

# Experiences of Bhutanese teachers in wellbeing leadership roles: Contextual realities of implementing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion

---

**Sangay Jamtsho**

Bhutan: [sangay.jamtsho@gmail.com](mailto:sangay.jamtsho@gmail.com)

*Schools are ideal sites for the promotion of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enhance personal as well as collective wellbeing. Schools engage in numerous programs and activities to promote the wellbeing of students. Despite indications of positive effects of a whole-school approach, reports find that implementation is challenging because these programs typically require fundamental changes to the ways in which schools operate and are organized. Although they are key implementers, the experiences and challenges that middle-level leaders in schools face when working towards a whole-school approach has been rarely reported. This qualitative study explored the perceptions and experiences of key implementers in implementing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion in secondary schools in the small Kingdom of Bhutan. Findings suggest that they face numerous challenges in implementing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing that revolve around culture and context.*

*Keywords: student wellbeing; whole-school approach; implementation contextual factors*

## INTRODUCTION

Wellbeing is as much an individual as it is a societal aspiration. We all seek a quality of life characterized by sound health, peace of mind, positive relationships, prosperity, and contentment. Education is a key mechanism through which wellbeing can be promoted in effective and sustainable ways. Schools represent important sites for promoting wellbeing, whether it is to address the personal wellbeing of students, or to prepare them as agents of societal change.

The promotion of student wellbeing in schools can cover a diverse range of programs and activities, with aims that range from student management to student empowerment. Efforts to address wellbeing are sometimes recognized as an important and integral aspect of a school's responsibility and, at other times, presumed to be peripheral activities intended to address distractions to the central aim of academic and intellectual development.

In this study, wellbeing is conceptualized as consisting of multiple and inter-related dimensions operating at individual, relational, and collective levels (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007). Student wellbeing promotion refers to the practice of promoting

these in schools through school policies, the ways in which schools are organized, and teaching and learning of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be well.

This study draws on the experiences of key implementers of student wellbeing programs in schools in the small Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan. The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of the challenges that teachers in student wellbeing leadership roles face in implementing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing.

## **STUDENT WELLBEING PROMOTION IN BHUTAN**

Bhutan is a land-locked kingdom in the Himalayas located between China and India, with an area of 38,394 sq. km. It has a population of 768,577 of which 172,919 are school children (National Statistics Bureau, 2016). In 2012, Bhutan's adult literacy rate was 63 per cent (2012), and in 2015, had a GDP per capita of US\$2,719 (National Statistics Bureau, 2016). Bhutan became a democratic constitutional monarchy in 2008, and the *Constitution of Bhutan* guarantees free basic education (seven years of primary and four years of secondary education).

A modern and secular system of schooling in Bhutan began in the 1960s, coinciding with its first Five-Year Development Plan. It started with a borrowed system from India, which, in turn, was largely an inheritance of British colonial education. Prior to this, Buddhist monastic education prevailed and, although it still continues to thrive, it is separate from the mainstream secular Westernized education. The first major attempt to Bhutanize and reform the Education system was launched with the introduction of the New Approach to Primary Education (NAPE) in 1986. NAPE represented a major shift from a borrowed curriculum that was teacher- and textbook-centred teaching to a Bhutanized curriculum that emphasized an activity-based, learner-centred approach. This was followed by a gradual vertical expansion of curricular changes relevant to Bhutan's needs and aspirations. For example, imported textbooks were replaced with textbooks written locally with local content, especially for humanities and social sciences; and the Bhutan Board of Examination (now Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment) took over school examinations and assessment from the Indian Council for Secondary Education.

Since the late 1990s, the promotion of 'wholesome education', saw the introduction of school programs such as the comprehensive health program, values education, reproductive health and population education, career guidance and counselling (UNESCO, 2011). In 2009, Bhutan launched the Education for Gross National Happiness (E4GNH) initiative that emphasized the importance of transforming the Education system to embody and reflect the values and principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH). GNH is Bhutan's development philosophy that puts human wellbeing as a measure of development as opposed to the conventional GDP or economic growth. However, beyond policy-level discourse, it remained largely absent from the school-level practices until the introduction of E4GNH.

