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## Gross happiness of a 'tourism' village in Fiji

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### ABSTRACT

For small island developing states, tourism is often seen as a passport to development and modernisation, resulting in economic and social growth. In Fiji, this was recognized in the 1960s, which resulted in large-scale tourism development. Yet the links between tourism development and higher quality of life and wellbeing for residents of tourist destinations are at best ambiguous. Tourism can bring both positive and negative social impacts, yet few studies have attempted to assess whether tourism contributes to holistic quality of life: in short, does tourism make residents happy? Validated measures exist to measure broader wellbeing. This study measures the Gross Happiness Index of two Fijian villages, one of which has a high dependency on tourism income and the other has very little contact with the tourism industry or tourists, to compare the levels of wellbeing. The findings indicate that, despite the 'tourism' village being materially wealthier, the non-tourism villagers are happier across a significant number of life domains. The implications for tourism research and destination management are discussed.

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### 1. Introduction

Tourism has long been recognized to bring both benefits and costs to host communities (de Kadt, 1979; Krippendorf, 1987). Tourism development can herald economic modernization leading to employment creation, injection of income through the multiplier effect, improved local business viability, regeneration and restructuring of economies in towns and cities where traditional industries are in decline, and the stimulation of inward investment (Page & Connell, 2009). The negative economic impacts can include: inflation, seasonality, forgone opportunity costs, low-paying jobs, and potential over-dependency on tourism (Andereck, Valentine, Vogt, & Knopf, 2007). These economic restructuring processes can lead to social changes in communities, and research has often focused on the detrimental effects of tourism on communities, including: changes in value systems, individual behavior, family relationships, collective lifestyles, traditional ceremonies, or community organization (Milman & Pizam, 1988, p. 191). However, there are recognized problems in trying to assess the direct effects of tourism on social systems and communities. Social impacts are often indirect consequences, incremental and slow to develop over time. Additionally, there is a recognized link between economic

dependency on tourism and positive attitudes towards it amongst residents (Liu, Sheldon, & Var, 1987), in what Harrill (2004) calls growth theory, which suggests that those people in the community who have most to benefit from tourism will have the strongest support for its development.

The growth-machine perspective has, however, been challenged (Woosnam & Norman, 2010), and whether impacts are perceived to be positive or negative is generally determined by a range of factors including: the relative level of economic development in relation to working in or owning a business in tourism or a related industry; the distance of place of residence from areas of high tourist activity; the level of contact with tourists; the shared use of facilities by residents and tourists; and the proportion of tourists to residents (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012). Whereas early research on the subject sought to scope out the range of social impacts and to assess the connections between different contexts (Ap, 1990, 1992; Ap & Crompton, 1993), more recent research has advanced the discussion to examine the broader sets of dimensions that have enriched work in this area (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005). The majority of studies are based on social exchange theory, which postulates that individuals are likely to judge the outcomes of an exchange according to their perceptions of the associated benefits and costs (Ap, 1990). This has, however, been criticised for being too narrow to explain complex social relations (Moscovici, 1981). Woosnam and Norman, (2010) argue that perceptions of impacts might be influenced by the extent of emotional solidarity

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felt towards tourists by residents, and suggest that more needs to be done to explore the extent of similarity and shared understanding between tourists and residents.

The study of social impacts of tourism on host communities is therefore rich yet inconclusive. On the one hand the field is mature and subject to a number of major reviews (Easterling, 2004) and on the other it is perceived to be in a state of 'arrested development' (Deery et al., 2012, p. 66). In a recent review, Deery et al. argue that social impacts research has taken on a circularity of focus on measurement issues and debates concerning the constructs and variables to be considered. This review points to the need for further, more detailed and wider-ranging studies. Indeed, it is only through a better understanding the effects of tourism on individual and communities that policy and management can be effective in ensuring that the optimal levels and types of tourism activity can be implemented (Kim, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2013).

One of the most fruitful avenues of research on the social impacts of tourism development has been consideration of the quality of life for residents accruing from tourism (Long, Perdue, & Allen, 1990). Many studies across a range of contexts such as social, cultural and environmental factors have examined the links between tourism and perceived quality of life. However, in reviewing this body of work, Kim, Uysal and Sirgy (2003), note that many of these studies capture the effects of tourism's impacts using objective measures such as poverty, per-capita incomes, crime rates, and pollution. Accordingly, the question remains whether residents perceive there to be an impact from tourism and, if so, whether those impacts influence their sense of wellbeing across a range of life domains. Their study showed that positive perceptions of the economic impacts of tourism significantly influenced material wellbeing, which in turn influenced life satisfaction, but that social and cultural impacts were less substantive influencers of satisfaction. However, whilst recent attempts have probed the links between tourism development and residents' quality of life, there are recognised limitations to the existing methods used (cf. Kim et al., 2013). Additionally, there are many indicators of wellbeing, and research is needed that introduces some measure of control to examine the direct impacts associated with tourism development.

The following study aims to address this omission through the application of the concept of gross national happiness (GNH) as an overall measure of community wellbeing. Specifically, our aim was to answer the question of whether the presence of tourism in a community influences residents' sense of happiness, using a holistic measure of wellbeing. The GNH index was applied to two villages: one where tourism has become a firmly established and integral component of the economic and social fabric of the community, and another that is dependent on traditional subsistence economy with very little exposure to tourism.

The context for this research is Fiji, which is a developing country and highly dependent on tourism for its economic development. It has also been the subject of previous research on the social impacts of tourism, where resident were found to support tourism development even though they expressed concerns about negative social and cultural consequences associated with it (King, Pizam, & Milman, 1993). The tourism village was chosen because it is located directly adjacent to an international four-star resort and a high proportion of the local community is employed by the Resort. The 'non-tourism' village was chosen for its geographical location (away from the main developed tourism areas) and its traditional lifestyle. Moreover, both villages were chosen because the researchers had good access to potential respondents.

