leisure ties in with the requirement of 'time,' of which both the quantity and quality are important. In the words of Stiglitz and colleagues (2009:131–132): "[I]t is reasonable to expect that people will enjoy some of the fruits of that progress in the form of leisure." Seligman (2002), on the other hand, stresses that happiness is about more than hedonistic experiences. He argues that a self-centred "pleasant life" is an important dimension of happiness, but a "meaningful life" of purposeful sharing and generosity has even greater value.

In addition, Stiglitz and colleagues (2009) extend the argument to the employment domain, pointing out that both the quantity and quality of employment matter. Of course, people's subjective experience of happiness is related to being employed, and unemployment undermines quality of life (Stiglitz et al., 2009:44). Therefore, we cannot discount the objective measures. Yet, subjective measures such as decent conditions of employment, fair remuneration, equality in the workplace, non-discrimination and the like are equally strong imperatives (Powdthavee, 2009).

3 Evaluating Tourism's Happiness Dividend

3.1 Introduction

Based on the foregoing analysis and its normative assumptions, it is evident that the societal balance sheet to evaluate tourism should extend beyond conventional GDP metrics. At face value, based on conventional metrics, tourism is a force for the good (see discussion below). However, it is important also to consider tourism's contribution (or lack thereof) to subjective human happiness, including decent work and the sustainability of the earth's resource base, where the latter represents the upstream reservoir for future (or intergenerational) happiness.

3.2 Conventional metrics

In 2011, tourism was responsible for one in every 12, or some 260 million, employment opportunities globally (WTTC, 2011:1–6). The sector's contribution to global GDP is likely to increase from the current 9.1 per cent ($6 trillion) to 9.6 per cent ($9.2 trillion) over the next decade (WTTC, 2011:5). For many small islands and developing-country tourist destinations, these numbers are much more dramatic. However, impressive as these figures may be, they provide only a partial view of tourism's happiness dividend.

3.3 Beyond conventional metrics

The umbilical cord between tourism and happiness extends far beyond

GDP and employment creation. Tourism "goes to the core of the aspirations of people world-wide and over many generations" (Vorster, 2012). Tourists consume 'experiences' – which holds great intrinsic value. As explained by Lipman and Vorster (2011): "Travel and tourism is at the heart of trade and leisure, which are arguably two of mankind's most fundamental vehicles to create well-being and happiness. Travel and tourism is the primary vehicle for delivery of leisure, and an important driver of inclusive and shared economic growth and social development."

The United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 1999:4) also underscores tourism's contribution to various dimensions of societal EI: "Tourism, the activity most frequently associated with rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature, should be planned and practiced as a privileged means of individual and collective fulfillment; when practiced with a sufficiently open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and learning."

Tourism has a unique ability to facilitate people-to-people connections. It brings people and cultures together, removes prejudices and stereotypes that feed conflict, and promotes social cohesion, peace and harmony. In short, tourism gives globalization a human face, and mitigates societal fragmentation.

3.4 Ethics, decent work and environmental sustainability: Keys to optimizing tourism's happiness dividend

Nevertheless, there is also a dark side to tourism, or a liability on the metaphorical balance sheet. To shift the balance to the positive side of the happiness scale requires a commitment to ethics, decent work and environmental sustainability.

The ethical requirements are best expressed in the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics (1999:4): "The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundations and consequences of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognize their worth."

Tourism is a labour-intensive sector with a supply chain that cascades deep into national economies and communities. That said, although the quantity of jobs is important, the quality of jobs cannot be ignored. The decent-work agenda is particularly challenged due to the seasonal nature of the tourism and hospitality industry. The increasing casualization of labour reduces job security, and often leads to exploitation (ILO, 2011). Here, it is consequently argued that governments cannot simply leave conditions of employment up to the market alone. Ensuring decent work requires public-sector policy and regulatory intervention (ILO, 2011).

Tourism also holds huge potential "as vehicle for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the household, community, national and global level" (UNWTO & UN Woman, 2011:i). Women constitute nearly 50 per cent of the tourism labour force (UNED-UK, 2002). This creates invaluable opportunities for income generation, the building of self-esteem, new skills and social connections, and a greater role for women in decision making in local communities (Machel, 2011).

However, a recent report by the UNWTO and UN Woman (2011) found huge inequalities in conditions of work, vertical and horizontal gender segregation, limited career progression opportunities, and the underrepresentation of women in management and ownership. The UN survey found that "women in tourism are typically earning 10% to 15% less than their male counterparts" (UNWTO & UN Woman, 2011:ii). Other challenges include the "sexual objectification of women," the sexual exploitation of women and children, and the exploitation of unpaid family workers in family-run tourism businesses (UNED-UK, 2002; Equations, 2007). In this regard, it is argued that governments should ultimately accept responsibility for adopting policies and measures to mitigate these challenges, which undermine tourism's happiness dividend.

Finally, in terms of environmental sustainability, we must recognise that the quality of the environment is a key enabler of happiness. Tourism contributes significantly to carbon emissions and, thus, climate change, but also to "water consumption, discharge of untreated water, waste generation, damage to local terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and threats to the survival of local cultures and traditions" (UNEP, 2011:11). To advance intergenerational happiness, it is imperative to decarbonize the tourism economy; prevent unsustainable ecosystem exploitation; conserve biodiversity; optimize the use of resources, including scarce water resources, and reduce tourism's waste footprint (Lipman & Vorster, 2011).

Overall, individuals, communities, the private sector and governments need to partner in order to optimize tourism's happiness dividend. Governments can regulate; ultimately, however, we need people and organizations to change. They should do so not for the sake of compliance alone, but because they want to become leaders in an ethically, socially and environmentally responsible tourism economy that creates decent jobs as a vehicle for individual and societal self-actualization.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the perspectives presented by contemporary economic and developmental literature on the more inclusive measurement of societal well-being and GNH, this essay explored the national and global dimensions of 'happiness', and how they connect with individual happiness, inter alia in the tourism policy domain.

Happiness is one dimension of the 'emotional intelligence of societies'. On the one hand, individual happiness depends on societal values, leisure time, people-to-people contact, the provision of decent work, and the natural environment. On the other hand, happiness also ascends from individuals to families, organizations and communities, up to the national and global levels. Seeing society as a collection of individuals creates a bottom-up connection between individual and societal happiness; yet, broader societal forces also have a top-down impact on individual happiness. Though tempting, it would thus be a mistake simply to aggregate happiness in our measurement at the national level, without understanding how individual happiness feeds into it at a subjective level.

Given this observation, and assuming the desirability of moving beyond narrow GDP metrics to assess individual and societal satisfaction and well-being, any global level of measurement should include bottom-up self-assessment by the citizenry, as is the case in Bhutan. Furthermore, while noting the strong relationship between the "dispersion of happiness" and "social equality" (Veenhoven, 2001:15), the distribution of happiness and aggregate happiness should receive equal attention.

From a planning perspective, like any good journey, the GNH journey needs a roadmap, and requires pit stops to take stock and refuel. That is where the policy interface comes into play. Governments should consciously and systematically assess progress along the GNH journey, and develop quantitative and qualitative indicators to do so, not least to ensure more appropriate policy outcomes. One such policy domain is tourism.

On balance, tourism has the "capacity to add a happiness coefficient to its paramount economic contribution" (Vorster et al., 2011). The tourism industry is a vehicle for fostering better understanding through people-to-people contact; for empowering young people and women, affording them an income, better self-esteem and a voice in decision making. By the very nature of the leisure experience, tourism replenishes the spirit. However, there is also a dark side to tourism that undermines happiness, for example the exploitation and underrepresentation of women, job insecurity due to seasonality, indecent work conditions, and threats to environmental sustainability, which has present happiness value, but is important for intergenerational happiness as well.

Fortunately, this dark side of tourism is manageable. While recognizing and advancing the economic benefits of tourism, we must ensure social inclusion, equitable growth, decent work conditions, environmental sustainability, ethical conduct, and respect for local cultures. Governments have to address these potential market failures by using the range of policy instruments at their disposal, including awareness-raising and information-based approaches, by integrating happiness indicators with national planning frameworks, both through fiscal incentives and by means of policy and regulation. In the process, governments need to forge partnerships with stakeholders who stand ready to advance tourism's contribution to human self-fulfillment and happiness as well as to the sustainability of the earth's resource base.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

EI	emotional intelligence
GDP	gross domestic product
GNH	gross national happiness
HDI	Human Development Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNED-UK	United Nations Environment and Development UK Committee
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

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The ethics platform in tourism research: A Western Australian perspective of Bhutan's GNH Tourism Model

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Abstract[1]

This paper examines Bhutan's unique development model based on a philosophy called Gross National Happiness (GNH) through tourism. The discussion is framed by Macbeth's (2005) ethics platform in tourism research. The purpose of the paper is to investigate and understand a group of Western Australians' perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination and the likelihood of participants visiting Bhutan after understanding the GNH tourism model at a live display of Bhutanese culture. The aim is to report on three major findings of the case study (N=64) where: (i) 64% of respondents agreed that GNH is the best measure of a nation's development; (ii) 98% of respondents agreed that happiness is important for the 'well-being' of a nation, and (iii) 89% of respondents indicated that they were more likely to visit Bhutan after attending the event. The implication of the study is to emphasize ethical positions that are useful as unique selling points for a tourism destination. The study on the GNH discourse contributes knowledge to tourism authorities and researchers by acknowledging that when Bhutan's GNH model is in congruence with tourists' personal values, it can lead to the likelihood of an increase in tourist visitation to Bhutan. A limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size and gender imbalance. Further research on other factors that might influence decision-making to visit Bhutan is proposed.

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Introduction

There are many arguments regarding the determining factors when choosing a valued tourism destination, amongst them motivational factors to fulfill an authentic experience (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), whilst others might consider the price or costs involved (Kozak & Andreu, 2006). Within Asia, popular tourist destinations such as Bali, Phuket or Penang are reasonably priced and affordable (Hitchcock, King, & Parnwell, 2009). Bhutan however, offers a unique authentic experience of its cultural tradition and pristine trekking environments. Bhutan is the only living Mahayana Buddhism Nation and is strategically priced exclusively to the high-end market (Dorji, 2001). Bhutan has chosen this direction because of its 'controlled tourism' model that is guided by a developmental philosophy called Gross National Happiness (GNH). GNH is a concept introduced by its benevolent 4th King Jigme Singye Wangchuck (reign 1972-2006), who proposed a more equitable measure of development that embraces 'happiness' and the 'well-being' of its people, as well as the traditional western model of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP only measures the annual total output of goods and services of a nation.

The 4thKing advocates this alternative development paradigm in that,

> Bhutan seeks to establish a happy society, where people are safe, where everyone is guaranteed a decent livelihood, and where people enjoy universal access to good education and health care. It is a society where there is no aggression and war, where inequalities do not exit, and where cultural values get strengthened every day. A happy society is one where people enjoy freedom, where there is no oppression, where art, music, dance and culture flourish (King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, 2000).

Such a philosophy appears idealistic in theory because of the many challenges that Bhutan faces in the face of modernity. Having emerged from isolation in the 1960's, this former feudal kingdom has developmentally advanced after being unified under the Wangchuck dynasty in 1907 (Aris, 1998). A democracy since 2008, Bhutan faces scrutiny from its immediate neighbours of China to the north and India to the south, and from some western countries concerning its GNH model of development.

Background

The genesis of this paper stems from an idea to understand the GNH model of development through tourism. One method was to understand a group of Western Australians' perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination. In particular, I wanted to discover the likelihood of participants visiting Bhutan as a result of their understanding of the GNH 'controlled tourism model.' The key aim of this paper is to report on the major findings of a Western Australian audience's perspective on Bhutan as a valued tourist destination after attending an information session on Bhutan.

To this end, I organized a public Bhutanese Cultural Event in a university setting. The method was to expose participants to information on the GNH development philosophy and the GNH 'controlled tourism' model. The results of the event provided some interesting findings. The first find is that two thirds of respondents (N=64) agreed that GNH is the best measure of a nation's development. Second, 98% of respondents agreed that happiness is important for the 'well-being' of a nation. Third and the most significant find is that 89% overwhelmingly indicated that they were more likely to visit Bhutan after attending the cultural event. The evidence reflects the audience's perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination.