E4GNH is described as a way of 'enriching learning, and improving the process of education. It has to do with creating a context and an approach that infuses a GNH consciousness into everything that is learned' (Hayward & Colman, 2010, p. 222). This statement underscores the importance of schools as settings where GNH is 'lived', and not just talked about and, therefore, can be viewed as a holistic approach to the promotion of student wellbeing. E4GNH represents a reform effort to inculcate and operationalize

GNH values in Education by infusing it into the curriculum and all aspects of school programs and activities (Ministry of Education, 2012). It is envisioned to be the anchor holding together the various strands of schooling, including programs and activities aimed at student wellbeing and presumed to contribute to 'wholesome education', but often referred to as co-curricular activities, although remained largely fragmented in its implementation. The School Guidance and Counselling Program forms a major aspect of this and is already aligned along the tenets of a whole-school approach in that it tries to address student wellbeing through curriculum, counselling, and consultation services, and reaches out to the parents and other agencies outside the school. While the substance of the E4GNH can be considered indigenous and based on the GNH values influenced by Buddhism, the form in which it is propagated is intended to be a whole-school approach.

### **IMPLEMENTING A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH**

In recent times, student wellbeing has been conceptualized as integral to education and as a form of learning in itself (e.g., De Jong & Kerr-Roubicek, 2007; Markham & Aveyard, 2003; Noddings, 2003; St. Leger, Young, Blanchard, & Perry, 2010). Consistent with this thinking, a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion is proposed which calls for the inclusion of student wellbeing promotion in a school's policies, curriculum, structures, and practices, making it a shared responsibility of all stakeholders. Several systematic reviews report evidence in support of a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion. St Leger et al. (2010), based on their review of research literature on health promotion, assert that school programs that are integrated, holistic, and strategic are more likely to produce better health and education outcomes than those which are mainly information-based and implemented only in the classroom. This confirms an earlier review of research literature by Lister-Sharp, Chapman, Stewart-Brown, and Sowden (1999), which described a whole-school approach as a promising and multifaceted approach likely to be most effective given its focus on a combination of curriculum, ethos, and environment, and family and community partnerships.

Several studies (Bond et al., 2004; Flay, Graumlich, Segawa, Burns, & Holliday, 2004; Hazell, 2005; Lee, Cheng, Fung, & St Leger, 2006; Patton et al., 2006; Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, & Carson, 2000), reviews of interventions (Stewart-Brown, 2006; Wells, Barlow, & Stewart-Brown, 2003) as well as a meta-analysis of randomized control trials (Langford et al., 2014) report positive benefits and effectiveness of a whole-school approach to aspects of student wellbeing and academic achievement. These reports suggest the benefits of targeting system-wide changes with multiple interventions in the areas of teaching-learning, ethos, and environment, and collaboration with parents and communities. However, they also point to some concerns and challenges. These include the lack of or limited information on interventions involving school environment and partnerships (Deschesnes, Martin, & Hill, 2003; Langford et al., 2014), and lack of detailed information on implementation or process evaluation (Blank et al., 2009; Langford, et al., 2014), and a lack of information on contextual understanding (Ringeisen, Henderson, & Hoagwood, 2003). These findings reported in the literature are based on studies in the Western and developed world and rarely, if at all, come from small states in the developing world.

Implementing a whole-school approach is challenging because it requires going beyond delivering classroom programs to addressing school ethos and environment, policy and practices, and developing or extending partnerships with parents, community groups or

health agencies, all of which involved additional time, energy, and resources (Wyn et al., 2000). Yet, research evidence suggests that effective implementation is associated with better outcomes (Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Wilson, Lipsey, & Derzon, 2003; Wilson & Lipsey, 2007).