## 2. Tourism, quality of life and happiness

The links between tourism and quality of life, wellbeing and happiness have been the focus of increasing research in recent

years (Kim et al., 2013). A main impetus for this interest is the recognition that wealth gain does not automatically lead to increased quality of life (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2012). The deficiencies of gross domestic product (GDP) as a measure of welfare have long been recognized. Yet it continues to be used because it provides a standardised measure that allows comparison across countries and provinces. It is also relatively easy to collect because it is universally reported. GDP is defined as the market value of all final goods and services produced within a nation's geographic borders during a period of time (Layton, Robinson, & Tucker, 2012). Yet higher incomes do not necessarily translate to increased happiness or wellbeing. In economic parlance, the diminishing marginal utility of income means that after a certain level, increased income adds very little incremental happiness (Helliwell et al., 2012, p.5). Across cultures and time, happiness is deemed as something which is to be fostered and pursued as the primary goal of policy makers (Andrews, 1974).

Researchers from a range of disciplines from economics, philosophy, and psychology have sought to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and a range of economic, socio-demographic, institutional, and other variables. It is beyond the scope of the current paper to rehearse these debates, particularly given recent contributions. The concept of wellbeing is important since perceptions of one's sense of well-being have been linked to higher productivity and a greater engagement in civic life at one end of the scale, to stress, depression and therefore higher welfare costs at the other (Kahn & Juster, 2002). Therefore the presence of tourists within a community, the numbers of tourists, and the scale of tourism development activity could have material as well as subjective effects on residents' perceptions of wellbeing. However, concepts such as happiness, wellbeing, quality of life, and life satisfaction are often used synonymously in tourism research (Bimonte & Faralla, 2012; Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012).

The majority of studies that have been conducted into the effects of tourism on residents have applied quality-of-life (QOL) indicators. The early work on QOL of residents at a tourism destination explored attitudes to tourism development in the contexts of satisfaction with various aspects of life and satisfaction with tourism (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990; Perdue, Long, & Kang, 1999). In this way, tourism development can be managed more effectively if there is satisfaction with the level of tourism in the community – a perception that it contributes to quality of life – and so satisfaction leads to greater community support. A range of different studies have explored the effects of different types of tourism development on quality of life, such as gaming tourism development (Perdue et al., 1999). Andereck and Nyaupane (2011) found that residents' perceived higher quality of life arose out of specific tourism products such as festivals and attractions. The most recent research has used structural equation modelling to explore the causal relationships such as between tourism development, the perceived value of tourism to the community and quality of life (Kim et al., 2013; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015).

Wellbeing, on the other hand, has been constructed as a mix of objective and subjective assessments. Objective indicators include wealth (income), education, and housing, although the latter items can also be considered to be subjective indicators. Kahn and Juster (2002) note the weak relationships between objective and subjective measures. Many studies in tourism have conflated wellbeing with quality-of-life measures (e.g. Sirgy, 2010), whereas there are crucial conceptual differences. Quality-of-life indicators are based on an individual's rating of satisfaction with specific domains of their life, whereas wellbeing aims to assess individuals' perceptions of their lives as a whole, as well as the interactions between different areas of life, including satisfaction, but in the context of the psychological resources needed to achieve an

individual's full potential and to be able to function positively (McCabe & Johnson, 2013; New Economics Foundation, 2009).

Several researchers have examined how satisfaction with tourism services affects tourists' life satisfaction. Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu (2011) developed a model describing how positive and negative memories generated from a recent trip contribute not only to overall satisfaction in leisure life but also satisfaction in other life domains, such as social life, family life, love life, arts and culture, work life, health and safety, financial life, spiritual life, intellectual life, self, culinary life, and travel life. McCabe and Johnson's (2013) study explored whether participation in domestic tourism affected subjective wellbeing amongst disadvantaged groups (social tourists). McCabe and Johnson's findings indicated that tourism contributes most to social wellbeing and psychological resources, leisure and family life domains. Dolnicar et al. (2012) argued that vacations should be included as a separate domain in quality-of-life measurements as they contribute to people's quality of life over and above the contribution that leisure makes in their lives.

In each of these areas of research, an essential problematic is the lack of a control for tourism development. The studies occur within destination contexts where tourism is embedded within the communities, and as such it is difficult to assess whether increases in satisfaction with quality of life are attributable to tourism or other factors. Further studies are thus required that attempt to isolate tourism's effects from wealth-creation activity associated with GDP measures. Indeed, in recognition that GDP is not a holistic measure of the wellbeing of a nation's citizens, other macroeconomic measures have subsequently been developed. The Human Development Index (HDI), for example, incorporates not only economic variables (GDP per capita) but also education (literacy and school enrolment) and health (life expectancy) variables to provide a composite index of wellbeing. In the context of tourism, Croes (2012) examines the relationship between tourism development and the HDI. Using the cases of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, Croes finds that tourism development triggers human development (education, health, standard of living), which in turn stimulates further tourism development, at least in the case of Nicaragua: there was a weaker relationship between tourism and human development in the case of Costa Rica.

Other measures have emerged based on the principles of the GNH index. For example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network developed and publish the World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2012). This report computes and then ranks the 'happiness' for 156 countries. The measurement has been computed since 2005 and an annual report shows movements in the ranking and absolute scores for each country. Unfortunately, neither Fiji nor any other South Pacific nation is included in the report. However, for the current study, the gross happiness index (GHI) framework was chosen to evaluate the well-being and quality of life of a tourism-dependent community compared with a community untouched by tourism.

### 3. Gross (National) happiness index

The term 'gross national happiness' was coined in 1972 by Bhutan's fourth Dragon King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. This small Asian nation made worldwide headlines as it rejected the notion of GDP as a measurement of national welfare by constructing a Gross National Happiness Index. Perceived initially as something of a gimmick, the GNH Index attracted a lot of media interest. Further, the ideas expressed in this index subsequently gained a lot of traction in global policy circles, as the Index included domains and variables that were derived from a wide range of academic literature which have subsequently become embedded in a range of other contexts.

The purpose of the GNH Index is to assess the overall happiness of a community or nation. The GNH Index can be decomposed into its sub-dimensions to understand the sources of happiness. Policy makers are then able to identify which areas of life residents are sufficiently happy and identify areas for improvement. The Index can be used by policy makers to increase GNH either by increasing the percentage of people who are 'happy' or decreasing the deficient conditions that contribute to unhappiness.

