



Genius Hour Approach Towards Micro-learning and Gross National Happiness (GNH)

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Abstract: *Learning for learning sake is no longer the motto of learning, nowadays 'learning' itself connotes imbibing. A learner can imbibe only when he or she feels interested and driven towards learning. If learning becomes their passion, reaching the goal will become easier. This passion driven learning will bring the learners joy and happiness, making them retain the lessons for a longer span. Genius hour is an hour dedicated to explore one's passions and interests which amounts to 20% of the total working hour. It is the hour when student voices and passions are heard and it offers them opportunities to ask genuine meaningful questions that would help them advance in their learning. On the other hand, Micro-learning is another type of learning design, designed to deliver huge content within a short time span to maximize engagement and therefore learning. It consists of short learning units or short-term learning activities. While speaking off happiness and joy, Gross National Happiness (GNH), a term coined by Jigme Singye Wangchuk, fourth King of Bhutan. More than a term, it is a philosophy that propagates the undertaking of an all-inclusive approach towards the notion of the development through sustainable development and giving equal importance to non-economic aspects of well-being. Micro-learning and GNH both have studies that showcases it as vital facets of life-long learning. Therefore, the present study targets to find the relation of cent percent utilization of Genius Hour with the four pillars of GNH and the determinants of Micro-learning.*

Keywords: *Sustainable development, promotion of culture, psychological well-being, retention*

1. Introduction: The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 enlisted Quality Education as its fourth Goal aiming at promoting global education. This goal for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 adheres to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). The terms inclusive and equitable are lofty and therefore, it will require the entire educational settings to be revamped so that it can foster learning along with maintaining its pace to achieve all of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1.1. Gross National Happiness (GNH) and its Significance:

Gross National Happiness (GNH) was coined by the Jigme Singye Wangchuk, the fourth king of Bhutan in 1970. The concept adopted a holistic approach towards the notion of progress and asserted that Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product (Ura, Alkire, Zangmo, & Wangdi, 2012). This concept has captured the imagination of countries beyond borders because of its inclusive nature. Gross National Happiness in comparison to Gross National Product extends its horizon to more people as it is not limited to only the privileged. It is a measure which is not strictly quantitative but a mix of quality life factors. These factors are represented through the four pillars of Gross National Happiness; good

governance, sustainable development, preservation and promotion of culture, and environment conservation(Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH Research, 2016). These four pillars lay the ground for happiness which is finally manifested in the nine domains of GNH- standard of living, psychological well-being, community vitality, health, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, ecological resilience and efficient usage of time. These nine domains consist of 33 indicators that emphasizes on different facets of well-being, different ways of meeting human needs and flourishing of humans. These 33 indicators are reliable and valid (statistically), therefore can be generalized for a larger audience. 66% cut off in GNH Index indicates ‘happy’ people with the remainder falling under ‘yet to be happy’ people. The GNH Index comprehensively classifies four group of people- deeply happy, extensively happy, narrowly happy and unhappy. The domains at first identify the unhappy group and then frame policies and sufficiency to reduce the percentage of unhappy group and narrowly happy group and increase the percentage of extensively happy and deeply happy group(Ura et al., 2012).

$$\text{GNH} = (\text{Proportion of Happy People}) + (\text{Proportion of not yet happy people} * \text{Average sufficiency levels of not yet happy people})$$

Let us look at the percentage indicators of the domains.

- **Group of deeply happy people:** The group of people whose sufficiency score is higher than 77 to 100%.
- **Group of extensively happy people:** The group of people whose sufficiency score is higher than 66 to 76.9%.
- **Group of narrowly happy people:** The group of people whose sufficiency score is higher than 50 to 65.9%.
- **Group of unhappy people:** The group of people whose sufficiency score is higher than 50 to 59.9%.

The domains when accumulated, surmounts to Gross National Happiness and the items in each domain were framed based on the four pillars of Gross National Happiness. The domains that silhouette Gross National Happiness are listed below.