To be effective, change initiatives require adaptations to suit local contexts (Botvin, Griffin, & Nichols, 2006), and it is the local choices about practice that dominate outcomes of change (McLaughlin, 2005). Schools not only differ in the environmental and resource support available, but also differ in their views, approaches, policies, and practices (McLaughlin, 2005). Within schools, all teachers make adaptations to programs (Datnow & Castellano, 2000) and do so in different ways, leading to different consequences (Klinger, Cramer, & Harry, 2006). In addition to those in school, there are various other stakeholders, such as parents and community members involved in the school who are bound to act or react in numerous ways that impact implementation. Hence, understanding the dynamics involved in the implementation process is key to ensuring effective change. In the context of small nations, it becomes even more important to understand the contextual factors because small nations have distinctive characteristics (Crossley, 2010). It cannot be assumed that findings elsewhere, especially those from the developed world, will equally apply.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on a constructivist interpretive theoretical orientation that assumes multiple constructed realities, and views truth and knowledge are subjective and socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). While it explored the perceptions and experiences of key informants on what they considered to be the factors that challenged them as key implementers in general, this report focuses on challenges associated with school culture and context. School culture, in this study, refer to: the policies, procedures and practices within a school community; and the assumptions, beliefs and the values underlying these. These range from beliefs and views held by those in the school, the school's vision, mission, and values; the school's physical, social, and emotional climate; and the ways in which schools are structured as organizations. It constitutes a complex interplay of numerous aspects that are both tangible and intangible.

A small number of 'information-rich' participants (four) from public secondary schools (one rural, one semi-urban, and two urban) in Western Bhutan were chosen through a purposeful sampling strategy, and interviewed face-to-face. The participants (two males and two females) were trained teachers with a graduate certificate majoring in school guidance and counselling; they had between four to six years of experience. Each participant was interviewed three times for approximately an hour on each occasion over a period of over one-and-half months. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed. In addition to embedding findings in contextual descriptions as far as possible, member checks, triangulation, peer debriefing and maintaining an audit trail were some of the strategies used to ensure trustworthiness. Documents and technical literature, such as policies, newsletters, brochures, reports, and website information were collected to fill in contextual information gaps and corroborate information obtained from interviews and observations of the school settings.

Written informed consent was sought from both individual participants and institutions involved; and measures were taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Where

participants are quoted in this report, only pseudonyms are used, referred to as Pedrup, Lhazom, Tyendel and Keldon.

Whereas a sound and complete understanding of the challenges and issues of implementing a whole-school approach will require perspectives of all the stakeholders involved, this study only focussed on the perspectives of school counsellors as student wellbeing leaders. School counsellors play a major role in the promotion of student wellbeing. Their roles include the teaching of guidance curriculum that include career education and life skills, providing counselling services to students with emotional and behavioural issues, providing consultation services and liaising with teachers, parents, and other professionals, and conducting parent education sessions, or similar other wellbeing programs and activities amongst other things. Even though, as key implementers, they are likely to be most knowledgeable and have first-hand experience, it is still an incomplete view.

## **FINDINGS**

Despite the appeal and promise of a whole-school approach, the findings from this study point to a number of implementation challenges that relate to school culture and context. Addressing school ethos, organization, and environment is one of the key components of a whole-school approach. This includes the important role of school culture, and often the need for its transformation, for bringing about effective and sustainable change, or, in this case, student wellbeing promotion. Throughout the interviews, in sharing their experiences of the challenges they face in implementing student wellbeing programs, participants either made explicit statements or implied school organizational culture as an important aspect that needed to be addressed. Prominent among these were concerns and challenges that revolve around beliefs and norms, school organizational structure, principal's leadership and support, and professional authority and legitimacy. Findings suggest that, for a whole-school approach to promoting student wellbeing to work, it will be important to establish a shared understanding of what constitutes student wellbeing, paying attention to the prevalent and competing norms and beliefs, and to work on the existing school organizational structures because it will be near impossible to effectively implement a whole-school approach if the existing structures are adapted to support or accommodate it. In achieving these, school leadership plays a critical role.

### **Views and beliefs of what constitute student wellbeing**

Despite the advocacy and the value attached to a whole-school approach, one of the challenges of implementation appear to be that schools continue to be deeply entrenched in traditional beliefs of control and compliance, and a reactive approach to treating those that are unwell. While these may still be relevant, the challenge is to reconcile their central position to create a more holistic approach that also includes being proactive and making student wellbeing a shared responsibility.