The rationales behind the event were three folds. First, I found that many people have little or no idea about Bhutan. Second, few people have heard about GNH and the impacts this developmental philosophy has on tourism policy making. And finally, whilst there are studies on Bhutan's ecotourism (Dorji, 2001; Gurung & Seeland, 2008), and community-based tourism sustainability issues (Gurung & Scholz, 2008); political issues on cultural tourism (Reinfeld, 2003), and power and regional political approaches to tourism policy-making (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010), there appears to be a gap in the study on the effects of GNH on tourism. The study is part of a wider study on Bhutan's GNH 'controlled tourism' model and the impacts of GNH on tourism policy-making.

The scope of this paper is confined to a discourse from a Western Australians' perspectives on the GNH tourism policy and how this affects their notion of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination. The implication of this case study is the benefit through the lesson learnt, for tourism destination managers and policy-makers, in making clear to potential tourists the host country's development values that might be congruent to theirs when they are choosing a travel destination.

The next section begins with a literature review on traditional development measures with a discussion on the assumptions and flaws GDP make in a nation's developmental measure. This is followed by discussions on the merits of Bhutan's GNH philosophy that embraces 'happiness and well-being' as a nation's developmental measure. Next, I introduce Maslow's (1943) concept of the 'hierarchy of needs,' to suggest that 'happiness and well-being' progress in stages. This is next followed by the mechanisms of the Bhutanese 'controlled tourism' model. Following on, I discuss Macbeth's (2005) theoretical 'ethics platform' framework in tourism for understanding tourism's value on a potential destination. I then discuss the methodology, findings and discussion before the conclusion.

Literature review on the traditional development measures

Traditional development measures growth between nations using Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) or sometimes Gross National Product (GNP). Development is defined as, "the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced or stronger" (Hornsby, 2005,p.418). GDP accounts for the nation's value of all final goods and services produced annually (Stiglitz & Walsh, 2002). It is the gross output of a nation. GNP, like GDP, measures the total output of a nation's residents, that is, their incomes including returns on overseas investments. Both GDP and GNP measures assume comparisons between nations on the same level of wealth and standard of living (Stiglitz & Greenwald, 2003). Where GDP fails is to compare the real changes in natural environment or the social conditions between nations (Hamilton & Saddler, 1997). This flaw is problematic as GDP can be negligent in providing a true picture of the nation's 'well-being' through the measure of the output of goods and services only in economic terms (Stiglitz, 1993). For example, when a tree is cut down, it is regarded as a resource that has value. This value is recorded as income as the resource is sold to another nation. However, what is not accounted for is the need to replenish this resource, because through depletion ultimately that resource is finite. Therefore, a reduction in the natural environment is not accounted for, only the output of that good and hence the problematic nature of GDP.

One of the originators of GDP as a system of national accounting, a Russian-American who was the 1971 Economics Nobel laureate, Simon Kuznets (1901-1985), warned the US Congress in 1934, claiming that "the welfare of a nation can scarcely be inferred from a measurement of national income" (Cobb, Halstead and Rowe 1995 cited in Hamilton and Dennis, 2000, p.2). The team of three top economists, including John Keynes and John Hicks, was aware of the flaws and assumptions resulting in the shortcomings of using GDP as prosperity indicators. However, their warnings were disregarded by the US authorities (Hamilton & Denniss, 2000). Ultimately, in 1962 Kuznets questioned the GDP model suggesting a rethink as,

> Distinctions must be kept in mind between quantity and quality of growth, between its costs and returns, and between short and long run... Goals for 'more' growth should specify more growth of what and for what? (Cobb, Halstead and Rowe, 1995 cited in Hamilton & Denniss, 2000,p.3).

This paper argues that to solely regard a nation's output of goods and services as growth and hence development appears somewhat negligent, since primarily these economic accounts do not reflect the real quality of life, in particular, the distribution of wealth in terms of human 'well-being.' For example, positive 'well-being' resulting in happiness can be achieved when, according to Maslow (1943), basic human needs are met. These basic human needs include physiological and biological needs, followed by safety needs. Hence, the assumption that economic growth only reflects positive 'well-being' may seem naïve. Furthermore, McDonald (2004) suggests that GDP is a problem as there is, "an increasing appreciation throughout the world that current priorities and in particular, the growth fetish of the Western economy, are misplaced and detrimental to our collective well-being" (p.2).

Hence, the problematic GDP assumption that conditions are equal when quantifying nations in comparative positions, in relation to the wealthiest and the poorest requires some more robust discourse (Sachs, 1989; Stiglitz, Meier, & World Bank., 2001). The inequality of GDP measure does not take into account environmental health, poverty levels, health and educational services, or unpaid labour such as 'in-kind' services like childrearing, or caring for the sick and elderly at home. In short, there is no accountability for natural, social and cultural capital. Nevertheless, GDP is still used as the national and international economic standard for comparison purposes.

Professors Costanza and Kubiszweksi, both leading scientists from the Institute for Sustainable Solutions, Portland State University, estimated Bhutan's ecosystem services to be worth Nu 760 billion (USD 15.2 billion) a year (W. Samten, 2012). The estimate is ten folds Bhutan's 2010 GDP of Nu 72.3 billion (USD 1.483 billion) a year (Global Finance., 2012). Such natural capital is absent from the GDP measurements. Furthermore, in terms of national 'well-being,' Hamilton and Saddler (1997) argue that GDP's negligence include:

- the failure to account for the way in which increases in output are distributed within the community;
- the failure to account for the contribution of household work;
- the incorrect counting of defensive expenditures as positives contributions to GDP, and
- the failure to account for changes in the value of stocks of both built and natural capital (p.1).

From the above shortcomings, development indicators such as people's health, life satisfaction, level of education, living conditions, 'well-being' and happiness would arguably provide a more robust picture of development growth rather than what GDP figures might indicate (Haq, 1995). From these GDP assumptive, negligent and limited reasons, I would argue that Bhutan's GNH as an alternative development model is a necessary discourse. In the context of this study, I asked the audience in the cultural event about their perceptions of whether GDP or GNH is the better measurement of development. The next section provides an insight to the Bhutanese controlled tourism model based on the principles of GNH.

The merits of GNH development philosophy

As mentioned above, the concept of GNH as an alternative development philosophy, was announced by Bhutan's 4thKing, who in 1986 had the wisdom to declare that the end product of development is more important than the means to achieve it (Karma, 2003). The GNH concept is a development philosophy that focuses on four pillars, namely:

1. the conservation of the natural environment,
2. preservation and promotion of cultural values,
3. establishment of good governance and,
4. equitable and sustainable socio-economic development (Karma, 2003).

The first pillar is explicit in the treatment of the natural environment since when damaged, it is an irreplaceable resource. The second pillar significantly positions culture as a value to be preserved and promoted. The third pillar emphasizes the need for good governance for fairness and justice. The fourth pillar examines socio-economic policies that promote an equitable and sustainable future. As such, GNH as a developmental philosophy appears to be more holistic in nature as it incorporates nature, culture, politics and socio-economy.

In the pursuit of happiness, there are nine domains present in GNH that is measured: psychological well-being, time use, community vitality, cultural diversity, ecological resilience, living standards, health, education and good governance. Within these nine domains, there are seventy-two indicators. And from these indicators, there are 124 variables. Such a complex system of measuring happiness is beyond the scope of this paper, however for readers who are interested, please refer to the works of Pankaj (2007), Karma and Zangmo (2008).

In comparison, the GDP model as a measure of development focuses on a nation's overall economic output (Stewart, 2005). Hamilton and Saddler (1997) defines GDP as,

> The total monetary value of final goods and services produced in a country in a year. It can also be measured by the total value added at each stage of production or by the payments to the factors of production used to produce goods and services (p.1).

According to the purely economic GDP measurements, the higher the resource output, the higher the GDP level. GDP, however, does not account for depletion of natural, social and cultural resources. Hence, absent from these calculations is the 'well-being' or happiness of the people. It is important, however, to acknowledge that the achievement of basic human needs is essential (Maslow, 1943) before one can aspire for happiness. Whilst material 'well-being' is essential, research has shown that beyond a certain level, an increase in material consumption is not necessarily accompanied by a concomitant rise in happiness (McDonald, 2004; Veenhoven, 2000). A study by Kahneman and Angus (2010), based on some 45,000 Americans' survey responses, found that people's emotional well-being measured, expressed in recent joy or sadness, stop accelerating after income threshold of about US$75,000 a year (cited in Porter 2011, p.74). In furthering the cause of GNH to the world, the Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigme Thinley (2004), stressed that,

> While conventional development model stress economic growth as the ultimate objective, the concept of GNH is based on the premise that true development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occur side by side to complement and reinforce each other (cited in Acharya, 2004).

We find that the conventional development model or the GDP model, which was fundamentally modelled on Utility Theory (Hicks, 1981), and Keynesian Economic Theory (Beinhocker, 2006; Maddison, 2007), stresses on the value of all final goods and services produced in a nation in a given year (Stiglitz, 1997). In other words, according to the GDP model, the higher the resource output, the more developed is a nation. However, what is not measured are the lost or irreplaceable resources, and the non-payment services such as domestic care for children, the sick or elderly, unpaid housewife works and volunteer works. A recent report by Karen Hayward and Ronald Colman of Genuine Progress Index for Atlantic (GPI Atlantic) placed volunteer work in Bhutan, recorded in the time section of the latest GNH survey 2010, to be valued at Nu 320 million or USD 6.4 million(Y. Samten, 2012). Therefore we come to understand that the key issue remains that economic outputs in the production of goods and services alone does not account for the 'well-being' of the nation.

Maslow's (1943) concept of the 'hierarchy of needs'

Let us turn briefly to Abraham Maslow's work on motivation theory (Maslow, 1943), through his hierarchy of needs in order to better understand 'happiness' and 'well-being.'

The five levels listed in Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs model include:

1. Biological and physiological needs
2. Safety needs
3. Belongings and love needs
4. Esteem needs
5. Self-actualization

Maslow argued that basic living needs such as food, shelter, warmth, sleep and other biological and physiological needs must first be met, before the next level is deemed to be more important. The second level looks at safety needs such as security, law and order, and personal safety and 'well-being.' Once basic living needs and safety needs are met, there is room for family, affection and relationships to develop, before self-esteem needs, such as responsibility, achievement and reputation is achieved. And finally, self-actualization through personal growth and fulfilment results in 'happiness' to the self.

Maslow's model, therefore, provides some rational understanding that 'happiness' can be achieved as the hierarchy of needs progresses. But how can 'happiness' be achieved when 'happiness' by definition, according to social psychologist Ruuth Veenhoven is, "about the subjective enjoyment of one's own life?" (Veenhoven, 2000). This definition appears to be incongruent with the goals of GNH, in that happiness is seen as a somewhat selfish pursuit of the enjoyment of one's own life without regard for others. Veenhoven however, later concluded that,

> Economic wealth and material satisfaction are useful in terms of creating happiness up to a certain level but after individuals and countries have got most of their basic materials taken care of, other non-material needs become more important as a source of increasing happiness. The quality of intimate social relationships is particularly spoken of in this context (Veenhoven, 2010,p.42).

Based on Veenhoven's sound study to support the idea that increasing 'happiness' is resultant from the 'quality of social relationship,' in this sense, GNH can be seen as a societal effort for the 'common good' rather than based on an individual's subjective enjoyment of the self. According to Thinley (2009) then, "GNH is a policy of equitable and balanced distribution of the benefits of development for all spectrums of society" (p.128 cited in Brahm, 2009). Hence we come to understand that the GNH concept focuses on a 'gross effect' for the 'common good' of society, rather than individual happiness per se.

To challenge this concept however, Torra (2008, p.458) argues that, "here is enormous bias in using GDP as a well-being proxy, but is there any less bias in the alternatives?" since the end product is 'happiness,' and 'happiness' as we know, is the subjective 'well-being' of society. Torras' argument seems to resonate amongst the audience. To understand the subjective nature of happiness, we turn to Thinley (2009) who further purports that,

> You cannot quantify the causes of happiness. Living with happiness is the most important element to be measured. To

> quantify is to adopt the same economic approaches that we are seeking an alternative to (p.128 cited in Brahm, 2009).