The Index is derived from nine dimensions: psychological wellbeing, time use, community vitality, cultural diversity, ecological resilience, living standard, health, education, and good governance. The aggregation method is a version of the Alkire Foster method (Alkire & Foster, 2011). These nine dimensions are made up of 33 indicators which are in turn comprised of 124 variables. According to Ura et al. (2012), the indicators were selected on the basis of five criteria: being normative values that are embedded in the culture and traditions of Bhutan; being statistically robust; being an accurate reflection of how happiness is increasing or evolving; being relevant for public action; and being able to be understood by the everyday citizen. There are four indicators in each domain with the exception of 'time use' (work and sleep) and 'living standards', which have three indicators each, see Table 1).

Following the methodology used in the Bhutan study, the criteria for assessing whether or not a resident is happy is a threshold or sufficiency level applied to each variable. This means that after the resident reaches a certain level or sufficiency on any particular measurement, any increase in that variable will not add incrementally to their level of happiness. At the domain level, all nine domains are equally weighted, as they are all considered to be equally valid for happiness. At the indicator level, self-reported indicators are ascribed a lower weight than more objective measures. The domains, indicators and respective weights are shown in Table 2.

A person is sufficiently happy if their response on the indicator meets or exceeds the cut-off. The level at which the sufficiency cut-off is set is a value judgment. For comparison, the cut-offs used in the current study are replicated from the Bhutan case. The indicator thresholds are shown in Table B1 in Appendix A. For the 'household income' indicator in the 'living standards' dimension, the cut-off was set at 1.5 times the national poverty level. For Fiji, this number was obtained from Fiji Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2008/2009, adjusted for inflation (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2010). A person is not required to achieve sufficiency in all indicators in order to be happy. A person is defined as happy if he or she has attained sufficiency in 66% or more of the weighted indicators, which is equivalent to six of the nine domains. The categorizations for 'happiness' are shown in Table 3.

The GHI consists of two summed measures. The first is the percentage of people who are deemed to be 'happy' ( $H^H$ ). That is, the percentage of people who have met the sufficiency cut-off for 66% in all the indicators. This is added to the second measurement

**Table 1**  
Dimensions of gross happiness

	Domain	Number of indicators
1	Psychological wellbeing	4
2	Health	4
3	Time use	2
4	Education	4
5	Cultural diversity & resilience	4
6	Good Governance	4
7	Community vitality	4
8	Ecological diversity & resilience	4
9	Living standards	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

**Table 2**  
Weights of the 33 GHI indicators

Domain	Indicators	Indicator weight	Domain weight	Variable weight
Psychological wellbeing	Life satisfaction	0.33	0.11	0.0370
	Positive emotion	0.17	0.11	0.0185
	Negative emotion	0.17	0.11	0.0185
Health	Spirituality	0.33	0.11	0.0370
	Self-reported health status	0.10	0.11	0.0111
	Number of healthy days	0.30	0.11	0.0333
	Disability	0.30	0.11	0.0333
Time use	Mental health	0.30	0.11	0.0333
	Work	0.50	0.11	0.0556
Education	Sleep	0.50	0.11	0.0556
	Literacy	0.30	0.11	0.0333
	Schooling	0.30	0.11	0.0333
Cultural diversity and resilience	Knowledge	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Value	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Artisan skills	0.30	0.11	0.0333
	Cultural participation	0.30	0.11	0.0333
Good Governance	Speak native language	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Cultural Values	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Political participation	0.40	0.11	0.0444
	Services	0.40	0.11	0.0444
Community vitality	Governance performance	0.10	0.11	0.0111
	Fundamental rights	0.10	0.11	0.0111
	Donation (time & money)	0.30	0.11	0.0333
	Safety	0.30	0.11	0.0333
Ecological diversity & resilience	Community relationship	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Family	0.20	0.11	0.0222
	Wildlife damage	0.40	0.11	0.0444
	Urban issues	0.40	0.11	0.0444
Living Standard	Responsibility towards environment	0.10	0.11	0.0111
	Ecological issues	0.10	0.11	0.0111
	Household per capita income	0.33	0.11	0.0370
	Assets	0.33	0.11	0.0370
	Housing	0.33	0.11	0.0370
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>1.0</b>

**Table 3**  
Happiness gradient

Percent of sufficient domains	Happiness category	
Less than 50%	Unhappy	Not-yet-happy
50–65%	Narrowly happy	
66–76%	Extensively happy	Happy
77–100%	Deeply happy	

( $H^N \times A^S$ ). This term is the percentage of people who are 'not-yet-happy' ( $H^N$ ) but who nevertheless enjoy sufficiency. Hence, the GHI can be formulated as follows:

$$GHI = H^H + (H^N \times A^S)$$

The GHI is bounded by 0 and 1. A number closer to 1 reflects greater happiness.

#### 4. Two Fijian villages – a “tourism” village and a non-tourism village

Tourism in Fiji was recognized as a path to economic development as early as the 1960s (Harrison & Pratt, 2010). By the early 1990s, tourism overtook the sugar industry as the main source of foreign exchange, and thus is one of the key economic drivers in Fiji's economy. Despite political instability brought about by several military coups, tourism in Fiji contributes approximately 23% to GDP and provides employment to an estimated 40,000 people (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). International tourism arrivals reached 692,630 in 2014, growing at an average rate of 5% over the past decade (Harrison & Pratt, 2013).