Views and beliefs around what constitute student wellbeing came up as an important theme in the interviews as an influential factor affecting implementation. Participants not only defined what student wellbeing meant to them but also spoke about the place of wellbeing or its value in children's education. In articulating their views on student wellbeing promotion and its implementation, participants often spoke about competing beliefs and views about student wellbeing held by others within the school, such as school leaders and teachers, and the challenges they pose for effective implementation of student

wellbeing programs. Some of them referred to this as the challenge of ‘changing mindsets’.

A common theme that came up in the interviews with all four participants is a tension between the punitive consequence-based approach to discipline and the preventive and helping approach in school counselling that they experience. Pedrup and Lhazom spoke most vehemently on this. According to Lhazom, many teachers in her school are of the opinion that ‘corporal punishment is always better, and that counselling might be stirring up more problems and issues than solving them . . . They also think that there is a decline in the respect for teachers because of counselling’. She points out that: ‘People think that counselling is required only . . . as a curative measure’, and ‘the fear of Discipline Committee’s sanctions is seen as a preventive measure’.

Similarly, Pedrup points out that many of his colleagues blame the school guidance and counselling program for any ‘classroom disruption’ or disciplinary ‘mishaps’ as being too ‘soft and losing control of students’. He also notes that a ‘traditional notion of the teacher-student relationship in our culture’ of ‘high expectations of obedience and compliance’ is still very strong especially among teachers; while the student ‘are brought up in a different time’, and so do not subscribe to it as much. He feels that such reliance on traditional notions of control and compliance as being disciplined and respectful comes in the way of teachers and students sharing a ‘sense of connectedness to each other’. Pedrup feels that being connected with students and getting to know them at a more personal level is important to make students feel at home and like school, but many teachers in his school believe that such a gesture on their part would end up in them losing control of students. Some teachers in his school continue to use physical punishment even when it is officially forbidden. These indicate how difficult it can be to advocate and justify the effectiveness of proactive time and resources intensive approach in the face of deeply entrenched faith in short-term compliance and control.

For many in the schools, student wellbeing is the same as providing non-academic student services to maintain discipline, manage student behaviour, or provide other forms of help and support. There seems to be an implicit underlying thinking that wellbeing is separate from learning, and that it only plays a secondary role of removing hurdles to academic learning. Among the participants, justification for promoting student wellbeing include statements such as: ‘It is important for schools to keep the students happy, we have to ensure that their problems are taken care of, and only if they are happy will they be able to focus on their studies’ (Lhazom); ‘If a student is taken good care of and is well, academics would be taken care of; and if he or she is not given good care, academics may suffer’ (Teyndel). Even in terms of time and resource allocations, student wellbeing-related programs and activities mainly fall under ‘extra-curricular activities’ that receive secondary consideration, and often viewed as expendable. They imply that wellbeing is important because it is instrumental to the achievement of the primary goal of academic achievement, but not necessarily an important aspect of learning in itself or an ‘integral’ part of learning.

Hence, a fundamental challenge in promoting a whole-school approach to student wellbeing is related to changing teacher beliefs or mindsets. For example, traditional notions of discipline and support services as managing and controlling students to facilitate academic learning tend to persist as time-tested and proven ways. Such beliefs, norms, and values would have evolved over several years and are deeply entrenched (Hargreaves, 1994), often supported by structures that remain unchanged. Addressing

beliefs and attitudes could be critical because educational change literature emphasize that effective implementation requires that all implementers have a shared vision (Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009) of what is to be the desired change. Professional development in student wellbeing promotion for both school leaders as well as teachers, is needed. This needs to be designed so that it deeply engages teachers in the subject, especially in relation to existing norms and beliefs around student wellbeing; and critically reflecting on their everyday practices.

### **Organizational structure and strategic direction**

In the participants' schools, organizationally, student wellbeing programs fall under the purview of Student Support Services Department or Unit headed by a vice principal. Various programs such as E4GNH, life skills education, values education, guidance and counselling, scouting, and several such other extra-curricular activities, form part of Student Support Services as distinct from the academics. These programs are coordinated or implemented by different people, typically in addition to full-time teaching responsibilities; and often with little time and effort to integrate or collaborate.