As 'happiness' and 'well-being' is subjective, some would argue that GNH is a less robust form of developmental measure compared to GDP (Kusago, 2007). The compelling argument for GNH as a development philosophy maintains that a more equitable examination of a community's socio-cultural values, rather than just the economic outputs embedded in the traditional GDP model, provides for a more rigorous and robust measure of outcomes (Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Stiglitz, Chang, & World Bank., 2001; Torras, 2008). The subjectivity implicit in objective measures that is contradictory of 'well-being' is well articulated by Torras (2008), who suggests that, "the problem with emphasising material consumption is that progress, development and well-being improvements involve many other dimensions not reducible to income" (p.478). These include contributions of family and community on one hand and the natural environment on the other (Hamilton & Denniss, 2000).

The courage to argue that GDP be considered a fallible instrument to measure a nation's growth and development is indeed challenging, since there is no other national accounting system that offers an alternative. The 4th King theory, in which GNH is a more equitable form of measuring development, therefore invites us to examine above the limitations of GDP that can scarcely account for the national 'well-being' of a nation. In this empirical study, I have asked the audience for their perception of whether 'happiness' is important for the 'well-being' of a nation. The next section discusses Bhutan's GNH Tourism model.

Bhutan's GNH tourism model

Nestled between China in the north and India in the south, Bhutan is a small kingdom roughly the size of Switzerland. A relatively unknown tourist destination for many, including West Australians, the Bhutanese tourism product is highly priced making it less attractive to the 'mass tourism' market. Instead, Bhutan, whom many believe to be the utopian 'Shangri-la,' is unique because of its 'controlled tourism' model. This model encourages 'high value low volume' tourism, where there is a relatively high minimum spending requirement known as the tariff system, and restrictions on the number of international tourists allowed into the country (Tourism Council of Bhutan, 2010). The two key objectives of this model are firstly to contain acculturation and second, to protect the country's fragile natural environment.

How does the Bhutanese 'controlled tourism' model function?

The 'controlled tourism' model is synonymous with the fall of the Iron Curtain and is mainly practiced in line with socialistic ideologies by the former European Eastern Bloc countries and the Former Soviet Union (D. R. Hall, 1990), and currently in North Korea (Kim, Timothy, & Han, 2007). This model is underpinned by socio-cultural protection against the open-market forces aligned to the Keynesian economic theory. Researchers have suggested that the free market enterprise approach to tourism, or better known as the mass tourism model, focuses on large-scale tourist numbers (Aramberri, 2010; Bramwell, 2004; Pons, Crang, & Travlou, 2009; Segreto, Manera, & Pohl, 2009; Sinha, 2005). Studies indicate that this large-scale approach can lead to impacts such as environmental destruction, acculturation, and a false promise of long-term benefits (Beech & Chadwick, 2006; Boissevain, 1996; Ghimire, 2001; Ghimire & United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1997).

Bhutan's 4th King had the hindsight and wisdom to note the impacts of mass tourism from the experiences of neighbouring Nepal. Large scale mountaineering tourism has left Nepal in a environmentally destitute state (Rogers, 1997), with rubbish left all over the mountain trials and economic instability due to the seasonal nature of tourism (Bansal, Gautam, & Institute of Integrated Himalayan Studies (Simla India), 2007). When Bhutan opened its door to tourism in the 80s, it adopted a carefully managed 'controlled tourism model,' one that limited the extent of incoming tourists, mainly because of its limited infrastructure. However, underpinning the wise King's decision on a 'controlled tourism' policy were the four GNH pillars outlined earlier. This policy saw that the environment was protected above all, whilst limiting outside influence and pressure on its socio-cultural integrity (Basu, 1996) .

The essential feature of this model, known as 'high value low volume' is its explicit daily tariff of US$ 200 (equivalent to around AU$ 180 Australian dollars) per tourist during the high season, which is increased to US$ 250 from 2012. For the unfamiliar, this rate appears to be a rather high charge, however upon closer examination, the daily tariff includes the following: accommodation (three-star hotel), all meals, tours, transport and the services of a tour guide throughout the duration of stay, and is a condition attached to obtaining a tourist visa (Rogers, 2002). Another interesting feature is that out of this daily tariff, a tourism 'royalty fee' of US$ 65 or AU$ 59, increased to US$ 70 in 2012, is channeled into a fund for the nation's universal free access to education and health services. A further US$ 10 or AU$ 9 is directed towards tourism development fund.

Bhutan's controlled tourism model therefore provides direct transparent benefits as a 'common good' to its citizens. For example, Bhutanese nationals enjoy free educational (up to secondary level) and health services. Hence, this paper argues that this tourism model deliver direct value to its people. More significantly, the tourism benefit is made tangible and transparent in Bhutan through the ethical compass of GNH philosophy that directs equitable distribution of tourism revenue (royalty fee) towards the 'well-being' of its citizens.

In the mass tourism model, the economic impact is measured through Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) system. Because a tourism product is co-dependent on a host of different economic production components, for example transportation by airline, taxi, bus; tour agency business enterprize through sight-seeing activity; accommodation as in staying in a hotel/motel; food and beverage enterprize through food consumption in a restaurant; and retailing business; it is difficult to show direct tourism economic contribution in the national accounting system. Each of the tourism service components has a classification. The purpose of TSA therefore is, "to provide the means by which the economic aspects of tourism can be drawn out and analyzed separately within the structure of the National Accounts" (Richardson & Fluker, 2004, p.100). Therefore, the economic benefits in national accounting using GDP calculation are difficult to ascertain, if not for TSA.

It is important to mention that in the mass tourism model, a significant amount of revenue (profit) goes back to the parent company, which is often a foreign investor, known as 'leakage' (Richardson & Fluker, 2004). In sustainability terms, this raises the question of how effective is the flow of direct benefits to the local community. In some cases, attractive incentives such as tax break is provided by governments, in efforts to entice potential large scale tourism developers (Butler & Aramberri, 2005; Butler & Pearce, 1999; Coopers & Lybrand. & Western Australia Tourism Commission., 1997; Inskeep & World Tourism Organization., 1994; Singh & Singh, 1999).

The main issue arising between the two models, that of 'high value low volume' and 'mass tourism' essentially lies in the real term benefits to the local community. As mentioned earlier, around 30% of Bhutan's tourism revenue directly contributes to the nation's education and health revenue portfolio called the 'royalty fee.' In 2009, this amount was US$11.5 million dollars (Tourism Council of Bhutan, 2011). Under the TSA system however, it remains unclear as to where the tourism benefits might end up. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind and understand that a key function of Bhutan's 'controlled tourism' model is to provide some 'common good' to its people. Receiving free education and health services may help achieve Maslow's hierarchy of needs model in meeting basic living and safety needs. To this end, I measured the audience's perception to discover if they valued Bhutan's tourism model and the likelihood that they might visit Bhutan, knowing that around 30% of their tourism spending contributes direct real benefits to the Bhutanese people. In this sense, I would argue that tourism plays a responsible and ethical role, to which we will turn to Macbeth (2005) for further discussions in ethics platform in tourism in the following section.

Macbeth's ethics platform in tourism

The perspectives of tourism development scholarship has evolved since mass tourism originated with the movement of large numbers of visitors by train from English industrial cities to the coastal towns for recreation (Sigaux, 1965). Tourism literature have pointed out that whilst economic benefits resulted from such mass movements, the tourism impacts such as overcrowding, littering, seasonality, exploitation of limited infrastructure, environmental degradation gave rise to critical appreciation of the tourist dollar (C. M. Hall, Jenkins, & Kearsely, 1997; C. M. Hall & Lew, 2009; Mill & Morrison, 1992; Swarbrooke, 1999). On the one hand, mass tourism has created jobs and opportunities; on the other hand, it has left behind a host of impacts mentioned above. Proponents of mass tourism continue to argue on the net benefits provided (Butler, 1989), whereas opponents point out that elusive costs (externality) outweighs such net benefits (Beech & Chadwick, 2006; Buhalis & Costa, 2006; Ihalayanake, 2007).

Macbeth's (2005) seminal piece on the *ethical platform* in tourism, seeks to challenge and invite serious questions of 'morality' in tourism. Taking the cue from Jafari's (1990) four tourism platforms of advocacy, cautionary, adaptancy and knowledge-based approaches towards tourism development, Macbeth advances two further platforms, namely, *value-based* and *ethics*. The key concept Macbeth introduces is the discourse of, “ethical positions of stakeholders, in what each values and how each prioritizes those values“ (p.967). It cannot be denied that tourism contributes significantly to developing countries, especially elevating poverty (Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin, 2000; C. M. Hall, 2007). However this paper calls for caution in tourism development that may cause tourism ills such as acculturation, economic leakage, seasonality, externalities and environmental decline previously mentioned.

Jafari’s (1990) four platforms set out the foundation of tourism development after World War II. The ’advocacy’ platform focused on the economic prospects and benefits of tourism that overshadowed all else. The ’cautionary’ platform arose as a result of alarming discrepancies in the promise and spread of economic benefits and environmental degradation resulting from tourism. The ’adaptancy’ platform calls for efforts to alleviate some of the tourism impacts resulting from earlier platforms. This resulted in tourism forms which are responsive to the host communities, for example rural tourism, ecotourism and a more holistic approach termed sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism as a concept was derived in the late eighties, as a spin-off from the infamous *Brundtland Report* (Brundtland & World Commission on Environment and Development., 1987), where the notion of sustainable development was first conceived as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the activity of the future generations to meet their own needs” (p.34).

Maturing into the ’knowledge-based’ platform, rather like a ’helicopter-view’ with a systems approach facilitates a more comprehensive tourism development based on scientific objectivity. These four platforms of scholarship appeared to satisfy tourism academia until Macbeth (2005) brought enlightenment by arguing that, “tourism scholarship by becoming overly “scientific“ in its epistemology, would be limited and restrictive in its understanding of the world" (p.965). Macbeth may have taken the cue from Tribe's (1997) suggestion that scientific routes may have resulted in technical straitjacket of quantitative data. Nevertheless, the currency of Macbeth's argument for a subjective approach, evident in a 'value-based' and 'ethics' platform does deserve our attention.

Such a subjective platform approach has shaken previous stable foundations, if not created a seismic tremor within tourism academe, for Macbeth bravely defended the need to not ignore *ethical positions* of tourism stakeholders. In other words, whilst objective quantitative data does indicate system findings, 'values and ethics' do not only enrich but further add a whole new dimension in tourism development scholarship. This is important, I would argue, in understanding the political economy of tourism stakeholders.

Ethical positions in practice then, to reiterate Macbeth (2005) is, "what each values and how each prioritizes those values" (p.967). In the context of potential visitors, I would argue that, when the distribution of tourism revenue is made transparent and aligns ethically with visitors' values, the value of that destination is secured. In short, when tourists' direct contribution to tourism is made known to the tourist, as in the case of Bhutan, where a *royalty fee* of 30% of the tourism revenue driven by the GNH policy, is channeled into the nation's *common good* coffers (health, education and tourism development), tourists may tend to value such a model.

Such knowledge could lead to the likelihood that increases a tourist's desire to visit Bhutan. For some tourists, this may be due to an altruistic endeavour, nevertheless, ethically it aligns to one's own value system, and hence is subjective in nature. As the purpose of the study is to investigate the West Australians' public perception of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination, such knowledge may help establish the likelihood of participants visiting Bhutan, as a result of their understanding of the 'controlled tourism' model. A survey questionnaire is used which will be further discussed in the following section.

The study is informed by Macbeth's ethical paradigm for tourism research, and may be of interest to tourism managers and researchers. The idea of ethics also applies to tourists. By extension, I am applying Macbeth's paradigm in a practical way through understanding a group of Western Australians' perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination. Ethical standpoints of tourists should not be dismissed. Rather, ethical standpoints of tourists when aligned with those of the host country may attract visits to that country. In this context, by illustrating the concept of the GNH philosophy, the possibility of potential visitors' personal value being in congruence with the GNH philosophy, may plausibly give rise to the likelihood of many more visitors regarding Bhutan as a valued tourist destination and wanting to visit Bhutan.