The 'tourism' village of Votulalai is located on the Coral Coast of Fiji in the province of Nadroga. The village itself is located directly adjacent to The Naviti Resort, a four-star 240-room resort. In the 1970s, landowners from the village agreed to lease their land to the hotel provided work was given to the people of Vatuolalai. These villagers were among the first Fijians to gain employment in tourism when the resort opened in 1974 (Movono, Pratt, & Harrison, 2015). Other international brand resorts are located nearby including; The Outrigger on the Lagoon, The Warwick Fiji Resort and Spa, the Shangri-La's Fijian Resort and the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa. During the mid-1900s, the southern Coral Coast underwent a series of developments. The first, in 1942, was the construction of the Queen's Highway by the United States army, and this in turn prompted further development, which led to the opening of the area to tourism (Movono, et al., 2015). The province of Nadroga, where the tourist village of Votulalai is located, is the main destination for 29% of international tourists that come to Fiji. In contrast, the province of Cakaudrove (the site of the traditional or 'non-tourism' village) is the main destination of only 1% of tourists (Fiji's Ministry of Tourism, 2009). Harrison and Prasad (2013) also note that the Nadroga region of the Coral Coast is one of the main tourist regions in Fiji, located 93 km away from Fiji's main international airport and accessible via the Queen's Highway. Vatuolalai consists of 32 households and has a population of about 185–200 people. Vatuolalai is one of the most well developed villages in the country and has modern housing and amenities. According to Movono et al., (2015), 92% of village residents are employed either directly or indirectly in tourism. Sources of income include regular payments by the resort for leasing land and direct employment (71% have a steady job at the resort, where 36% of the workers are women). Those not directly employed by the resort generate income through tourism-related

businesses, such as village stays, village tours, nature tours, hair braiding, traditional massage, handicraft sales, and even a jet-ski business. As this area has been influenced by tourism for such a long time, it is the subject of various studies on the host-guest relationship (Fong, 2006; Kado, 2007; Movono, 2012).

The area under research for the 'non-tourism' village actually comprises two neighbouring traditional Fijian villages in the Buca Bay area in the province of Cakaudrove. The two villages are called Buca and Tukavesi. These neighbouring villages are 1.2 km apart. Buca Bay is located on Vanua Levu, the second largest island of the Fiji Island group, and is not widely travelled by tourists. Most inhabitants in these villages are small subsistence farmers or fishermen. Buca Bay is approximately 75 km away by road from Savusavu airport, the nearest domestic airport. The airport at Taveuni is closer but lies across the bay and can only be accessed from that airport by ferry or smaller boat. Fig. 1 below demonstrates the geographical difference between the two villages, showing the relative proximity of the 'tourism' village to international tourism center.

The traditional villages in Buca Bay are quintessential subsistence villages. The land is communally owned. Gender roles are clearly demarcated. The males go fishing and do the farming. The most common crops include cassava, dalo (taro), yams and sweet potato. Papaya and coconut trees are usually in abundance. Surplus produce, over and above subsistence requirements, is usually sold or exchanged to pay for things like motorboat fuel and school fees. On special occasions, pigs are cooked in a *lovo* (an underground oven) and shared among the whole village. The females

are responsible for preparation of the meals, cooking and cleaning. Villagers are usually Methodists and very conservative in terms of dress code, attitudes and values. The village protocols (*itovo vakavanua*) are expected to be followed inside the village. Each Fijian villager is born into a certain role in the family unit (*tokatoka*). From a young age, children learn the importance of respect for elders and the chiefly system. The communal lifestyle means that an extended family unit ensures that no-one goes hungry, or is uncared for. This all-encompassing social-security net ensures that individuals are cared for and gives each person a sense of belonging and identity.

In the traditional village of Buca Bay, there has been and still is some small-scale tourism that takes place. Until July 2000, the Buca Bay Resort offered rooms in a plantation house, a 12-bed dormitory room and a *bure*. However, during the 2000 military coup in Fiji, the resort was invaded by local villagers making claims on the land and the resort ceased operation (Kanemasu, 2015). Currently, there is a smattering of home-stays in and around Buca Bay, and a thriving boutique and dive tourism destination on Taveuni, a two-hour boat ride away.

## 5. Data collection

Bhutan's GNH survey was adapted for the Fijian context. Questions that specifically related to Bhutanese culture were modified for the Fijian case. For example, in the indicator