While there are several programs and activities that contribute to student wellbeing, their impact is likely undermined by the lack of a cohesive and coordinated approach. It is very rarely, if at all, that the different groups and people with responsibilities for student wellbeing come together to discuss how their activities together contribute to the larger goal of a holistic student wellbeing. Hargreaves (1994) argues that such a balkanized, departmental cubbyhole culture rooted in the division of labour for efficiency is inimical to change and flexibility. Despite the efforts through E4GNH to 'infuse' and integrate across curriculum; structurally, they continue to be 'add-on' peripheral programs and activities around the central goal of academic achievement.

In the absence of an overall framework, Bhutan schools tend to experience a fragmented approach with poor coherence among a variety of programs independently coordinated by various individuals. A strategic policy framework that outlines how student wellbeing fits into the overall framework of what schools view as their vision and mission can provide the basis for making the promotion of student wellbeing an integral aspect unlike being an add-on, peripheral activity of secondary importance as is often the case. Such policy support can provide the required impetus for change implementation (Rowling & Samdal, 2011). In addition to working on a shared understanding through a policy framework, it will be critical to consider how well they fit into existing structures.

All four participants spoke about the Discipline Committee as an important and powerful body in their schools. Its main role is to decide on what punishment or consequences should be meted out to those who violate school rules or codes of conduct. Consequences typically range from verbal or written admonishments and cleaning work to suspension or expulsion from school depending on the severity of offense. For example, in Teyndel's school, apart from students who directly seek his help, it is often the Discipline Committee that refer students to him for counselling, and sets the framework within which counselling is used. He usually receives 'a directive to counsel' a student, typically for a few weeks to 'see if there is any change', and then the Committee makes decisions based on his report and any changes observed. He recounted some bad experiences of students being expelled from school because no tangible progress could be made within the time-frame provided; thereby effectively turning counselling into a part of mechanism for punitive purposes and undermining its underlying assumptions and purpose to provide

student the required help and support. Thus, having to fit new initiatives, such as counselling into existing structures that are often based on contradictory beliefs and assumptions, can be a challenge. Hence, any attempts to introduce student wellbeing programs without making commensurate changes in the structures or the ways in which schools are organized can pose challenges of implementation.

School organograms typically have support services that mirror the academic structure, each one led by a vice principal. However, when it comes down to implementation at classroom level, support service programs and activities receive relatively little time and resource allocation. Opportunities to directly engage with students on proactive knowledge and skill building in regular classes, or to engage with teachers to support them to address student wellbeing needs are limited. For example, one Ministry of Education policy guideline requires allocation of one period of guidance and career education a week. Yet, only one participating school had allocations consistent with this guideline. Even here, they are often supplanted in case of shortfalls in academic subjects for these have examinations, a performance yardstick by which schools are measured. These serve to further perpetuate perceptions of an ‘academic-wellbeing’ split whereby teachers are inclined to see student wellbeing distinct from the academics and of secondary importance.

Accordingly, these points together, suggest an underlying principle that casts or adds on any new initiatives into the existing framework or mould rather than making adjustments to integrate. They lend support to Hargreaves’ (1994) point that the problems secondary schools and teachers face are, in fact, a result of their persistent adherence to the monolithic, opaque and inflexible structures from the past; whereas a culture of collegiality and collaboration is in order.

### **Leadership support, professional authority, and legitimacy**

All the participants identified the Principal’s leadership and support as an important factor influencing implementation. They spoke of the Principal’s support as a critical factor in being able to sustain their efforts to promote and implement the student wellbeing agenda in the face of strong opposition from many senior colleagues who preferred a more direct and punitive approach to manage students. However, Teyndel’s experience of working in different schools has been that it can work both ways: ‘some (principals) are pro counselling, others are not, and they have their ideas of what counselling should be’. He notes that where the Principal supports student wellbeing programs, this can be used to leverage and enforce implementation within a school. However, if Principals do not subscribe to the view of student wellbeing as integral to learning, then it becomes an even bigger challenge to implementation.