Methodology

The Bhutanese cultural event

The Bhutanese cultural event occurred in August 2010. I gave an introduction on the kingdom of Bhutan and highlighted the concept of GNH, in addition to using GDP as a developmental indicator. I explained to the audience about the four pillars of GNH which are: (1) conservation of the natural environment, (2) preservation and promotion of cultural values, (3) establishment of good governance, and (4) equitable and sustainable socio-economic development (Karma, 2003). As the aim was to discover whether GNH is the best measure of a nation's development, I explained that GNH is structurally divided into nine domains including the: standard of living, health of the population, education, ecosystem vitally and diversity, cultural vitally and diversity, time use and balance, good governance, community value and emotional 'well-being.' These nine domains are further broken down into seventy-two indicators. I did not discuss what they were, as the focus was not to carry out the indicator measurements but rather to understand the concept of GNH and how it applies to tourism in Bhutan.

Next, I provided the audience with general information about Bhutan (location, demography, economy, government, etc.). I then discussed about the concept of GNH, what the principles entail and how 'happiness' is measured in Bhutan through surveys and interviews and showed the audience a fifteen minutes DVD about Bhutan's main tourist attractions. Then, two experienced Australian tour guides provided more information about their experiences on Bhutan. Following on, ten Bhutanese scholars sang and performed two cultural dances. I then showed the audience a Bhutanese movie about Bhutanese values in the face of modernity, subtitled in English. During the movie intermission, the audience were invited to taste Bhutanese food and drinks. At the end of the movie, the purposive audience of 120 were asked to answer a survey questionnaire. Three key questions asked were whether the audience: (1) believed that GNH is the best measure of a nation's development; (2) believed that 'happiness' is important for the 'well-being' of a nation, and (3) were more likely to visit Bhutan after attending the cultural event.

Apart from these three key questions, participants were asked if this event has affected their desire to visit Bhutan and if they will tell their friends about Bhutan. Additionally, three open-ended questions invited participants' qualitative perspectives with three words that best described Bhutan; aspects of GNH that participants liked or disliked and any further comments. This allowed participants to voice their opinions freely rather than being restricted with the close ended questions (De Vaus, 2002). A return of 64 questionnaires produced a 53% response rate.

Sample description

The purposive population sample (N=64) consists of academics, students and the wider public. The population sample gender is made up of two thirds females (67%) and a third males (33%). The most significant age group of the sample is between 50-59 years old, representing a third of total respondents (37%). A great majority (88%) of respondents have never visited Bhutan.

Data analysis

The data analysis tool SPSS 18 program was used to analyse quantitative nominal data using the Likert scale (1-5), to determine the relative intensity of responses, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree (Babbie, 2005, p.485). The quantitative data collected is presented using descriptive statistics, which summarizes the characteristics of the sample population such as percentage (%) or the relationship between the subgroup (n) to the total group (N); the mean (x) which is an average value; standard deviation (σ) which is a measure of the dispersion around the mean, and mode (m) which is the most frequent appearing value (Sarantakos, 2005,pp 429-433). The qualitative data is presented using content analysis, which is the "study of human recorded communications" (Babbie, 2005, p.328), where coding of words is use to transform data into themes conceptualizing the findings.

Findings and discussions

The most common three theme words that best describes Bhutan were 'peaceful' (15%), 'beautiful' (14%) and 'nature' (13%) from a total of 168 descriptive collected. 'Happiness' was fourth position with 9%. Further findings revealed that a significant majority 88% of survey respondents (N=64) have not visited Bhutan. This may indicate that Bhutan is less popular or more expensive than other mass tourism destinations such as Bali, Singapore or Thailand. Of these, almost three-quarters (72%, N=59) of respondents indicated that they would like to visit Bhutan in the future.

The findings revealed that two-thirds of respondents 64%, (N=64, x= 3.89, σ = .81, m = 4) agreed that GNH is the best measure of a nations' development, whereas only a third of respondents preferred GDP 36%, (N=63, x= 2.95, σ =1.08, m = 2). The significant difference suggests that a majority of the respondents think that GNH should be a key component for measuring development. By understanding the GDP flaws by Simon Kuznets, GDP negligence (Hamilton and Saddler, 1997) and assumptions of GDP (cited in Hamilton & Denniss, 2000) the findings showed that respondents were able to appreciate the compelling argument for a more equitable form of development measured through GNH. This could be attributed to what Torras (2008) terms as the 'non income' dimensions embedded in the GNH philosophy.

Overwhelmingly, 98% of respondents, (N=64, x= 4.65, σ =.48, m =5) agreed that happiness is important for the 'well-being' of a nation, whilst a great majority 81% (N=62, x= 3.98, σ =.77, m =4) think that economic development is important. That 81% of respondents saw economic development as being important aligns with Maslow's (1943) notion of the hierarchy of needs, which essentially says that the first two levels of basic human needs of biological, physiological, and safety must be met first. Once these basic needs are met, higher needs such as belonging, love, esteem, self-actualization and personal growth can begin. On the other hand, a significant 98% of respondents saw happiness as important for the 'well-being' of a nation. This clearly shows that essentially higher needs including happiness are very extremely important in the 'make-up' of a nation.

More significantly, 89% of respondents, (N=62, x= 4.37, σ =.65, m =5), agreed that they were more likely to visit Bhutan after attending this cultural event. This result may reflect on the understanding of the benefits of 'controlled tourism,' such as the tourism 'royalty fee,' which is channelled into education, health and tourism development funds. As this paper argues that Bhutan's tourism model adds direct value to its people through Macbeth's (2005) framework of *ethical positions* of tourism stakeholders, it may appear that the audience identified with the value in the GNH tourism model that benefits the 'common good' of the people. Whilst other tourism model may add value to the local economy through its Tourism Satellite Account, there is little evidence to show that indeed the local population benefits from tourism, since as discussed earlier, 'leakages' do occur. Therefore, through the mechanism of the GNH policy, there is evidence of ethical distribution of tourism revenue towards the 'well-being' of the Bhutanese. In this sense, I would argue that it would be in the interest of tourism authorities to highlight such transparency in their marketing efforts, since there can be alignment between tourists' *ethical positions* and the benefits tourism provides.

And finally, after learning about GNH as a development philosophy, a significant majority of respondents 84%, (N=62), agreed that they would tell their friends about GNH. This reflects a good indication of the awareness of GNH as a valuable alternative model of development. Furthermore, only 9% of respondents indicated that the event has not affected their desire to visit Bhutan compared with 91% of respondents who have been affected.

Some aspects of GNH that respondents (R) like about GNH include:

- Clear government focus on community (R4),
- It's probably the only sustainable way for human beings to live (R18),
- Respect for the people and recognition of the importance of their happiness (R40).

On the other hand, respondents also pointed out that they dislike GNH as:

- It is harder to measure as happiness mean different things to different people (R9),

- It is not easy for other governments to implement (R11),
- It is a subjective form of measurement (R17).

Despite the varying comments on GNH, there appears to be some recognition of the importance of happiness, subjective form of measurement and the role good governance plays in facilitating GNH for the 'common good' in the community through tourism. This may imply that GNH is a relatively new and obscure concept; however, one that beyond doubt requires more discourse. Two further comments that are of significant relevance were that,

> I really like the concept of controlled tourism. Many countries in Asia have been ruined by uncontrolled tourism. It is good to see that Bhutan is protecting its culture in such a manner (R12), [and] Bhutan is one step ahead from developed countries (R4).

These positive comments further suggest respondents' belief that GNH is a more equitable developmental concept than GDP. Additionally, one respondent declared that GNH is, "Wonderful! If only the Australian government shared these values" (R29). Some of these responses do suggest that there are lessons to be learnt from respondents whose personal values is in alignment with the principals of GNH, and the ethical values embedded in this development model.

Conclusion

Many people have not heard of Bhutan, let alone the idea of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Bhutan's unique development model includes GNH, apart from the traditional western development measure of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This has given rise to some skepticism. This study is part of a wider study on Bhutan's 'controlled tourism' model and the impacts of GNH on tourism policy-making. The purpose of the paper is to understand a group of Western Australians' perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination and the likelihood of participants visiting Bhutan after understanding the GNH tourism model. The key aim here was to report on three major findings of the case study where: (i) 64% of respondents agreed that GNH is the best measure of a nation's development; (ii) 98% of respondents agreed that happiness is important for the 'well-being' of a nation, and (iii) 89% of respondents indicated that they were more likely to visit Bhutan after attending the cultural event.

The evidence significantly indicated the audience's cognizance of Bhutan's 'controlled tourism' model, with 'royalty fee' that provides health and education for its people, where 89% of respondent were more likely to visit Bhutan after knowing what they now know. Hence, the notion that Bhutan is an expensive destination is plausibly identified as a misjudgment. The evidence strongly reflects the audience's perspective of Bhutan as a valued tourist destination. The implication of the study for tourism authorities and researchers is to emphasize their ethical positions, and use that as their unique selling point in their marketing campaigns.

A limitation of this study was the relatively small sample size and gender imbalance. Another limitation was that it was unclear if money or value was the determining factor to visit, or not visit, Bhutan. A recommendation for future research could focus on other factors that influence visitors' decisions to visit Bhutan.

The case study has contributed to knowledge, especially for policy-making and strategic tourism destination management through the discourse in highlighting and advancing Bhutan's 'controlled tourism' model through the philosophy of GNH to potential visitors. This may result in a stronger likelihood of more visitors visiting Bhutan possibly due to their personal value being in congruence with the GNH philosophy.

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In-service Training: Key to Enhancing Competence and Building Confidence for Job Performance of *Gewog*-level Extension Agents in Bhutan

Dr Samdrup Rigyal*

Abstract

The study is aimed to measure the confidence levels of the extension agents under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests based in the gewogs for efficient job performance by identifying their perceptions on the various competencies. A total of nine out of the 20 dzongkhags comprising of 60 gewogs from four regions of the country were selected for the purpose of the study. A structured questionnaire-based survey was administered to 150 samples of extension agents at the gewog-level. The study showed that most of the competencies EAs considered important were also possessed by them and vice versa. However, the competencies considered important that were least possessed by EAs were particularly in vital areas, including technical knowledge and skill oriented competencies. The study indicated that EAs needed some form of training in all the 40 competencies of extension knowledge, skills and qualities measured. The technical knowledge competency stood out as the most important training need. The senior extension agents have lower level of confidence on various competencies as compared to their juniors. These differences in the competency levels could be attributed to the lack of consistent in-service training programme. The approaches and practices of delivering extension services are consistently evolving and curriculum of training institutions being improved based on new developments. The implementation of in-service training should be systematized and regularized or at least the frequency of in-service training should be increased in the future so that technical knowledge and skills of employed/senior extension agents in the field are consistently upgraded and their confidence levels on technical competencies further enhanced. In-service training was rated as one of the primary sources of information and knowledge for extension agents.

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The opportunities to participate in forums like workshops, seminars, conferences and meetings were also found very useful and knowledgeable. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests should accord the highest priority in increasing the frequency of providing in-service training particularly to senior extension agents and also give more opportunities to staff based in the dzongkhags/gewogs for participating in national/regional conferences and seminars.

Introduction

Bhutan is administratively divided into 20 *dzongkhags/*districts. Each *dzongkhag* is governed by a *Dzongdag*/district administrator. The *Dzongkhag* is further broken down into further smaller administrative units called *Gewogs*. In each of the country's 205 *gewogs*, there is an extension centre manned by three extension agents (EAs) representing agriculture (AG), animal husbandry (AH), and forestry (FO) extension working in an integrated approach in the delivery of their services. These EAs have mostly diploma-level trainings and are equipped with basic technical knowledge and communication skills.

The agricultural extension centres are equipped with basic necessary resources to smoothly transfer appropriate technologies, facilitate access to input supplies and promote farm-based enterprizes. The *gewog* extension centres also provide feedbacks to government agencies to improve future services and provide assistance to relevant agencies for prioritizing development activities. The *Dzongkhag* level extension service provides administrative and technical back-stopping to the *gewog* extension centres while the National Extension Coordination (ECC) Unit, at the centre in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MoAF), provides guidelines for implementation of extension programmes at the national level. The *gewog* extension centres are the main service providers to the farmers.

Initially, agricultural extension services in Bhutan were delivered centrally by the Departments under the Ministry of Agriculture through the various outreach programmes such as the research/production farms. In the mid 1980s, the government decentralized all its development programmes to the districts and appointment of EAs in the blocks was started. It was during the 1992-1997 period that the government adopted an integrated approach to services delivery through the Renewable Natural Resources (RNR) sector placing greater importance on farmers' participation in the decision making process.