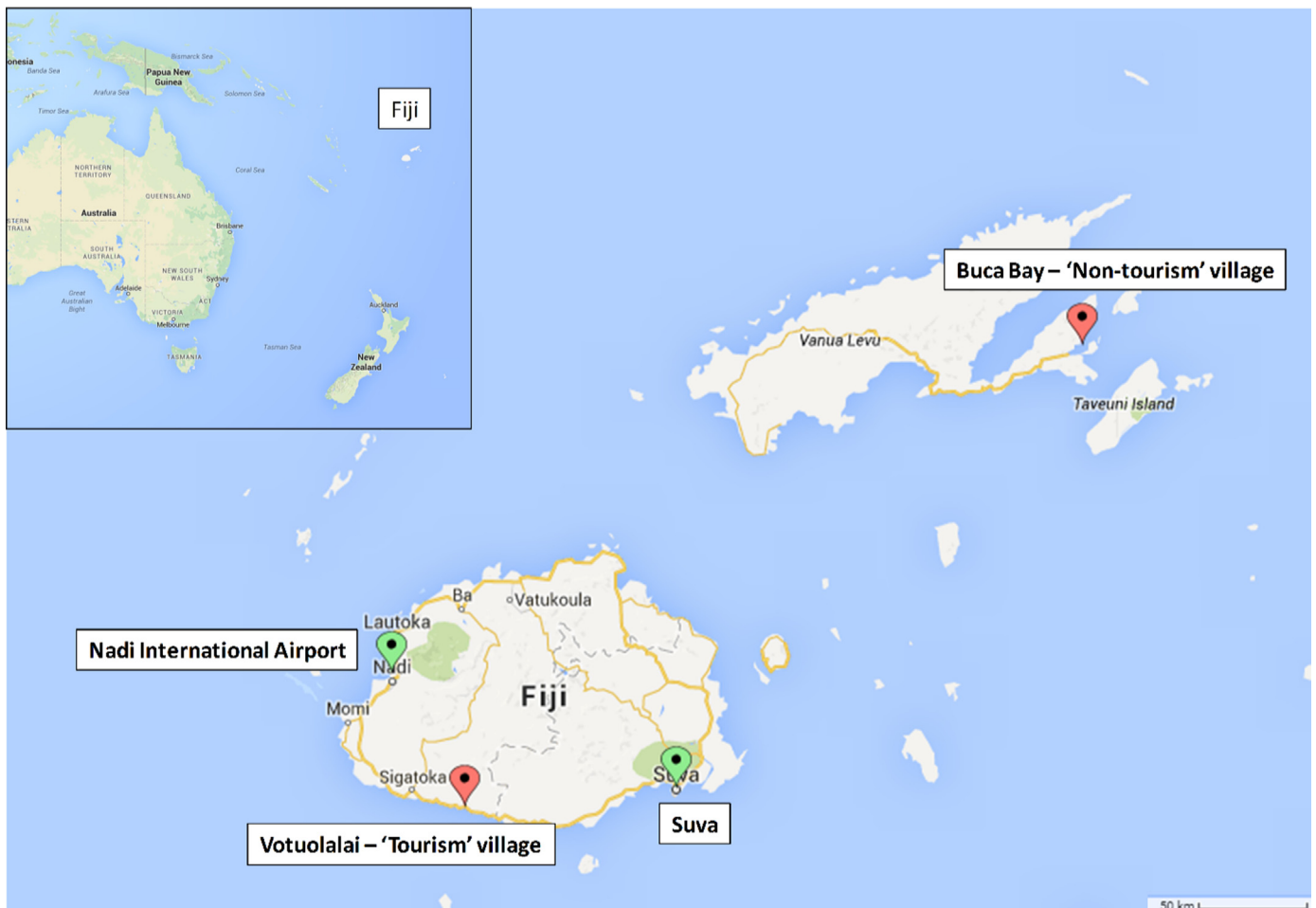


Fig. 1. Location of the tourism and non-tourism Fijian villages.

'spirituality' under the 'psychological wellbeing' dimension, the Bhutan study asked about self-reported spirituality level, the frequency with which they consider karma, engage in prayer recitation, and meditation. Given that Fijian villages are Methodist, the questions were adapted for a Christian context: self-reported spirituality level, the frequency with which they pray, go to church and consider the Bible's teachings in the course of their daily life. Similarly under the 'cultural diversity and resilience' dimension, the indicator of 'artisan skills' was simplified in the Fijian version. Artisan skills for Fijians included weaving, carving, and traditional dance. The Bhutan version assessed people's interest and knowledge in 13 arts and crafts, collectively known as *ZorigChusum*. The indicator of this measurement then reports the number of skills possessed by a respondent. With these minor adjustments, the number of questions and dimensions remained the same as the Bhutan model. The calculations and sufficiency cut-offs used to construct the GHI in the Fijian context were identical to the original index. The quantitative GHI surveys were conducted in the Fijian language in person by a tertiary-educated indigenous Fijian with one member of each village household. A copy of survey instrument in Fijian and English can be found in [Appendix A](#). In the 'tourism' village of Votulalai, 31 questionnaires were completed (out of the 32 households representing a response rate of 96.9%). In the traditional villages of Buca and Tukavesi, where there are 79 households and 88 households, respectively ([Qalo, 2015](#)), 43 and 53 households were interviewed. This represents a total of 96 completed household questionnaires for a response rate of 57.5%. The data was entered into SPSS for further analysis.

**6. Findings**

The findings indicate that the non-tourism village was significantly happier than the tourism village. Less than a quarter (22.6%) of people living in the tourism village were happy (including only 6.5% who were deeply happy, that is have sufficiency in over 76% over the 33 indicators) compared with over three-quarters of inhabitants of the non-tourism village, with 41.7% of villagers being deeply happy ([Table 4](#)). Conversely, 77.4% of villagers in the tourism village were not-yet-happy compared to 22.9% in the non-tourism village.

Using [Alkire-Foster, \(2011\)](#) method noted above, the Gross Happiness Index for the tourism village in Fiji was 0.655. This comprised of the 22.6% (0.226) happy villagers and the 77.4% of not-yet-happy people (0.774), multiplied by the 55.4% of domains in which not-yet-happy people enjoy sufficiency (0.554). In comparison, the non-tourism village had a Gross Happiness Index of 0.905. For Bhutan in 2010, the GNH Index value was 0.743. The decomposition of the index shows 40.9% of people in Bhutan

**Table 4**  
Categories of GHI, Headcounts and Sufficiency

	Tourism (Votulalai)		Non-Tourism (Buca Bay)	
	% of village	Average sufficiency	% of village	Average sufficiency
<b>Happy</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>0.7369</b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>0.7740</b>
Deeply happy (76–100%)	6.5%	0.7931	41.7%	0.8215
Extensively Happy (66–76%)	16.1%	0.7144	35.4%	0.7182
<b>Not-yet-happy</b>	<b>77.4%</b>	<b>0.5539</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>0.5772</b>
Narrowly Happy (50–65%)	58.1%	0.5799	18.8%	0.6071
Unhappy (0–49%)	19.4%	0.4762	4.2%	0.4430

**Table 5**  
Sufficiency in the happiness dimensions by village type

Dimension	Tourism village (%)	Non-tourism village (%)	difference (%)	P-value
Psychological wellbeing	87.6	82.1	5.5	0.271
Health	85.6	75.8	9.8	0.045 **
Time use	41.9	82.3	–40.4	0.000 **
Education	74.1	66.5	7.6	0.062
Cultural diversity	62.4	78.5	–16.2	0.000 **
Good governance	23.2	68.0	–44.7	0.000 **
Community vitality	57.4	69.2	–11.8	0.006 **
Ecological diversity	20.7	59.4	–38.7	0.000 **
Living standard	82.8	74.1	8.7	0.170

\*\* Represents a statistically significant difference at 95% level of confidence between the villages.

achieved happiness, with the remaining 59.1% enjoying sufficiency in 56.6% of the domains on average.