Sl. No.	Domain
1.	Health
2.	Psychological well-being
3.	Educational qualification
4.	Resilience and Cultural Diversity
5.	Community vitality
6.	Good governance
7.	Ecological Diversity and resilience
8.	Standard of Living

1.1.1. Understanding the Domains of Gross National Happiness

Health: The domain of health indicates the conditions of the human body and mind and thereby defines health from both physical and psychological outlook. The indicators include: Self-reported health status, Number of healthy days, Disability and Mental Health(Ura et al., 2012).

Psychological well-being: This domain refers to the people's understanding of their quality of life by the use of reflective cognitive evaluation strategy. The indicators include: Life Satisfaction, Positive Emotion, Negative Emotion, and Spirituality.

Educational Qualification: Apart from taking account of the informal and formal education, this domain also tries to measure various kinds of knowledge, skills and values, mostly acquired through informal methods. The indicators include: Literacy, Schooling, Knowledge and Value.

Resilience and Cultural Diversity: This domain explores the diversity of cultural traditions and their strength to preserve and promote a culture that includes creative arts. Norms and festivals. The indicators include: Artisan skills, Cultural participation, Ability to speak native language, Code of etiquette and Conduct.

Community Vitality: The domain attempts to uncover the patterns of interaction and relationships within communities, thereby focusing on the strengths and weaknesses. This domain seeks information on social cohesion both inside and outside home. The indicators include: Family, Safety, Community Relationship and Donation of time and money.

Good Governance: This domain refers to the judgement of people on the governmental functioning in terms of their efficacy, quality and honesty. The indicators include: Government performances, Political involvement, Services and Fundamental Rights.

Ecological Diversity and Resilience: This domain surrounds people's perception and evaluation of the ecological quality, environmental conditions and eco-friendly behaviour. The indicators include: Ecological issues, wildlife damage, urban issues, responsibility towards environment and wildlife damage.

Standard of Living: This domain refers to exclusively the comfort and pleasure drawn from the materialistic resources like income, asset, house, and household per capita income.

1.2. Genius Hour Project Approach: If there are seven classes to be attended by learners each day for five consecutive days in a week, a total of seven hours will be called as the 'Genius Hour'. It is the hour when learners are allowed to explore their passion, imagination, wonders for emerging with an idea, project or any output that is innovative and has social significance (Wetrick, 2014). The idea of genius hour evolved from the 80:20 approach of renowned tech giants like Google, where the employees were given the leisure of spending 20% of their working hours to work on their individualistic projects. Research found that this 20% gave birth to 50% of Google's successful projects. This idea was later adopted to the classroom where learners can explore their possible future interests to learn about what they might be interested to pursue in the future. The belief that teacher is the dispenser of all knowledge is negated by Genius Hour and learners are entrusted to learn through experience and application of knowledge and skills. Learners can't be passive but active and hardworking as they have to think critically, create and contribute(Juliani, 2015).

Three Genius Hour Approaches were recognized that can be well effective in the classroom context (Ginsberg & Coke, 2021).

- **Student selected Inquiry:** This approach is independent where the teachers let learners to explore an area of their interests and therefore the passion projects by those learners will in-evidently be different

from one another. This particular approach begins with student inquiry and brings autonomy to them, where they can make meaning out their query and address social issues of the world.

- **Small group or Whole Class Designed Enquiry:** This approach is a collaborative group effort where passion projects are conducted under a theme or umbrella topic that addresses socio-cultural and economic issues of the society. The activities that genius hour passion project approach demands are researching on the topic, identifying and interviewing the stakeholders and academics, generating an action plan and finally implementing it to tally the outcome with the hypotheses.

In the instance of Whole Class Designed Enquiry, the whole class works together to brainstorm, inquire, discuss and design a project. For example, if the whole class wishes to work on gender equity, students can freely explore the internet, read scholarly articles, investigate the library for the books related to the topic, meet once a week to share their thoughts on it and work individually on the topic for the rest of the week. The action plan and implementation of the plan for the desired outcome is also discussed during the meet and acted upon in coherence.