Since 1985, the extension strategy in Bhutan was centred on the adoption of the Training and Visit (T&V) extension system. Experiences in applying this system demonstrated the need to modify the management to suit the difficult terrain and scattered farming community of Bhutan. The application of this system, however, improved the overall implementation of the extension services and contributed to farm development especially those in the project-based areas (Tashi, 1993).

The first national extension policy was finalized in 1995 and provided guidelines in pursuing rural development. The main emphasis of this policy was determined by the definition it adopted from Roling (1988) to bring about "communication intervention" and "voluntary changes" on the part of the farmers. To keep pace with the change, this policy was revised, and a simplified definition was adapted where it mentioned that, "extension is providing necessary information to help people form sound opinions and make good decisions" (MoAF 2009, p.9). The policy also recognizes that it is equally important to facilitate providing necessary means and inputs to translate newly acquired information, knowledge or skills into action.

According to the revised extension policy, motivation of extension staff is important to deliver the expected goods and services to the farmers. "The extension system is only as good and effective as the extension agents are. Therefore, how to keep the extension agents highly motivated, dedicated and committed towards their work is a major challenge"

(MoAF, 2009, p. 8).

Given these facts, "extension managers need to know what motivates their staff to be able to manage them more effectively, minimize employees' frustration and boost their working morale," (Mwangi and McCasline, 1994 cited in Fabsoro, Awotunde, Sodiya & Alarima, 2008, p. 141). MoAF (2007) noted that, "job status of extension staff" in Bhutan was reportedly low and that there is an urgent need to "explore other ways and means of motivating the extension staff."

One way of improving the motivation levels of EAs is to pay adequate attention by the MoAF in providing opportunities for enhancing their technical competencies and up-gradation of professional capacities through proper in-service training both within and outside the country. The human resource management division (HRMD) of MoAF should maintain proper staff database on human resource development and make them available to the respective departments for monitoring the staff training position.

Theoretical framework

Fabusoro, Awotunde, Sodiya and Alarima (2008) said that within an agricultural setting, particularly an agricultural extension outfit, motivation of staff is important in achieving the desired agricultural development plan. They said, "Agricultural extension aims at improving the practice of agriculture in the developing world through extension of knowledge to farm families on improved agricultural practices and technologies" (p. 140). Apantaku and Apantaku (2008 cited in Fabusoro, Awotunde, Sodiya & Alarima, 2008) found that motivation factors accounted for 56% of the variance in job satisfaction of agricultural extension workers.

The work motivation and morale of extension staff are very poor in many countries (Vijayaragavan, K. & Singh, Y. P., 1988). The bureaucratic structure of extension administration, lack of in-service training, rewards and incentives, poor facilities, poor promotional avenues, and the low esteem meted out to extension agents are the major causes of poor motivation and morale. The extension supervisors should have the ability to motivate and lead the field extension workers so that the field agents perform more than routine jobs. Special in-service training for developing motivation among field-workers has to be undertaken by the supervisors. There is the need to identify the job areas in which extension workers are less competent and need trainings. Until and unless these areas are clearly identified, their training programmes may not be planned efficiently (Khan, Lodhi, Ashraf & Khan, 2007).

The training of extension personnel contributes directly to the development of human resources within extension organizations (Vijayaragavan et al., 1988). "Training programmes are directed towards maintaining and improving current job performance" (Stoner & Freeman, 1992, p. 388). Training has to start with the identification of training needs through job analysis, performance appraisal, and organizational analysis.

Worldwide, there are currently more than 600,000 extension workers comprised of administrative staff, subject-matter specialists (SMS), field-workers, and some multipurpose unidentified people; the Asian and Pacific countries have absorbed more than 70 per cent of them (Bahal, Swanson, & Earner, 1992). Deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and ability among extension personnel, particularly those of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, are remarkable. About 39 per cent of the extension personnel worldwide have a secondary-level and 33 per cent an intermediate-level education (Bahal et al., 1992).

Moreover, within each region, there are lots of variations in basic academic qualifications of the frontline extension workers, SMS, and administrators. Differences in training received are also wide (Halim, A.

& Ali, M. M. 1998). In Africa, most frontline extension workers still have only a secondary school diploma (Bahal et al., 1992). The poor educational background of extension personnel necessitates regular training. In almost all competency studies of extension personnel in developing countries, findings indicated the need for further strengthening of professional competencies in almost all areas of competencies identified (Androulidakis & Siados, 2003; Hussain, 2004; Khan et al, 2004; Muhammad et al, 1995; Raad, Yoder & Diamond, 1994; Randavay & Vaughn, 1991).

In-service training is offered by organizations from time to time for the development of skills and knowledge of the incumbents (Abdul et al., 1998). It is the process of staff development for the purpose of improving the performance of an incumbent holding a position with assigned job responsibilities. It promotes the professional growth of individuals. "It is a program designed to strengthen the competencies of extension workers while they are on the job" (Malone, 1984, p. 209). In-service training is a problem-centred, learner-oriented, and time-bound series of activities which provide the opportunity to develop a sense of purpose, broaden perception of the clientele, and increase capacity to gain knowledge and mastery of techniques (Halim et al., 1998).

Extension staff development (through training) is a crucial element in making the extension system more efficient and effective (MoA, 2009). However, once graduating as extension agents, continuous professional development through in-service training programme for extension agents in Bhutan still remains a challenge. The lack of properly coordinated up-gradation and specialization plan of extension staff, stand as a major shortcoming besides the existence of unhealthy practice of ad-hoc and biased nomination of candidates for overseas capacity building trips (ECC, 2007).

Raad, Yoder & Diamond (1994) suggested that professional competencies should be developed at the in-service level rather than at the pre-service level. They further suggested that even after pre-service programmes are implemented, there remains a substantial need for continuing education programmes for extension personnel. This will require an articulated continuing education programme which addresses the specific professional needs of agents.

Training is a circular process that begins with needs identification and after a number of steps, ends with evaluation of the training activity. A change or deficiency in any step of the training process affects the whole system, and therefore it is important for a trainer to have a clear understanding about all phases and steps of the training process (Halim et al., 1998). It is also important to understand that the training phases should end with an evaluation to determine the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of activities in light of their objectives. Raab et al. (1987, p. 5) define training evaluation as "a systematic process of collecting information for and about a training activity which can then be used for guiding decision making and for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of various training components."

Objectives

This study was part of a larger research concerned with examining the monitoring and evaluation system for improving the job performance of *gewog*-level EAs in Bhutan. Opinions were sought both from extension agents and RNR sector heads in the *dzongkhags*. This particular study focused on the professional competency levels and training needs of extension agents and compared the perception of extension agents on the competency levels possessed by them. The primary objectives of this study were:

1. To measure the competency level of EAs for job performance
2. To identify the in-service training requirements of EAs

3. To find out the differences of perceptions on the competency level by senior and junior EAs and by sector
4. To identify in-service training as the source of information and knowledge for EAs

Methods

Nine *dzongkhags* out of the total 20 *dzongkhags* were selected as study samples based on cluster sampling. The cluster sampling was employed by subdividing the *dzongkhags* distributed in the four regions covered by the RNR Research and Development Centres (RNR R&DC) of the MoAF. The R&DCs in Bhutan are distributed to cover the whole of the country through the four regions of East, East-Central, West and West-Central. The national mandates of R&DCs are horticulture research for east with six *dzongkhags*, cereal crops research for west with five *dzongkhags*, forestry research for west-central with six *dzongkhags*, and livestock research for east-central with three *dzongkhags*. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of the four geographical regions.

Table 1 Four geographical regions along with the Research & Development Centres with their national research mandates and sample districts from each region

Region	**Research Centers (RC) & mandates**	**Total No. of *dzongkhags***	**Names of Sample *dzongkhags***	**No. of respondents**
West	Yusipang: *(Forestry research)*	5	2 *dzongkhags*: *Haa and Paro*	31
West-central	RC, Bajo: (*Cereal crop research*)	6	3 *dzongkhags*: *W/Phodrang, Tsirang and Punakha*	69
East	RC, Wengkhar: (*Horticulture Research*)	6	2 *dzongkhags*: *Mongar and Trashigang*	30
East-Central	RC, Jakar: (*Livestock research*)	3	2 *dzongkhags*: *Bumthang and Trongsa*	20

Total	20	9	150

Having stratified the *dzongkhags* in the four regions, two sample *dzongkhags* each were selected from all the regions through simple random sampling. One additional sample was selected from the west-central region, as its mandate extended to one of the largest research areas, thereby making a total of nine *dzongkhag* samples. As the total number of *dzongkhags* in Bhutan is 20, the nine sample *dzongkhags* were equivalent to 45% of the total size.

There are three extension agents representing AG, AH, and FO in each extension centre in every *gewog*. As indicated in the introduction, there are a total of 205 *gewogs* in the various *dzongkhags*. Since there are three EAs in each extension centre in every geog, a blanket count of a total of 615 EAs was taken. From this total number of EAs, 29.27% of the EAs totalling to 180 EAs was taken as samples for the study. These many EAs covered 60 *gewogs* in the sample *dzongkhags*. These 60 *gewogs* were apportioned to the nine sample *dzongkhags* based on the sizes of the samples (29.27% EAs) and size of the *dzongkhags* in terms of the number of *gewogs*.

A structured questionnaire was designed and mostly self-administered questionnaire survey was executed. The survey was preceded by the pretesting of questionnaires with 45 respondents in two *dzongkhags*. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, a training-workshop was conducted with all the respondents in respective *dzongkhag* headquarters. Data format from EAs were collected through postal and personal hand delivery from October-November, 2009.

Out of the nine sampled *dzongkhags* with 180 EAs, 153 EAs responded out of which three data formats were screened and a sample size of 150 retained. The data analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

To obtain a quantitative measure of respondents' perceptions towards the competency level EAs considered important and level possessed, the rating scales used in the questionnaire included: very low = 1; low = 2; average = 3; high = 4 and; very high = 5. These rating scales were used as the basis for calculating the mean scores (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the competency level of each competency statement.

The categories of competencies used to measure was based on the recommendations made by Oakley and Garforth (1985) on the types of knowledge and personal skills EAs should have to make them carry out their jobs effectively. Knowledge focused mainly on the technical capabilities, rural life, adult education and policy, while skills focused on the various sub-categories of organization and planning, communication, analysis and diagnosis, leadership skills, and initiatives. The study also measured the personal qualities of EAs including their self confidence, sensitivity to farmers' feelings, reliability to work, and commitments.

The first analysis (Table 2) presented the mean score ranking to show the levels of competencies they considered important against the level they possessed. Table 3 shows the discrepancy values on the basis of differences between the importance levels of competencies for the job performance of EAs and the possessed levels as training needs in the identified competencies. Two F-tests (Table 4 & Table 5) followed by Scheffe post hoc comparisons were executed to find the differences of groups of EAs by periods of joining services and by sector.

A study on the sources of knowledge and information of EAs was also conducted. Table 7 shows the scores of the various sources where in-service training was identified as of the key sources of knowledge and information.

Personal characteristics of EAs

The personal characteristics of the EAs showed that there were 127 male and 23 female respondents with ages ranging from 21 to 53 years. The average age was 32.9 years out of which 138 of them were married with some of the spouses also working as EAs. The EAs have joined services from 1971 to 2009 with the range of 38 years. There were 53 respondents from AG, 56 from AH and 41 from FO sub-sectors. About 92% of the EAs have diploma-level education and training skills with the rest possessing post-graduate diploma or mere certificates. As many as 24 EAs reported having to stay overnight to reach their extension centres in the respective blocks while 126 of them said they could reach their centres within a day or less.

Competency level found important by EAs

Table 2 shows that EAs rated almost all competencies having a high level of importance (mean score (M) = 3.87 to 4.80). Out of the total of 40 competencies, the most important competencies they found in the seven categories of knowledge, organization & planning, communication, analysis and diagnosis, leadership qualities, initiative and personal qualities, included: good understanding about block, people, and culture (M=4.53); design and conduct farmers' training (M=4.47); ability to convey extension messages effectively (M=4.58); find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations (M=4.37); possess self motivation, determination and dedication (M=4.44); implement extension activities without being supervised (4.41); and maintain relationship with farmers (M=4.80). The three competencies EAs found least important in the seven categories in terms of mean score were, apply persuasive style to inform clientele (M=3.87); recognize learning differences in age groups (M=3.89); and coordinate work schedules with other peer staff (M=4.02).