To better understand the difference in the levels of happiness across village type, [Table 5](#) shows the proportion of villagers who had achieved sufficiency in each of the nine dimensions. As noted, there are some marked differences between the tourism village and the non-tourism village. For the psychological wellbeing dimension, there is a general trend that more tourism villagers met the sufficiency cut-off on three of the four indices (life satisfaction, positive emotions and spirituality). However, those from the tourism village reported a higher incidence of excessive negative emotions. The sub-indices that make up this indicator include selfishness, jealousy, fear, worry, and anger. Previous research in the village by [Movono, \(2012\)](#) suggests that increased employment of women in the tourism industry has led to women being exposed to new ideas and ways of life, and thus enjoy more freedom. Through being more financially independent, they have demanded a say in household and village affairs and this has led to conflict. This may have increased the frequency and intensity of these negative emotions.

For the health dimension, those from the tourism village were significantly healthier than those from the subsistence village. This was due predominantly to the higher number of reported healthy days in the month. In terms of time use however, only 41.9% of Fijians from the tourism village enjoyed sufficiency in this dimension, compared to 81.9% from the traditional village. Only 35.5% from the tourism village reported working at least eight hours a day (the sufficiency cut-off), compared to 88.5% of Fijians from the non-tourism village. It is important to note that work here includes even unpaid work such as childcare, labour contribution to community works; and voluntary works and informal help, for example. Similarly, in terms of sleep, those from the tourism village are significantly less likely to report getting enough sleep, compared to those from the non-tourism village (48.4% versus 76.0%).

For the education dimension, while there are no statistically significant differences at the dimension level, the main difference between the two villagers relates to the values indicator. In this instance, more tourism villagers met the sufficiency cut-off for happiness than those from the non-tourism village. The sub-indices for this indicator asked respondents whether they considered five destructive actions to be justifiable: killing, stealing, lying, creating disharmony in relationships, and sexual misconduct. The threshold is set at four, which denotes that a person can consider at least one of these actions to be justifiable. For the traditional subsistence village, a high proportion of villagers stated

that these five destructive actions were at least sometimes justifiable. The differences here may reflect a difference in values as tourism villagers hold more humanitarian and liberal viewpoints as a result of being exposed to international tourists.

For the 'cultural diversity and resilience' dimension, the tourism village reported a significantly lower level of happiness for this dimension. The indicators of artisan skills, cultural participation, and native language were lower for the tourism village than the traditional subsistence village. As noted by many scholars, tourism can encourage the continuous practice of aspects of culture such as dances, crafts and art, which may otherwise be lost (Macleod, 2006; Weaver & Oppermann, 2000, p. 283). In this case, however, it may be that tourism has indirectly imposed non-Fijian values and beliefs on the host society (Akama, 1999). Although it may not be obvious to host populations, tourism and the need to cater for guests may indirectly force locals to adopt and even assimilate aspects of the guest culture. This would mean that locals would have to accept, or fall subservient to, the cultural demands and requirements of international tourists. This is considered negative as it places the culture of locals as being less important than tourists (Macleod, 2006; Ryan & Page, 2000). A further socio-cultural impact of tourism, often considered negative, is the copying of tourist behaviour by the host population—the 'demonstration effect' (MacCannell, 1976; Weaver, 1998).

In terms of 'good governance', the non-tourism village was significantly better overall and in particularly in the area of political participation. Just under a quarter (23.2%) of villagers from the tourism village achieved sufficiency on this dimension compared to over two-thirds (67.7%) from the non-tourism village. Political participation is comprised of two sub-indices: the possibility of voting in the next election and the frequency of attendance at community meetings. While villages reported attending a similar number of community meetings, those in the non-tourism village were more likely to report going to vote in the next election.

For the dimension of 'community vitality and ecological diversity and resilience', those from the non-tourism village were significantly happier than those from the tourism village. While over half (57.4%) of the tourism village met sufficiency on the Community Vitality dimension, over two-thirds (69.9%) from the non-tourism village did likewise. On three of the four indicators of this dimension, there was little difference. The main difference was on the 'family' indicator. Those from the tourism village were less likely to agree that family members care about each other, that they get enough time to spend with their family, that there is a lot of understanding in their family, and that the family is a real source of comfort. The reasons for this may be the increased individualistic lifestyle from working in a tourism village.

For the 'ecological diversity and resilience' dimension, about a fifth of villagers from the tourism villages achieved sufficiency compared to about three-fifths from the non-tourism village. The main differences related to urban issues, such as traffic congestion and lack of green spaces. Votuolalai, located on the Queen's Road on the main island of Viti Levu, is on Fiji's main highway: a single lane highway that connects Suva, Fiji's capital with Nadi International Airport, going through the tourist regions of the Coral Coast and Nadi. This may be why villages from Votuolalai were significantly less happy on this dimension.

Interestingly, there are similar level of happiness reported for the 'living standards' dimension between villages. While the 'housing quality' indicator for happiness was comparatively high at 80.6% and 78.1% for the tourism and non-tourism village respectively, the indicator for 'assets' was also similar. The sub-indices for the assets indicator are land, livestock, and electronic household goods (such as a refrigerator, a colour television, a washing machine among other goods). All of the households in the

**Table 6**

GHI of the tourism village and non-tourism village by demographic segment

GHI	Tourism village	Non-tourism village
Total	0.655	0.905
Gender		
Male	0.719	0.879
Female	0.614	0.943
Age		
34 years or younger	0.610	0.858
35 years or older	0.711	0.919
Education level		
Some high school or below	0.658	0.910
High school graduate or above	0.642	0.896
Marital Status		
Married	0.755	0.930
Not married	0.597	0.878

tourism village achieved sufficiency in this indicator and 87.8% of the villagers in the traditional subsistence did as well. Lastly, for household per capita income, with a sufficiency level of 1.5 times the national poverty level, 41.7% of the tourism village achieved this cut-off but none of the villagers from the non-tourism did. Money does not necessarily bring happiness.

Table 6 shows the GHIs for different segments of the tourism village. Males were happier than females, while those 35 years or older were happier than those 34 years and younger. There was little difference in happiness by level of education; however those who are married were significantly happier than those who were not, either being single, divorced or widowed. Table 6 also shows a comparison between the GHI of the tourism village and non-tourism village by demographic segment. While married villagers were still happier than non-married villagers in the non-tourism village, there was less of a difference in happiness. As in the tourism village, for the non-tourism village, there was little difference in happiness by the level of education among the non-tourism village. Older non-tourism villagers were happier than younger non-tourism villagers but, as with marital status, the difference was less pronounced. Conversely, females in the non-tourism village reported a higher level of happiness than males. This means that the difference between happiness among females in the tourism village and the non-tourism village was more pronounced than the difference between the males from the two village types.