- **Curricular project or Book-based Inquiry:** This approach is similar to the other two but is linked to curriculum required project or book. It is entirely learner's interest driven. The learners are expected to undertake a project emerging from their love for books, literary texts, social as well as print media that is related to the curriculum of the program they are pursuing. Their imagination, creativity and intellect infused by reading different genre of books and literary texts, and decoding diverse forms of media becomes foundational for exploring topics of personal significance. This approach encourages independent inquiry and generates original ideas, thereby bridging the gap between the theoretical and the real.

1.3 Significance of Microlearning: 'Microlearning' refers to small, consumable packets of information focused on a sole learning objective that is need-based, heuristic, action-oriented, and aligned with smart tools in favour of E-learning. Smart technology applications have become very important in sustaining learning (Qazi, A. et al, 2021) and the busy lifestyles of learners have made them shift their information-seeking behaviours to information that gets delivered quickly. Hence, microlearning as an instructional approach (Monib, W. K. et al., 2024) fulfils such preferences. With the information presented in small manageable segments (Robles, H. et al., 2023) microlearning makes knowledge transformation less arbitrary and more practical (Beste T., 2023). However, a largely agreed definition does not yet exist due to the fact that microlearning is still evolving and is in the early stage (Taylor & Hung, 2022) particularly when it comes to the extent of the duration of instruction. Literature in this regard is not structured, with a huge lacuna in the duration proposed for the delivery of micro-content. Micro-learning lacks a precise definition and derives from diverse interpretations across dimensions like time, content, curriculum, form, process, media, and learning type (Hug, 2005). Micro-learning content is designed to be bit-sized, multisensory, self-contained, tailored according to the needs, and interactive to optimize the learning outcomes.

Content for microlearning can be in various audio-visual formats, such as videos, audio, and images (Sankaranarayanan, R. et al., 2023). Especially, short videos have been earmarked as highly effective in microlearning (Sung, A. et al, 2023) and use of short animations and video clips have been endorsed (Zarshenas, L. et al, 2022). Any device with mobility can serve as a convenient tool for microlearning activities, allowing learners to access content anytime and anywhere (Tabares, M. S. et al., 2022) making it more convenient for usage. While some critics are concerned about its capability to effectively deliver the complex topics, it proves to be beneficial in managing the cognitive load, making it noteworthy in learning contexts. Microlearning also improves learner engagement (Zhao, L. et al., 2022), accessibility (Hosseini, H. M. et al., 2020, Choo, C. Y. et al., 2021), flexibility (Kohnke, L. et al., 2024, Ho, Y. Y. et al., 2023), device friendliness (Dolowitz, A. et al., 2023), focused content (Prior Filipe, H. et al., 2020), short duration (Salleh,