Principals’ active involvement and support has been reported to enhance the quality of implementation, whether it is by creating pressure through expectations or incentives for staff to implement (Ransford, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Small, & Jacobson, 2009; Weinbaum & Supowitz, 2010). Additionally, it also suggests that it is crucial to ensure that the mindset of leaders are aligned to change initiatives in order to change the culture (Lee, 2004).

The role of leadership support and involvement is also likely amplified as an Education system, or for that matter, Bhutan’s culture in general, places high values on a hierarchical power structure. Participants also reported that their relative position in the school hierarchy influence their ability to exert professional authority and add legitimacy to their



role. For example, Lhazom's experiences implementing student referrals in her school is indicative of such a case. The official procedure for referral of students with behavioural issues in her school is for teachers to first try and address it at the classroom level, and then to refer to the school counsellor if it could not be resolved. When making referrals, teachers are required to fill out a form. However, in practice, she points out that 'they (teachers) would rather convey it to me verbally because the form requires them to fill out details of what has been tried and with what results and so on'; and it is often with an attitude of 'you are also a teacher, and . . . let's see what else you can do' that teachers pass it to her.

Both, Lhazom and Keldon spoke about how they are often reminded of their junior status and inexperience each time senior teachers did not like student wellbeing programs and activities that they proposed. Thus, bureaucratic and hierarchical structures are likely to undermine professional autonomy and legitimacy. The weight of their voices in the decision-making process is often based on their relative position in the hierarchy rather than their competence as school counsellors or wellbeing leaders; and they struggle to find legitimacy in their work as wellbeing leaders.

## **CONCLUSION**

Student wellbeing leaders' accounts of the implementation challenges that relate to their school culture and context are characterized by tensions between their aspirations for a proactive and holistic approach to student wellbeing, and prevalent views and structures in school that are often incompatible with these aspirations. Their efforts to promote student wellbeing as integral to learning often contradict school structures and practices that relegate it to a peripheral role. They advocate a more proactive approach, particularly in the context of E4GNH, but they are often caught up with fixing problems within the framework of a consequence-based school discipline system that is deeply rooted in school cultures that have been in existence for a long period of time. This suggests the need to understand the promotion of a whole-school approach to student wellbeing as a change process that requires some unlearning of old and incompatible ways as well as establishing the motivation for change (Lewin, 1997; Marcus, 2000) such as working on a shared vision or meaning of what constitutes student wellbeing.

Educational change theories emphasize the importance of a shared meaning to guide implementation of change (Fullan, 2009; Hargreaves, 2009). Findings from this study suggest that achieving this is a complex business. Not only is student wellbeing understood in a multitude of ways, often with seemingly dichotomous and conflicting views and beliefs; but commensurate changes need to be made in the ways in which schools are structured or organized for any change in views to be effectively translated into practice.

Findings suggest that a clear and comprehensive policy framework that embodies a shared meaning, and guides all student wellbeing promotion programs and activities could be helpful. It could potentially form the basis for a shared understanding within each school community that will still need to be negotiated and nurtured persistently over a period of time for it to take roots in practice. Reconciling and balancing aspects of wellbeing that emphasize control and discipline, provision of reactive care and support services, and a proactive educational approach will require both time and resources, in addition to concerted efforts and the involvement of all stakeholders.

An important finding from this study is that implementing change in schools will require commensurate changes in the ways that the schools are organized or structured. The ways in which student wellbeing programs are structured as an ‘add-on’, mirroring the academic structure; while making good sense for clear-cut job descriptions and resource allocations also run the risk of creating boundaries that contribute to an ‘academic-wellbeing split’ culture quite contrary to the notion of wellbeing as integral to education.