Amongst tourism villagers, there were few differences between the socio-demographic segments of gender, age, education, and marital status. Notable exceptions include 'cultural diversity', where older villagers were happier than younger villagers. Due to globalization and increasing modernity, younger villagers may be losing some of their cultural identity and practices. Other differences include the time use of those who are married compared to single people. Those who are married achieve higher sufficiency in meeting adequate amounts of sleep and work.

## 7. Conclusions and recommendations

The search for happiness plagues both rich and poor countries alike. Most people agree that societies should foster the happiness of their citizens. Agreeing on what a happy life is like is problematic. This leads to the question of how to measure happiness and its complex dimensions. This paper has applied the methodology of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index to a 'tourism' and a 'non-tourism' village in the South Pacific country of Fiji. The tourism village has a long relationship with international tourism, having adapted and reacted to tourism development, leading in

turn to both positive and negative impacts (Movono et al., 2015). The non-tourism village has had no substantive experience with tourism and is typical of most of Fiji's rural and semi-subsistence communities. The Gross Happiness Index for the tourism village in Fiji is 0.655. This compares with a GHI for Bhutan of 0.743 and is benchmarked to a non-tourism Fijian village with a GHI of 0.905. The debate on tourism's impacts on local indigenous communities is an ongoing process, unique for each destination. Tourism has proven its potential as an important development tool for many developing countries and has been the backbone of economies in the Pacific and small island developing states. From the national to the village and community level, tourism has proven to be a tool capable of enhancing livelihoods and diversifying economic opportunities. Socially, tourism may also be a beneficial contributor to communal development, not only raising economic standards but also encouraging cultural preservation and positive cross-cultural exchange. Understanding the development of a destination and its relation to the global community is vital to understanding tourism's contribution to community development.

Tourism development tends to introduce host populations to new ways of life and behaviours, different from their own. Such close interactions of people with large cultural differences often leads to the host society demonstrating aspects of the guest culture, leading to the 'demonstration effect' (Cohen, 1988). Locals, in contact with foreigners, often display behaviour typical of Western tourists in the village setting and at times the subsequent behavioural change can cause conflicts within the host community (Cohen, 1988; MacNaught, 1982). However, such interactions can also lead to positive social outcomes and a shared sense of solidarity between hosts and guests (Woosnam and Normal, 2010) and so it is also possible that different aspects of tourism's development can yield negative social impacts.

Tourism may draw people out of their 'normal' roles in villages as they gain formal employment in the tourism industry. As a result, traditional roles in the village setting may be challenged depending upon the type of employment as well as the nature of tourism (de Burlo, 2003; Douglas & Douglas, 1996). Douglas and Douglas (1996) list differences in host and guest culture, ratio of visitors to residents, and speed and intensity of development as determinants of the extent of impacts on host communities in the Pacific.

Tourism supposedly influences indigenous cultural practices as well, as it adds a new (often commercial) context to which culture is performed. As a result, age-old traditions may lose their significance through alteration and over-exploitation to meet tourism demand (Cohen, 1988). In his study of the changes in indigenous Fijian culture, Ravuvu (1988), affirms that the introduction of economic activity is possibly one of the strong influences for changes and will continue to be a force that will influence the modernization of Fijian communities.

The relatively high GHI in the non-tourism village is perhaps not so surprising for Fiji, given that a 2014 WIN/Gallup international poll of countries found that Fiji's people are the happiest on Earth. This poll found that 93% of Fiji citizens stated they were either 'happy' or 'very happy'. This compares to 67% of USA citizens who considered themselves content with life. When compared to the tourism village, those living in the non-tourism village were, on average, extremely happy. Whether the results of the GHI from this village are representative of other traditional Fijian villages across Fiji is open to question. As with any case study, how representative the cases are to the remainder of the population remains debatable. This is one of the limitations of the study. Further research across a wider range of villages, with varying levels of exposure to tourism would certainly add to the assessment of tourism's ability to contribute to happiness of indigenous populations.

For the tourism village, a close relationship with the tourism resort has enabled an increase in the material wealth of the villagers. Females, who are employed at the resort have developed new skills, confidence and have elevated their standards economically and socially. However, this has affected the traditional gender roles in Fijian society and has influenced shifts in the social arrangements within a traditional village setting. Under the Education domain, while overall the tourism village has higher sufficiency, the tourism village has lower sufficiency on the indicator of 'schooling'. This is due to the guarantee that those villagers from the land-owning tourism village are ensured of employment once they leave high school. We might speculate that there is little incentive for the villagers to further their education because of this guaranteed employment.

The difference in ecological diversity can partly be explained by the geographic location of the two villages. The tourism village is on the main island of Viti Levu in the midst of a concentrated tourism area. As mentioned earlier, the Coral Coast also has other international branded resorts along the same strip of coastline. Yet there is just a two-lane road, generously named the Queen's Highway, which connects Suva, the capital, and Nadi, the site of the international airport. The non-tourism village on the other hand, is situated in a relatively isolated, undeveloped part of Fiji and is a three-hour bus ride to the nearest small township of Savusavu. Furthermore, a few months prior to the survey the villagers in the non-tourism village had undergone a series of workshops conducted by an environmental NGO on the subject of sustainability and importance of sustainable energy. Buca village is the only indigenous Fijian community to have its own micro-hydroelectric generation scheme, which was established through aid from the Turkish government and built by the villagers in 2012. The influence of the workshops in enhancing knowledge and greater appreciation for their ecological surroundings may have also contributed to the results on ecological diversity.