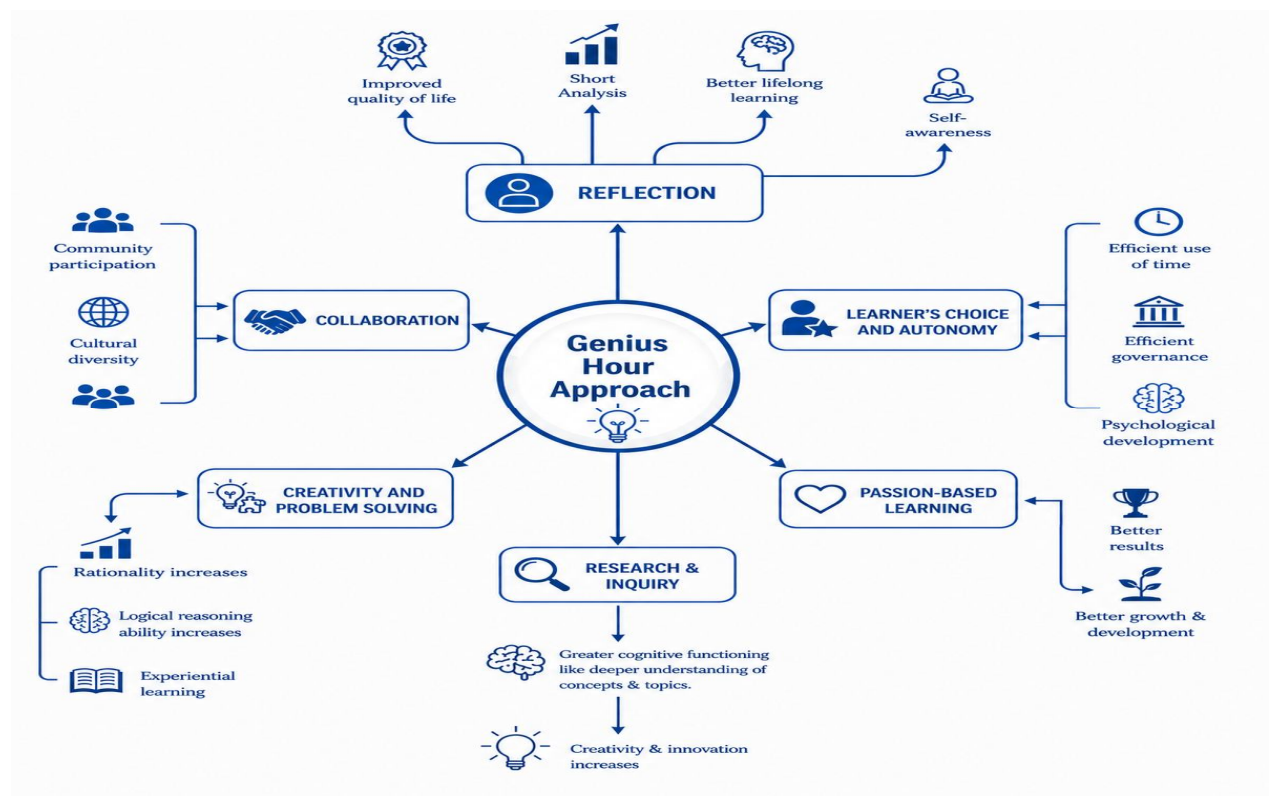
D. et al., 2022), independence and responsiveness (Shabadurai, Y. et al., 2022). In recent years, research related to effectiveness of microlearning has substantially risen (Sankaranarayanan, R. et al., 2023).

2. Relation between Genius Hour Approach, Microlearning and Gross National Happiness: ‘Genius Hour’ is a novel approach of instruction delivery that allots time in classroom for learners so that they can pursue individualized projects according to their passion and personal interests. The concept finds its fraternity with an initiative of Google, “20%Time,” which allows the workforce to dedicate a part of their working hours towards different projects (innovative) of personal interest (Ramadhan et al., 2023). In the diverse educational settings, the initiative of “Genius Hour” offers learners’, different designed opportunities so that they can explore topics based on their interests, ideate projects, and suggest required outcomes, thereby causing a jump from teacher-centric instruction to learner-centred inquiry. However, to achieve the outcome of Genius Hour approach, few instructional strategies are essential. One of them is ‘Microlearning’. It is a learning method where information is conveyed in small packets, designed in a way, where learners can grasp the info within no time and retain it sustainably. All of these concepts can be associated with the concept of “Gross National Happiness” (GNH), that is being operationalized in the form of the GNH Index in some novel and innovative ways. The conversation on conceptualizing GNH, originated in Bhutan. It gained its ground when the concept was made unique and distinct, where it differed from the western meaning of ‘happiness’ in two ways.

1. It is multi-dimensional. It is not only focused only on subjective aspect of well-being but to the other aspects as well.
2. It prefers action over preaching.