Schools are complex institutions with distinct cultures that will require adjustments to accommodate changes. In the case of implementing a whole-school approach to student wellbeing promotion, it entails negotiating competing views, and redesigning deeply-rooted but incompatible structures which make it very challenging. Supportive leadership, policy framework, and making commensurate adjustments in ways in which schools are organized or structured could help provide a cohesive and coherent approach. This includes the need to build the competency of school staff consistent with a whole-school approach. In promoting student wellbeing as integral to learning, this study identifies teacher beliefs and attitudes, strategic direction, such as a policy framework, leadership support, and organizational structure as key areas requiring attention for translating ideas into practice. While the intents of infusing GNH values and operationalizing them through everything that schools do is appealing, effective implementation will require making adaptations to the ways in which schools are used to operating.

The findings of this study also corroborate Crossley’s (2010) contention that attention to contextual factors in educational research and international development, is particularly necessary, as seen in the case of this small state. The assumption that if it works in larger nations with more complex systems it can be applied without attention to contextual factors in small states is problematic, given their particular needs and characteristics. This study suggests that, whether large or small, each system has its distinct contextual realities that need to be taken into consideration when introducing reforms.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The author would like to acknowledge the support provided by the University of Melbourne in carrying out this study.

## **REFERENCES**

- Blank, L., Baxter, S., Goyder, E., Guillaume, L., Wilkinson, A., Hummel, S., & Chillcot, J. (2009). *Systematic review of the effectiveness of universal interventions which aim to promote emotional and social wellbeing in secondary schools*. Sheffield, UK: ScHARR Public Health Collaborating Centre. Retrieved from <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/11991/45543/45543.pdf>
- Bond, L., Patton, G., Glover, S., Carlin, J. B., Butler, H., Thomas, L., et al. (2004). The Gatehouse project: Can a multi-level school intervention affect emotional wellbeing and health risk behaviours? *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 58, 997–1003.

- Botvin, G. J., Griffin, K. W., & Nichols, T. D. (2006). Preventing youth violence and delinquency through a universal school-based prevention approach. *Prevention Science* 7(4), 403–408.
- Crossley, M. (2010). Context matters in educational research and international development: Learning from the small states experience. *Prospects*, 40(4), 421–429.
- Datnow, A., & Castellano, M. (2000). Teachers' responses to success for all: How beliefs, experiences, and adaptations shape implementation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(3), 775–799.
- De Jong, T. & Kerr-Roubicek, H. (2007). Towards a whole school approach to pastoral care: A proposed framework of principles and practices. *Australian Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 17(1), 1–12.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1–32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Deschesnes, M., Martin, C., & Hill, A. J. (2003). Comprehensive approaches to school health promotion: How to achieve broader implementation? *Health Promotion International*, 18(4), 387–396.
- Durlak, J. A., & Dupre, E. P. (2008). Implementation matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 41, 327-350.
- Evans, S. D., & Prilleltensky, I. (2007). Youth and democracy: Participation for personal, relational, and collective well-being. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35(6), 681-692.
- Flay, B., Graumlich, S., Segawa, E., Burns, J. L., & Holliday, M. Y. (2004). Aban Aya Investigators. Effects of 2 prevention programs on high-risk behaviors among African American youth. A randomized trial. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 158, 377–384.
- Fullan, M. (2009). Have theory, will travel: A theory of action for system change. In A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan (Eds.), *Change wars* (pp. 209–223). Moorabbin, VIC: Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (2009). The fourth way of change: Towards an age of inspiration and sustainability. In A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan. (Eds.), *Change wars* (pp. 9–33). Moorabbin, VIC: Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Hayward, K. & Colman, R. (2010). Proceedings: Education for gross national happiness workshop 7–12 December 2009. GPI Atlantic, Canada. Retrieved from [http://www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/educatingforgnh/educating\\_for\\_gnh\\_proceedings.pdf](http://www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/educatingforgnh/educating_for_gnh_proceedings.pdf)