With standard deviations of all the levels in almost all categories found ≤1, there are lesser variations in the perceptions of the respondents with regards to the overall competency levels found important.

Table 2 Statements of professional competency rank orders, mean and standard deviation of extension agents of various categories (n=150)

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	Level of Importance			Level of Possession		
		R	M	SD	R	M	SD
1. Knowledge							
1	Good understanding about block, people & culture	1	4.53	0.621	1	4.13	0.730
2	Adequate technical knowledge in the subject area	2	4.46	0.692	4	3.46	0.631
3	Awareness of the current government policy	3	4.39	0.741	3	3.49	0.809
4	Awareness of the approaches to adult education	4	4.21	0.805	2	3.52	0.817
2. Personal skills							
2.1 Organization and planning							
1	Design and conduct farmers' training	1	4.47	0.621	1	4.15	0.775
2	Deal effectively with field / extension problems	2	4.44	0.690	4	3.89	0.651
3	Design a work plan for extension activity	2	4.44	0.690	2	4.03	0.750
4	Involve farmers in program planning	3	4.37	0.781	5	3.73	0.948
5	Manage time effectively	4	4.34	0.654	3	3.97	0.695
6	Evaluate extension program	5	4.29	0.710	6	3.71	0.790
7	Set objectives for an extension program	6	4.21	0.745	6	3.71	0.830
8	Conduct situational analysis of extension program	7	4.15	0.693	8	3.48	0.800
9	Coordinate work schedules with other peer staff	8	4.02	0.781	7	3.67	0.757
2.2 Communication							
1	Ability to convey extension messages effectively	1	4.58	0.627	1	4.12	0.732

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	Level of Importance			Level of Possession		
		R	M	SD	R	M	SD
2	Ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies	2	4.36	0.707	2	3.65	0.624
3	Ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information	3	4.33	0.783	3	3.42	0.929
4	Provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers	4	4.06	0.899	4	3.33	0.923
5	Ability to present a seminar	5	4.03	0.827	6	3.26	0.935
6	Ability to use power point presentations	5	4.03	0.958	5	3.27	1.267
2.3 Analysis and diagnosis							
1	Find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations	1	4.37	0.709	3	3.65	0.743
2	Use local leaders to influence farmers to change	2	4.27	0.849	1	3.84	0.905
3	Identify problems of farmers and why they arise	3	4.24	0.721	2	3.81	0.721
4	Analyze how change in social status affect farmers	4	4.11	0.770	5	3.55	0.832
5	Analyze traditional culture and its effect on change	5	4.03	0.867	4	3.56	0.823
6	Recognize learning differences in age groups	6	3.89	0.804	6	3.45	0.887
2.4 Leadership qualities							
1	Possess self motivation, determination & dedication	1	4.44	0.680	1	4.03	0.741
2	Lead farmers	2	4.32	0.726	2	4.01	0.764
3	Provide leadership in program planning and execution	3	4.27	0.810	3	3.78	0.842
4	Visualize future extension prospects and problems	4	4.18	0.812	5	3.57	0.763
5	See both sides of arguments in question	5	4.03	0.827	4	3.61	0.741
6	Apply persuasive style to inform clientele	6	3.87	0.838	6	3.37	0.807
2.5 Initiative							
1	Implement extension	1	4.41	0.744	1	3.97	0.878

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	Level of Importance			Level of Possession		
		R	M	SD	R	M	SD
	activities without being supervised						
2	Confidence to work without guidance and support	2	4.37	0.671	2	3.81	0.814
3	Introduce new methods in extension work	2	4.37	0.691	3	3.62	0.849
3. Personal qualities							
1	Maintain relationship with farmers	1	4.80	0.418	1	4.47	0.673
2	Commitment to extension work	2	4.58	0.658	2	4.20	0.777
3	Reliability in implementing extension work	3	4.41	0.647	3	4.05	0.663
4	Sure of what is being done everyday	4	4.39	0.723	4	4.02	0.831
5	Confidence in own abilities to meet set objectives	5	4.37	0.727	5	3.91	0.732
6	Sensitive to the feelings and wishes of farmers	6	4.29	0.780	6	3.87	0.780

Note. R = rank; M = mean; SD = standard deviation

Competency level possessed by EAs

The perceptions of the EAs regarding the competencies they possessed ranged from a mean score of M=3.26 to M=4.47. The competencies which were possessed by EAs at the highest level in the seven category-wise competencies were: good understanding about block, people & culture (M=4.13); design and conduct farmers' training (M=4.15); ability to convey extension messages effectively (M=4.12); use local leaders to influence farmers to change (M=3.84); possess self motivation, determination and dedication (M=4.03); implement extension activities without being supervised (M=3.97); and maintain relationship with farmers (M=4.47). The three competencies EAs indicated they possessed least in the seven categories in terms of mean score were, ability to present at seminar (3.26), ability to use power point presentations

(M=3.27); and provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers (3.33).

With standard deviations of all the levels in almost all categories found ≤1, there are fewer variations in the perceptions of the respondents with regard to the competency levels possessed by the EAs.

Overall Competency level found important and possessed by EAs

There were few cases of contrasting variations where the competencies considered important were least possessed by EAs particularly in the case of technical knowledge, ability to deal effectively with field problems, and finding ways to encourage farmers to adopt changes. The comparisons also found that skill oriented competencies like use of power-point presentations, applying styles to inform clientele, and identifying learning differences in age groups were found to be at the lower level of competencies possessed. These are usually skills and knowledge that were to be developed at the in-service level as recommended by Raad, Yoder & Diamond (1994) but a systematic in-service and continuous professional development programmes have yet to be implemented on a regular basis within MoAF. The in-service trainings for EAs are conducted by the College of Natural Resources (CNR) under the Royal University of Bhutan while the EAs are directly under the mandate of MoAF. The inconsistent and irregular in-service training implemented for EAs maybe the result of lack of coordination and understanding between the training institute and MoAF.

Overall, it showed that most of the competencies EAs considered important were also possessed by them and vice versa. The following competencies observed the highest mean scores for both the importance and possession competencies levels: good understanding about block, people, and culture; design and conduct farmers' training; ability to convey extension messages effectively; possess self motivation, determination and dedication; implement extension activities without being supervised; and maintain relationship with farmers. These seven statements topped each of the seven categories of competencies for both the importance and possession competencies levels, thereby, clearly establishing the fact that the competencies considered important were possessed by EAs.

Competency level differences and training needs of EAs

Presented in Table 3 are the discrepancy values (DV) calculated on the basis of mean differences between the levels of competencies considered important and the competency levels possessed by the EAs. These differences were considered as the training needs in the identified competencies. Based on the scores of the DV, each statement is ranked, with 1 accorded as the highest DV rank (R). The highest rank indicated the greatest training needs. Two types of rankings were accorded: (i) individual category/sub-category-wise ranking (R) and (ii) overall ranking (OR).

The results of the overall competency level differences and training needs of EAs identified by presenting the DV values are described below.

Out of the three main categories of competencies with 40 statements, the most important training needs areas of EAs, category-wise, were: adequate technical knowledge in the subject areas (DV=1.00); conduct situational analysis of extension programs (DV=0.067); ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information (DV=0.91); find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations (DV=0.72); visualize future extension prospects and problems (DV=0.61); introduce new methods in extension work (DV=0.75); and confidence in own abilities to meet set objectives (DV=0.46).

Table 3 Rank orders of professional competencies on the basis of differences between level of importance and level of possession by EAs (n-150)

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	IL Mean	PL Mean	DV	Rank	OR
1. Knowledge						
1	Adequate technical knowledge in the subject area	4.46	3.46	1.00	1	1
2	Awareness of the current government policy	4.39	3.49	0.90	2	3
3	Awareness of the approaches to adult education	4.21	3.52	0.60	3	13
4	Good understanding about block, people & culture	4.53	4.13	0.40	4	31
2. Personal skills						
2.1 Organization and planning						
1	Conduct situational analysis of extension program	4.15	3.48	0.67	1	10
2	Involve farmers in program planning	4.37	3.73	0.64	2	11
3	Evaluate extension program	4.29	3.71	0.58	3	14
4	Deal effectively with field / extension problems	4.44	3.89	0.55	4	17
5	Set objectives for an extension program	4.21	3.71	0.50	5	18
6	Design a work plan for extension activity	4.44	4.03	0.41	6	30
7	Manage time effectively	4.34	3.97	0.37	7	34
8	Coordinate work schedules with other peer staff	4.02	3.67	0.35	8	36
9	Design and conduct farmers' training	4.47	4.15	0.32	9	38
2.2 Communication						
1	Ability to prepare visual aids	4.33	3.42	0.91	1	2

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	IL Mean	PL Mean	DV	Rank	OR
	to help deliver information					
2	Ability to present a seminar	4.03	3.26	0.77	2	4
3	Ability to use power point presentations	4.03	3.27	0.76	3	5
4	Provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers	4.06	3.33	0.73	4	7
5	Ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies	4.36	3.65	0.71	5	9
6	Ability to convey extension messages effectively	4.58	4.12	0.46	6	22
2.3 Analysis and diagnosis						
1	Find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations	4.37	3.65	0.72	1	8
2	Analyze how change in social status affect farmers	4.11	3.55	0.56	2	16
3	Analyze traditional culture and its effect on change	4.03	3.56	0.47	3	20
4	Recognize learning differences in age groups	3.89	3.45	0.44	4	23
5	Use local leaders to influence farmers to change	4.27	3.84	0.43	5	25
6	Identify problems of farmers and why they arise	4.24	3.81	0.43	5	26
2.4 Leadership qualities						
1	Visualize future extension prospects and problems	4.18	3.57	0.61	1	12
2	Provide leadership in program planning and execution	4.27	3.78	0.49	2	19
3	See both sides of arguments in question	4.03	3.61	0.42	3	27
4	Possess self motivation, determination & dedication	4.44	4.03	0.41	4	30
5	Lead farmers	4.32	4.01	0.31	5	39
6	Apply persuasive style to inform clientele	3.87	3.37	0.05	6	40
2.5 Initiative						

Sl. No.	Competency categories and competency statements	IL Mean	PL Mean	DV	Rank	OR
1	Introduce new methods in extension work	4.37	3.62	0.75	1	6
2	Confidence to work without guidance and support	4.37	3.81	0.56	2	15
3	Implement extension activities without being supervised	4.41	3.97	0.44	3	24
3. Personal qualities						
1	Confidence in own abilities to meet set objectives	4.37	3.91	0.46	1	21
2	Sensitive to the feelings and wishes of farmers	4.29	3.87	0.42	2	28
3	Commitment to extension work	4.58	4.20	0.38	3	32
4	Sure of what is being done everyday	4.39	4.02	0.37	4	33
5	Reliability in implementing extension work	4.41	4.05	0.36	5	35
6	Maintain relationship with farmers	4.80	4.47	0.33	6	37

Note. IL=level of importance; PL=level of possession; DV= discrepancy value; OR=overall ranking

In executing the overall ranking of all the seven categories combined with 40 statements, the ten most important training needs identified, in order of importance, were: (1) adequate technical knowledge in the subject area (DV=1.00); (2) ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information (DV=0.91); (3) awareness of the current government policy (DV=0.90); (4) ability to present a seminar (DV=0.77); (5) ability to use power-point presentation (DV=0.76); (6) introduce new methods in extension work (DV=0.75); (7) provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers (DV=0.73); (8) find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations (DV=0.72); (9) ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies (DV=0.71); and, (10) conduct situational analysis of extension programmes (DV=0.67).

The five competencies that required the least training requirements were: (1) apply persuasive style to inform clientele (0.05); (2) lead farmers (0.31); (3) design and conduct farmers' training (DV=0.32); (4) maintain relationship with farmers (DV=0.33); and (5) coordinate work schedules with other peer staff (DV=0.35).

The discrepancy values based on the mean perceptions of EAs were positive values for all the competencies ranging from the lowest value of 0.05 to the highest value of 1.00. This indicated that EAs needed training in all competencies shown in the three main categories of extension knowledge, skills and qualities. This supports the findings of Androulidakis & Siados (2003); Hussain, (2004); Khan et al. (2004); Muhammad et al. (1995); Raad, Yoder & Diamond (1994); Randavay & Vaughn (1991) that in developing countries, there is the need to strengthen competencies in all areas. This result also supports the low estimation that the MoAF have in Bhutan on the technical competency level of extension agents. The MoAF always contended that although EAs in Bhutan have fairly good communication skills, they lacked technical competency to undertake their jobs proficiently (ECC, 2007). Therefore, the ten most important training needs identified above should be considered as important training needs areas for designing future in-service training programmes.