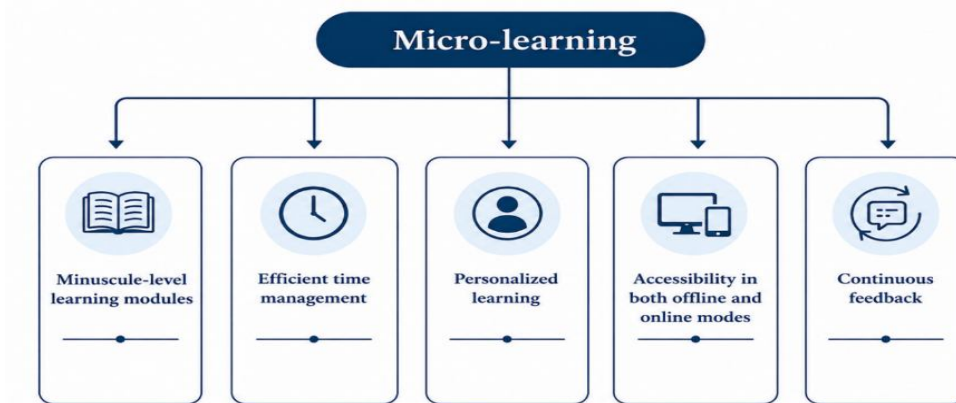
While multidimensional measures of well-being and the quality of life are increasingly debated, it is important to understand the relation between Genius-hour approach, Microlearning and GNH in a step wise manner.

Step 1:



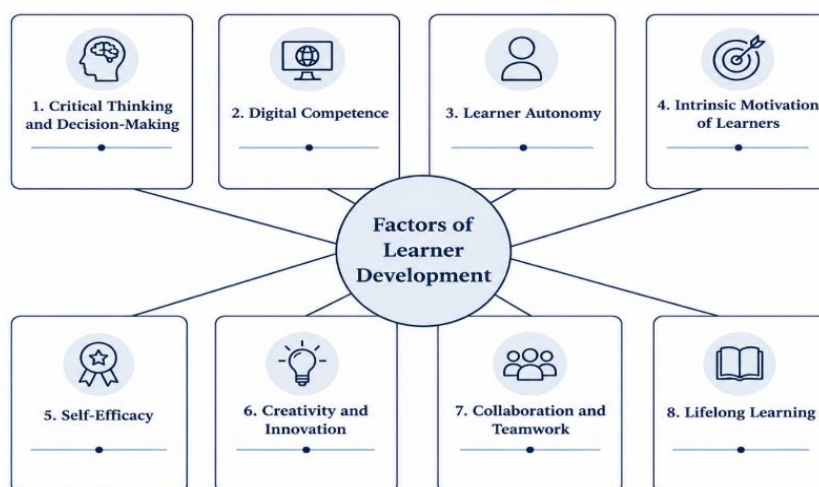
The concept, “*Genius Hour Approach*” is a student-centric strategy of education that encourages learners’ holistic development through individualistic education and investigation of one’s own individual interests. This conceptual framework entails six key components: Learner’s Choice and Autonomy, Passion-Based Learning, Creativity and Problem Solving, Collaboration, Research & Inquiry and Reflection. These six components intertwine to enhance critical thinking, innovation, self-awareness, logical reasoning and lifelong learning. This approach also reassures sound psychological development, community participation, effective time management, appreciation and acclimatization of cultural diversity. The Genius Hour Approach helps students in achieving better learning outcomes, individual growth and development, and accountable citizenship by nurturing creativity, curiosity and independent inquiry.

Step 2:



Micro-learning, being a medium to apply this Genius hour approach, is a pioneering approach in educational setting that imparts essential content in small packet-sized learning units, which will maintain learners’ focus. It makes complex concepts turn into tiny learning modules, allowing learners to comprehend and retain the information efficiently. With efficient time management, learning happens in quick yet effective sessions that fit day-to-day routines. It also encourages custom-made learning, acclimatizing the content with respect to individual needs, learning rate and abilities. With the advancement in digital devices, accessibility through offline and online modes guarantees flexibility in learning irrespective of time and place. In addition, Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) along with continuous feedback helps learners and teachers to track progress rate, helping in improving overall performance. Overall, micro-learning augments better engagement, attain learning outcomes, better knowledge retention, and flexibility.