- Hazell, T. (2005). *Evaluation of the professional development program and school-level implementation: Final report*. Hunter Institute of Mental Health. Retrieved from: [http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/pd\\_final.pdf](http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/verve/_resources/pd_final.pdf)
- Klinger, J. K., Cramer, E., & Harry, B. (2006). Challenges in the implementation of Success for All by four urban schools. *Elementary School Journal*, 106, 333–349
- Langford, R. Bonell, C. P., Jones, H. E., Pouliou, T., Murphy, S. M., Waters, E., Komro, K. A., Gibbs, L. F., Magnus, D., & Campbell, R. (2014). The WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* 2014, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD008958.
- Lee, T. (2004). Cultural change agent: Leading transformational change. In C. Barker & R. Coy (Eds.). *The power of culture: Driving today's organisation*. McGraw Hill.
- Lee, A., Cheng, F. F. K., Fung, Y., & St Leger, L. (2006). Can health promoting schools contribute to the better health and wellbeing of young people? The Hong Kong experience. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 60(6), 530–536.
- Lewin, K. (1997). *Resolving social conflicts and field theory in social science*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lister-Sharp, D., Chapman, S., Stewart-Brown, S., & Sowden, A. (1999). Health promoting schools and health promotion in schools: Two systematic reviews. *Health Technology Assessment*, 3(22), 1–207.
- Marcus, E. C. (2000). Change process and conflict. In M. Deutsch & P. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 366–381). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Markham, W. A. & Aveyard, P. (2003). A new theory of health promoting schools based on human functioning, school organisation and pedagogic practice. *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 1209–1220.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (2005). Listening and learning from the field: Tales of policy implementation and situated practice. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), *The roots of educational change* (Vol. 1, pp. 58–72). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ministry of Education. (2012). *Educating for Gross National Happiness: A training manual*. Thimphu: Author.
- National Statistics Bureau. (2016). *Bhutan at a glance*. Retrieved from <http://www.nsb.gov.bt/publication/files/pub3kg7317hg.pdf>
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Patton, G. C., Bond, L., Carlin, J. B., Thomas, L., Butler, H., Glover, S., et al. (2006). Promoting social inclusion in schools: A group-randomized trial of effects on student health risk behaviour and well-being. *American Journal of Public Health*, 96, 1582–1587.
- Ransford, C. R., Greenberg, M. T., Domitrovich, C. E., Small, M., & Jacobson, L. (2009). The role of teachers' psychological experiences and perceptions of curriculum supports on the implementation of a social and emotional learning curriculum. *School Psychology Review*, 38(4), 510–532.

- Ringeisen, H., Henderson, K. & Hoagwood, K. (2003). Context matters: Schools and the 'research to practice gap' in children's mental health. *School Psychology Review*, 32(2), 153–68.
- Rowling, L., & Samdal, O. (2011). Filling the black box of implementation for health-promoting schools. *Health Education*, 5, 347–356.
- St Leger, L., Young, I., Blanchard C., Perry, M. (2010). *Promoting health in schools: From evidence to action*. An International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) publication. Retrieved from: [http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Activities/Scientific\\_Affairs/CDC/School%20Health/PHiS\\_EtA\\_EN\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.iuhpe.org/uploaded/Activities/Scientific_Affairs/CDC/School%20Health/PHiS_EtA_EN_WEB.pdf)
- Stewart-Brown, S. (2006). *What is the evidence on school health promotion in improving health or preventing disease and, specifically, what is the effectiveness of the health promoting schools approach?* Copenhagen: World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. Retrieved from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/74653/E88185.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/74653/E88185.pdf)
- UNESCO. (2011). Bhutan. *World Data on education* (7th ed). Paris: Author.
- Weinbaum, E. H., & Supovitz, J. A. (2010). Planning ahead: Make program implementation more predictable. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(7), 68–71.
- Wells, J., Barlow, J. & Stewart-Brown, S. (2003). A systematic review of universal approaches to mental health promotion in schools. *Health Education*, 103(4), 197–220.
- Wilson, S. J. & Lipsey, M. W. (2007). School-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behavior: Update of a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 33(2S), S130–S143.
- Wilson, S. J., Lipsey, M. W. & Derzon, J. H. (2003). The effects of school-based intervention programs on aggressive behaviour: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(1), 136–149.
- Wyn, J., Cahill, H., Holdsworth, R., Rowling, L., & Carson, S. (2000). MindMatters, a whole school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 34, 594–601.