The study, thus, found out that from the 40 statements identified that required some form of training for the EAs, the statement on technical knowledge competency stood out as the most important training requirement for the EAs.

Comparison on perceived competency by periods of joining service/senior and junior EAs

Table 4 shows the comparison made among the three groups of EAs who have joined service, from 1999 and earlier (n=59), 2000 to 2004 (n=42), and 2005 to 2009 (n=49) on the 40 statements/competencies. These three groups who have joined services at different periods were likely to vary in terms of work experience, ages, family patterns, and training opportunities due to the evolving curriculum or contents of training programmes in institutions like the CNR at Lobesa. These variations of personal effects were likely to impact on the perceptions of the EAs and this comparison was aimed to record these varied perceptions.

Table 4 Comparison of competency level possessed by extension agents by periods of joining service

	Competency categories and competency statements	Periods of joining service						F-value
		1999 and earlier (n=59)		2000 - 2004 (n=42)		2005 - 2009 (n=49)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Knowledge								
1	Adequate technical knowledge in the subject area	3.37	0.64	3.50	0.63	3.53	0.62	0.954
2	Good understanding about block, people & culture	4.03	0.81	4.14	0.68	4.24	0.66	1.126
3	Awareness of the current government policy	3.49	0.82	3.55	0.83	3.43	0.79	0.244
4	Awareness of the approaches to adult education	3.44	0.79	3.62	0.70	3.53	0.94	0.588
2. Personal skills								
2.1 Organization and planning								
1	Deal effectively with field / extension problems	3.80	0.64	3.98	0.68	3.92	0.64	1.021
2	Manage time effectively	3.78[b]	0.59	4.05[ab]	0.70	4.14[a]	0.76	4.162*
3	Coordinate work schedules with other peer staff	3.51	0.77	3.88	0.67	3.67	0.77	3.057*

	Competency categories and competency statements	Periods of joining service						F-value
		1999 and earlier (n=59)		2000 - 2004 (n=42)		2005 - 2009 (n=49)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
4	Conduct situational analysis of extension program	3.51	0.84	3.52	0.74	3.41	0.81	0.295
5	Involve farmers in program planning	3.69	0.93	3.71	1.07	3.78	0.87	0.101
6	Set objectives for an extension program	3.54	0.84	3.93	0.78	3.73	0.84	2.742
7	Design a work plan for extension activity	3.86	0.78	4.21	0.72	4.06	0.72	2.811
8	Design and conduct farmers' training	4.15	0.67	4.10	0.91	4.20	0.79	0.221
9	Evaluate extension program	3.69	0.82	3.79	0.78	3.65	0.78	0.326
2.2 Communication								
1	Ability to convey extension messages effectively	4.07	0.81	4.24	0.62	4.08	0.73	0.761
2	Ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies	3.64	0.64	3.67	0.57	3.65	0.66	0.016
	Ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information	3.25	0.96	3.62	0.76	3.45	1.00	1.953
4	Ability to present a seminar	3.07	0.94	3.45	0.83	3.22	0.99	2.106
5	Ability to use power point Presentations	2.95	1.33	3.40	1.17	3.53	1.21	3.259*
6	Provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers	3.19	0.86	3.40	0.77	3.43	1.10	1.131

	Competency categories and competency statements	Periods of joining service						F-value
		1999 and earlier (n=59)		2000 - 2004 (n=42)		2005 - 2009 (n=49)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
2.3 Analysis and diagnosis								
1	Find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations	3.46[b]	0.80	3.86[a]	0.68	3.69[ab]	0.68	3.833*
2	Use local leaders to influence farmers to change	3.68	0.86	4.07	0.89	3.84	0.94	2.359
3	Analyze traditional culture and its effect on change	3.37[b]	0.74	3.81[a]	0.71	3.57[ab]	0.96	3.578*
4	Recognize learning differences in age groups	3.25	0.82	3.55	0.92	3.61	0.91	2.564
5	Identify problems of farmers and why they arise	3.64[b]	0.71	4.02[a]	0.56	3.82[ab]	0.81	3.528*
6	Analyze how change in social status affect farmers	3.44	0.88	3.57	0.80	3.67	0.80	1.063
2.4 Leadership qualities								
1	Lead farmers	4.00	0.70	4.07	0.71	3.96	0.89	0.245
2	Possess self motivation, determination & dedication	3.88	0.70	4.19	0.67	4.06	0.83	2.249
3	Provide leadership in program planning and execution	3.63	0.81	3.90	0.79	3.86	0.91	1.652
4	See both sides of arguments in question	3.49	0.82	3.76	0.66	3.61	0.70	1.650

	Competency categories and competency statements	Periods of joining service						F-value
		1999 and earlier (n=59)		2000 - 2004 (n=42)		2005 - 2009 (n=49)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
5	Visualize future extension prospects and problems	3.36[b]	0.80	3.76 [a]	0.76	3.67 [ab]	0.66	4.283*
6	Apply persuasive style to inform clientele	3.03[b]	0.85	3.45[a]	0.67	3.71[a]	0.71	11.11***
2.5 Initiative								
1	Implement extension activities without being supervised	3.81	0.99	4.14	0.68	4.00	0.87	1.798
2	Confidence to work without guidance and support	3.73	0.87	3.98	0.60	3.78	0.90	1.214
3	Introduce new methods in extension work	3.53	0.80	3.74	0.83	3.63	0.93	0.776
3. Personal qualities								
1	Commitment to extension work	4.08	0.79	4.31	0.68	4.24	0.83	1.150
2	Reliability in implementing extension work	3.98	0.66	4.14	0.57	4.06	0.75	0.714
3	Maintain relationship with farmers	4.47[b]	0.68	4.52	0.55	4.43	0.76	0.225
4	Sensitive to the feelings and wishes of farmers	3.83	0.70	3.86	0.75	3.94	0.90	0.268
5	Confidence in own abilities to meet set objectives	3.85	0.74	3.95	0.62	3.96	0.82	0.391
6	Sure of what is	3.98	0.88	4.14	0.61	3.96	0.94	0.645

Competency categories and competency statements	Periods of joining service						F-value
	1999 and earlier (n=59)		2000 - 2004 (n=42)		2005 - 2009 (n=49)		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
being done everyday							

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; * significant at 0.05 confidence level; *** significant at 0.001 confidence level; Scheffe' post hoc comparison represented with superscript ^{ab}: means followed by same letters are not significantly different from each other

The comparison showed statistically significant differences of perceptions among the three stratified groups of senior and junior EAs on: manage time effectively, F=(2, 147) 4.162, p=0.017; coordinate work schedules with other peer staff, F=(2, 147) 3.057, p=0.050; ability to use power point presentations, F=(2, 147) 3.259, p=0.041; find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations, F=(2, 147) 3.833, p=0.024; analyze traditional culture and its effect on change, F=(2, 147) 3.578, p=0.030; identify problems of farmers and why they arise, F=(2, 147) 3.528, p=0.032; visualize future extension prospects and problems, F=(2, 147) 4.283, p=0.016; and apply persuasive style to inform clientele, F=(2, 147) 11.117, p=0.000.

The standard deviations for all categories were mostly ≤1, indicating there were no significant deviations of opinions from the mean.

Post-hoc comparison on groups with differences of perceptions

Scheffe' post hoc comparison indicated that group 1999 & earlier and group 2005-2009 significantly differed on, manage time effectively (p=0.024) and observed highly significant difference on, apply persuasive style to inform clientele (p=000); group 1999 & earlier and group 2000-2004 significantly differed on, find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations (p=0.028), analyze traditional culture and its effect on change (p=0.031), identify problems of farmers and why they arise (p=0.032), visualize future extension prospects and problems (p=0.029); and observed statistically high significant difference on, apply persuasive style to inform clientele (p=000). No significant differences were observed between groups 2000-2004 and 2005-2009 on any of the statements.

Table 5 Comparison of competency level possessed by extension agents by sub-sector

S/N	**Competency categories and competency statements**	**Sector**						**F-value**
		AG (n=53)		AH (n=56)		FO (n=41)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Knowledge								
1	Adequate technical knowledge in the subject area	3.45	0.64	3.43	0.63	3.51	0.64	0.211
2	Good understanding about geog, people & culture	4.15	0.77	4.11	0.68	4.15	0.76	0.057
3	Awareness of the current government policy	3.53	0.72	3.46	0.89	3.46	0.81	0.107
4	Awareness of the approaches to adult education	3.55	0.80	3.57	0.83	3.41	0.84	0.478
2. Personal skills								
2.1 Organization and planning								
1	Deal	3.96	0.62	3.82	0.66	3.88	0.68	0.640

S/N	Competency categories and competency statements	Sector AG (n=53) M	SD	AH (n=56) M	SD	FO (n=41) M	SD	F-value
	effectively with field / extension problems							
2	Manage time effectively	3.96	0.62	3.98	0.65	3.98	0.85	0.011
3	Coordinate work schedules with other peer staff	3.75	0.76	3.55	0.81	3.71	0.68	1.044
4	Conduct situational analysis of extension program	3.47	0.85	3.46	0.79	3.51	0.78	0.046
5	Involve farmers in program planning	3.72	0.99	3.71	1.02	3.76	0.80	0.027
6	Set objectives for an extension program	3.92[a]	0.78	3.50[b]	0.85	3.73[ab]	0.81	3.704*
7	Design a work plan for extension activity	4.09	0.77	3.96	0.76	4.02	0.72	0.406
8	Design and conduct farmers' training	4.32[a]	0.70	3.95[b]	0.88	4.22[ab]	0.65	3.496*
9	Evaluate extension program	3.72	0.79	3.66	0.77	3.76	0.83	0.177
2.2 Communication								
1	Ability to convey	4.06	0.80	4.18	0.72	4.12	0.68	0.375

S/N	Competency categories and competency statements	Sector AG (n=53) M	SD	AH (n=56) M	SD	FO (n=41) M	SD	F-value
	extension messages effectively							
2	Ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies	3.64	0.59	3.71	0.59	3.59	0.71	0.517
3	Ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information	3.49	0.82	3.41	1.04	3.34	0.91	0.299
4	Ability to present a seminar	3.30	0.99	3.09	0.92	3.32	0.88	0.967
5	Ability to use power point presentations	3.21	1.35	3.20	1.30	3.44	1.12	0.519
6	Provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers	3.43	0.84	3.20	0.96	3.37	0.97	0.951
2.3 Analysis and diagnosis								
1	Find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations	3.62	0.77	3.61	0.76	3.73	0.71	0.372
2	Use local leaders to influence farmers to change	3.79	0.95	3.75	0.92	4.02	0.82	1.203
3	Analyze	3.58	0.66	3.52	0.89	3.59	0.92	0.116

S/N	Competency categories and competency statements	Sector AG (n=53) M	SD	AH (n=56) M	SD	FO (n=41) M	SD	F-value
	traditional culture and its effect on change							
4	Recognize learning differences in age groups	3.51	0.85	3.34	0.90	3.54	0.93	0.747
5	Identify problems of farmers and why they arise	3.81	0.59	3.68	0.77	3.98	0.79	2.040
6	Analyze how change in social status affect farmers	3.55	0.85	3.59	0.83	3.51	0.84	0.103
2.4 Leadership qualities								
1	Lead farmers	3.83[b]	0.78	4.00[ab]	0.66	4.24[a]	0.83	3.506*
2	Possess self motivation, determination & dedication	3.92	0.70	4.02	0.73	4.17	0.80	1.286
3	Provide leadership in program planning and execution	3.75	0.85	3.66	0.82	3.98	0.85	1.707
4	See both sides of arguments in question	3.66[ab]	0.65	3.38[b]	0.75	3.85[a]	0.76	5.464*
5	Visualize future extension prospects and problems	3.58	0.72	3.45	0.81	3.73	0.74	1.680
6	Apply persuasive	3.26[b]	0.79	3.25[b]	0.84	3.68[a]	0.72	4.340*

S/N	Competency categories and competency statements	Sector AG (n=53) M	SD	AH (n=56) M	SD	FO (n=41) M	SD	F-value
	style to inform clientele							
2.5 Initiative								
1	Implement extension activities without being supervised	4.08	0.70	3.84	0.99	4.00	0.92	1.026
2	Confidence to work without guidance and support	3.85	0.86	3.71	0.83	3.90	0.74	0.708
3	Introduce new methods in extension work	3.68	0.83	3.57	0.95	3.61	0.74	0.221
3. Personal qualities								
1	Commitment to extension work	4.23	0.72	4.16	0.85	4.22	0.76	0.114
2	Reliability in implementing extension work	4.09	0.66	3.96	0.71	4.12	0.60	0.823
3	Maintain relationship with farmers	4.42	0.66	4.48	0.76	4.54	0.55	0.382
4	Sensitive to the feelings and wishes of farmers	3.91	0.74	3.84	0.76	3.88	0.87	0.098
5	Confidence in own abilities to meet set objectives	3.87	0.79	3.96	0.69	3.90	0.74	0.240
6	Sure of what is being done	4.04	0.81	4.00	0.89	4.02	0.79	0.028

S/N	Competency categories and competency statements	Sector						F-value
		AG (n=53)		AH (n=56)		FO (n=41)		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
	everyday							

Note. AG = agriculture; AH = animal husbandry; FO = forestry; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; * significant at 0.05 confidence level; Scheffe' post hoc comparison represented with superscript ^{ab}: means followed by same letters are not significantly different from each other.