Step 3:



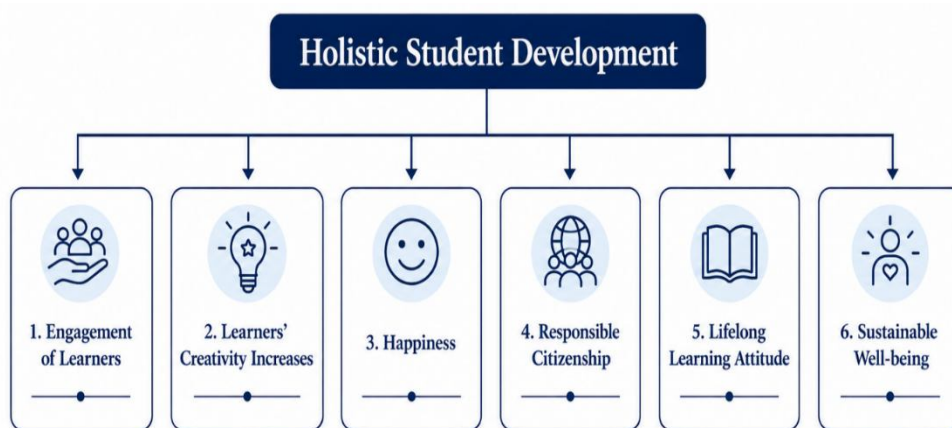
Different factors play role in Learner development, enhancing the knowledge, attitude, and skills necessary for academic as well as personal success. Key factors incorporated are critical thinking and decision-making (helping learners interpret information and solve the problems efficiently), digital competence allows the accountable and sustainable use of technology, learner autonomy reassures self-paced holistic learning and individuality. Intrinsic motivation of learners' and their self-efficacy foster self-confidence, determination, and rendezvous in the learning events. In addition to that, innovation and creativity facilitate originality in thinking, adaptability and better solutions. Teamwork and Collaboration strengthen interpersonal skills and social communication skills, whereas principle of lifelong-learning reassures growth and development throughout life. These factors promise holistic development of the learner.

Step 4:



Gross National Happiness (GNH), a concept that primarily originated in the valleys of Bhutan, is a philosophy of holistic development, measuring national development through the well-being and contentment of society rather than economic upliftment. It underlines sustainable development by partaking spiritual, societal, cultural, ecological, and financial dimensions. Key features of GNH include spiritual well-being, educational backing, community participation, cultural diversity, efficient governance, efficient use of time and resources, and natural conservation. Overall, the concept of GNH proves to be a change maker by providing an all-inclusive framework for attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby improving quality of life of the individuals in the society.

Step 5:



Holistic Development of students is a didactic approach that promotes the emotional, intellectual, ethical, social and individual growth of students. Beyond academic accomplishments, the prime focus should be on fostering all round development of individuals who are proficiently conducive to the well-being of the society. This approach augments better student participation and motivation in the entire learning process. It also endorses originality, allowing students to think outside their domain or specialization and solve problems efficiently. By supporting emotional well-being and happiness, it builds self-confidence and flexibility. Furthermore, it advances social responsibility among students at a higher level, develops an attitude of lifelong learning, and facilitates sustainable happiness and well-being, making the students ready to adapt, responsible, and effective take holders of society.

4. Conclusion: Genius Hour Approach, Gross National Happiness and Microlearning shares a commitment towards holistic education. Genius Hour Approach promotes student autonomy, passion-driven inquiry, and creativity among learners, while the Gross National Happiness Framework emphasizes well-being, personal growth and all-round development. Microlearning on the other hand, complements these principles by personalized, flexible and accessible learning that support continuous engagement and skill enhancement. Together these approaches create an educational environment that nurtures academic achievement, emotional well-being and intrinsic motivation. As a result, resilient, responsible and reflective learners can be prepared for suiting the demands of this 21st century.

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