Employment, both at the resort and through the setting up of microbusinesses in the village adjacent to the resort, has meant the tourism villagers have had problems with time management. Juggling the demands of formal employment along with cultural practices and traditions while still attending to subsistence activities such as fishing and farming, has meant that those from the tourism village may have been working for long hours, which may have impacted on the results. The seasonality of tourism work also means that in some parts of the year, villagers work long hours while other parts of the year there is not enough paid employment for everyone who wants it. When compared to the tourism village, the non-tourism village is more detached from formal governance and external economic influences. The people in the non-tourism village are more internally governed, and less reliant on the government and on formal work. There is a higher participation in the subsistence sector. People choose to live more 'traditionally', are more self-reliant, can go to the farms at a time and pace of their choosing and are perhaps more content as they are detached from the broader social and political issues that affect the greater urbanized populace, including the tourism community.

Although, villagers in the non-tourism village may be financially less well-off, they claim to be socially wealthier as they value kinship, traditions and fewer concerns about money and material wealth. Another possible reason for the more positive response from the non-tourism village could be attributed to specific aspects of Fijian culture. According to Nabobo-Baba, 2008 pp. 201–233, in her study of indigenous Fijian education highlighted that indigenous Fijians 'out of their perceived obligation to please ... will be inclined to tell you the positive responses first ... researchers need to spend more time and dig deeper',



recommending that immersive studies, ethnographic techniques, and following up may help clarify the often euphoric initial responses to questions.

One recommendation is for the resort owners and management that lease the land from the tourism village to foster better dialogue and closer relations with the village. Closer linkages between the community and the resort would minimize any misunderstandings that have arisen in the past, benefiting both parties.

Going forward, this Gross Happiness Index instrument and methodology could be applied in difference contexts. It would be interesting to apply compute a Gross Happiness Index in a developed country context, as well as an Asian context. Other possibilities for future research include sampling tourism and hospital

employees, comparing their gross happiness with workers from other sectors.

## Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2015.11.001>.

## Appendix B

See Table B1.

**Table B1**  
Sufficiency Cut-offs of the 33 GHI indicators

Domain	Indicators	Response range (Worst - best)	Threshold
Psychological wellbeing	Life satisfaction	5 (Lowest satisfaction score) to 25 (Highest satisfaction score)	19
	Positive emotion	5 (Lowest positive emotion score) to 20 (Highest positive emotion score)	12
	Negative emotion	5 (Lowest negative emotion score) to 20 (Highest negative emotion score)	15
Health	Spirituality	4 (Lowest spirituality score) to 16 (Highest spirituality score)	12
	Self-reported health status	1 (Very poor) to 5 (Excellent)	4 (Very good) or 5 (Excellent)
	Number of healthy days	0 (Worst) to 30 (Best)	National average: 26 days
	Disability	1 (Yes)/2 (No) or 1 (All the time) to 5 (Never)	2 (No) & 4 (Sometimes) or 5 (Never)
Time use	Mental health	0-15 (Normal mental wellbeing) to 21-36 (Severe distress)	0-15 (Normal mental wellbeing)
	Work		480 min
Education	Sleep		480 min
	Literacy	1 (No)/2 (Yes)	2 (Yes)
Cultural diversity and resilience	Schooling	1 (No formal education) to 8 (Postgraduate/PhD)	2 (Primary school)
	Knowledge	5 (Lowest knowledge score) to 25 (Highest knowledge score)	19-25 (Knowledge score)
	Value	5 (Lowest value score) to 15 (Highest value score)	14-15 (Value score)
Good governance	Artisan skills	0 skills (Worst) to 4 skills (Best)	One skill or more
	Cultural participation	1 (None) to 5 (More than 20 days)	3 (6-12 days) or 4 (13-20 days) or 5 (More than 20 days)
	Speak native language	1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very well)	4 (Quite well) or 5 (Very well)
Community vitality	Cultural Values	1 (Not Important) to 3 (Very important)/1 (Getting weaker) to 3 (Getting stronger)	3 (Very Important or 2 (Important) & 3 (Getting stronger)
	Political participation	1 (No)/2 (Yes)	Yes and attend at least 1 meeting
	Services	Electricity 1 (No)/2 (Yes); Waste disposal 1 (Dump on open land) to 7 (Compositing); Source of Water 1 (River, pond etc) to 8 (Piped in dwelling); Quality of water 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Very good)	Time to health care centre = 30 min or less; Electricity = Yes; Waste disposal = 5,6,7; Water quality 5-8=Good/Very good
Ecological diversity & resilience	Governance performance	7 (Lowest govt. performance score) to 35 (Highest govt. performance score)	28
	Fundamental rights	1 (No)/2 (Yes) - 7 Questions	Sufficiency in at least 6 of the 7 sub-indicators
	Donation (time & money)	Amount of donation made in a year / Number of days volunteered	10% of annual household income & 3 days of voluntary time
Living standard	Safety	1 (Yes) or 2 (No)	2 (No)
	Community relationship	1 (Weak) to 3 (Very strong) / 1 (Trust none of them) to 4 (Trust most of them)	3 & 3 or 4
	Family	6 (Lowest family score) to 18 (Highest family score)	16
	Wildlife damage	1 (Major constraint) to 4 (Not a constraint)/1 (A lot) to 4 (Not at all)	1 (Major constraint) & 1 (A lot) or 2 (Some)
Living standard	Urban issues	1 (Major concern) to 4 (Not a concern)	Any major concern is under threshold
	Responsibility towards environment	1 (Not at all responsible) to 4 (Highly responsible)	4 (Highly responsible)
	Ecological issues	1 (Major concern) to 4 (Not a concern) - 6 Questions	4 (Not a concern) or 3 (Minor concern) or 2 (Some concern) in at least 5 issues
Living standard	Household per capita income	Household income in Fiji dollars	1.5 * National poverty line
	Assets	1 (No)/2 (Yes); Number of cultivable land owned by the household; Number of livestock owned by the household	2 or more electrical equipment or 5 acres of cultivable land or 5 livestock (Sufficiency in any one sub-indicators)
	Housing	Toilet=1 (No toilet facility, open spaces) to 5 (Flush toilet)/Roof material=1 (Slate/bamboo/straw/wood/mud)- 2 (Concrete/brick/stone/CGI/metal); Room ratio = Number of persons per room	Sufficiency in all three sub-indicators

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