Comparison on perceived competency by sub-sector

Table 5 shows the comparison of perceptions among the three sub-sectors of AG (n=53), AH (n=56) and FO (n=41) on the 40 statements/competencies. Given the different disciplines, the nature of their work also differed from one another in terms of work load, service, approach to farmers, extension methods, etc. The comparison was made to assess the differences of perceptions, if any, given the different nature of work in the three sectors.

The group comparison showed statistically significant differences among the three groups of AG, AH, and FO sub-sectors on: set objectives for an extension program, F=(2, 147) 3.704, p=0.027; design and conduct farmers' training, F=(2, 147) 3.46, p=0.033; lead farmers, F=(2, 147) 3.506, p=0.033; see both sides of an arguments in question, F=(2, 147) 5.464, p=0.005; and apply persuasive style to inform clientele, F=(2, 147) 4.340, p=0.015.

Again the standard deviations ≤1 indicated there were no significant deviations of opinions from the mean.

Post-hoc comparison on groups with differences of perception

Scheffe' post hoc comparison indicated that groups AG and AH significantly differed on: set objectives for an extension program (p=0.027) and on, design and conduct farmers' training (p=0.040). The two groups AG and FO significantly differed on: lead farmers (p=0.033) and on, apply persuasive style to inform clientele (p=0.042). The AH and FO groups significantly differed on: see both sides of an argument in question (p=0.006) and on, apply persuasive style to inform clientele (p=0.031).

Based on the means of the items, these statistical significance differences indicated that AG group is better than AH in setting objectives for an extension programme and to design and conduct farmer's training. The FO group was found to be in a better position to lead farmers as compared to the AG group; at the same time, the FO group was found better than AH to see both sides of arguments in question. The significance test found that it is mainly the FO group who is more inclined towards applying persuasive styles as compared to AG and AH groups.

Results of the perceptions based on the comparison by periods of joining service and by sector

In the comparison for groups with periods of joining services, the significant differences identified were mostly that of the senior EAs having joined services before 1999 with the other two groups of junior EAs. It is to be noted that in the identified significant differences, the means for the junior groups are higher than the senior group indicating that the EAs who have joined services after 2000 have higher confidence in the various competencies. This may be possible because of the irregular in-service training programme in Bhutan where the employed EAs are not able to enhance their competencies in accordance with the task areas assigned to operate (Androulidakis & Siados, 2003). Moreover, the continuously improved curriculum in the extension training institute is better suited to build the capacity of the new EAs to face relevant challenges in the farmers' fields. It is also possible that the proportion of training and up-gradation opportunities availed by the RNR *Dzongkhag* extension personnel may not be adequate. Table 6 shows that the percent share of training opportunities in terms of short terms, study tours, meetings, conferences, etc. are very low for the *Dzonkhags* as compared to other agencies within the RNR sector.

Table 6 Percent share of training acquired by staff working in the various agencies under MoAF during the period 2008-2009

S/N	Dept./ Agency	No. of Staff	Type of Training			% share of Training		
			Short Term	**Study Tours**	**Conference/ Meetings, etc.**	**Short Term**	**Study Tours**	**Conference / Meetings etc.**
1.	DAMC							
	HQ	24	3	5	12	12.5	20.8	50.0
	Central Program	12	0	0	5	0.0	0.0	41.7
	Total	36	3	5	17	8.3	13.9	47.2
2.	DoA							
	HQ	51	8	13	22	15.7	25.5	43.1
	Central Program	206	51	28	22	24.8	13.6	10.7
	Dzongkhag	281	64	47	15	22.8	16.7	5.3
	Total	538	123	88	59	22.9	16.4	11.0
3.	DoL							

	HQ	28	3	4	15	10.7	14.3	53.6
	Central Program	261	56	38	24	21.5	14.6	9.2
	Dzongkhag	280	27	10	2	9.6	3.6	0.7
	Total	569	86	52	41	15.1	9.1	7.2
4	DoF &PS							
	HQ	87	16	11	23	18.4	12.6	26.4
	Central Program	999	16	135	18	1.6	13.5	1.8
	Dzongkhag	234	0	5	2	0.0	2.1	0.9
	Total	1320	32	151	43	2.4	11.4	3.3
5.	CoRRB							
	HQ	17	4	8	6	23.5	47.1	35.3
	Central Program	188	30	22	25	16.0	11.7	13.3
	Total	205	34	30	31	16.6	14.6	15.1
6.	BAFRA							
	HQ	13	6	8	9	46.2	61.5	69.2
	Central Program	137	13	28	4	9.5	20.4	2.9
	Total	150	19	36	13	12.7	24.0	8.7
7.	Sectt.	222	70	19	77	31.5	8.6	34.7

Note. DAMC=Department of Agricultural Marketing and Co-operatives; DoA=Department of Agriculture; DoL=Department of Livestock; DoF&PS=Department of Forests and Park Services; CoRRB=Council for RNR Research for Bhutan; BAFRA=Bhutan Agricultural and Forestry Regulatory Authority: Sectt=Secretariat

Source: MoAF. (2012). Retrieved 31 January 2012 from http://www.moaf.gov.bt/moaf/?p=33&wpfbcat=5.

On the comparisons drawn by sector, particular mention has to be made on the highly significant differences noted on the statement, apply persuasive style to inform clientele, between the AG and AH with FO. The emphasis of training of EAs in Bhutan is on using participatory approaches in delivering services to farmers. While it is simpler for AG and AH EAs to adopt this practice, the nature of services for forestry is such that they are influenced in adopting more regulatory and policing job undertaken by the territorial forestry officials responsible for protecting the forests. Given the fact that Bhutan, with 72.5% of the total area covered with forests, maintained strong forest conservation and protection regulation, the forestry officials are highly trained to undertake policing and protection jobs. Although the block-level forestry EAs are trained to adopt participatory approaches, the effect of the manner in which territorial forestry protection is implemented is simply irresistible for them to emulate. Therefore, applying persuasive style to inform clientele, could be a more familiar job for the FO extension, and thus higher mean difference, while AG and AH extension are exposed only to participatory extension approaches to bring about changes.

The statistical significance test also showed that it is the junior groups of EAs who are more inclined towards applying persuasive style of delivering services.

In-service training: Key source of knowledge and information for EAs

Table 7 shows the scores of knowledge and information sources for the EAs. As many as 14 sources were ranked from 1 to 14 with 1 being the most important. Respondents ranked the same number in more than one source given the appropriateness and relevance. For the purpose of analysis, the score of the first three most important ranks (R) orders (R1 Imp, R2 Imp & R3 Imp) were chosen for each item, multiplied by 3, 2 and 1 respectively and summing up the sub-scores to get the total score as shown in the Table.

The result showed that the most important sources of knowledge and information for EAs were: the College of Natural Resources; RNR Sector Heads; and, in-service training, that ranked R1. The statements: attending workshops; seminars; and conferences ranked as R2 important sources of information. The third most important source was: regular sector-specific meeting in the *dzongkhag* (R3) followed by extension materials (R4) and

RNR R&DC at R5.

Table 7 Scores of knowledge and information sources in order of importance (n=150)

S/N	Sources of knowledge and information	No. 1 Imp (No. of scores x 3)	No. 2 Imp (No. of scores x 2)	No. 3 Imp (No. of scores x 1)	Total scores (1+2+3)	R
1.	RNR R&DC	72	32	20	124	5
2.	College of Natural Resources	136	42	10	188	1
3.	Dzongkhag RNR sector heads	108	66	14	188	1
4.	Regular sector-specific meetings in the Dzongkhag	84	64	15	163	3
5.	Attending workshops, seminars & conferences	90	52	23	165	2
6.	Policy directives from technical Departments	39	34	17	90	7
7.	External visitors (both RNR & non-RNR)	24	24	13	61	11
8.	Extension materials	87	44	21	152	4
9.	Peer group (other EAs in the geog)	51	34	11	96	6
10.	In-service training	108	60	20	188	1
11.	Village leaders and farmers	45	30	11	86	8
12.	Media: television	27	22	12	61	11
13.	Media: radio	36	24	9	69	10
14.	Media: newspapers	39	28	9	76	9

Note: Imp = Importance; R = rank

Therefore, it is vital for the MoAF to be aware that in-service training of EAs play key role as source of information and knowledge in addition to up-dating their technical competency and skills (during the training). It is also very clear that opportunities to participate in formal and informal forums like the workshops, seminars, conferences and regular sector-specific meetings are found very useful and knowledgeable although statistic in Table 6 showed very low participation in such forums by the *dzongkhag* level extension personnel within the RNR Sector.

Summary and recommendations

The discrepancy values of 40 competencies calculated on the basis of mean differences between the levels of competencies considered important and the competency levels possessed by the EAs showed that the mean perceptions of EAs were positive values for all the competencies ranging from the lowest value of 0.05 to the highest value of 1.00. The differences were considered as the training needs in the identified competencies and since they are all positive values, it indicated that EAs needed training in all the competencies. The technical knowledge competency, which is the most vital competency, required the highest level of training by EAs.

The ten most important training needs identified were: technical knowledge in the subject area; ability to prepare visual aids to help deliver information; awareness of the current government policy; ability to present a seminar; ability to use power-point presentation; new methods in extension work; provide feedback of researchable problems to researchers; find ways to encourage farmers to adopt innovations; ability to persuade farmers to adopt technologies; and, conduct situational analysis of extension programmes. Therefore, it is recommended to bestow the highest priority in these training areas in designing in-service training programmes in the future.

The approaches and practices of delivering extension services are consistently evolving and curriculum of training institutions being improved based on new developments. The implementation of in-service training should be systematized and regularized or at least the frequency of in-service training should be increased in the future so that technical knowledge and skills of employed/senior EAs in the field are consistently upgraded and their confidence levels on technical competencies further enhanced.

The result of the study showed evidences that merit in-service training programme to be accorded the highest priority. In measuring the competencies, the senior EAs particularly those who have joined service before 1999 were found to have lower level of confidence in several competencies. By up-dating and up-grading their knowledge and skills through in-service training, they could enhance their confidence and opportunities for personal growth.

In measuring the sources of knowledge and information for EAs, in-service training was also found to be one of the main sources of knowledge and information. The ranking of 14 sources of knowledge and information showed that in-service training along with the RNR SHs and the College of Natural Resources were rated as the most important sources of information and knowledge for the EAs. Thus, the significance of in-service training to EAs as highlighted above. The ranking also showed that the participation in workshops, seminars and conferences was rated as the second most important sources of knowledge by EAs. However, with the perceived weak institutional linkages and formal networks with external organizations, the opportunities for EAs to participate in such formal and informal forums could be greatly reduced. Therefore, the strengthening of institutional linkage building and enabling of as many EAs as possible to participate in national/regional seminars, meetings, workshops and conferences is recommended so that they can gain exposure and their prospects for learning can be enhanced.

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