

HAPPINESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Case study from Bhutan

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Outline of the Presentation

1. Gross National Happiness
2. Survey findings on unemployment and happiness
3. Employment policy of the Royal Government of Bhutan
4. Survey findings from National Labour Force Survey on unemployment situation
5. Current initiatives by the Royal Government



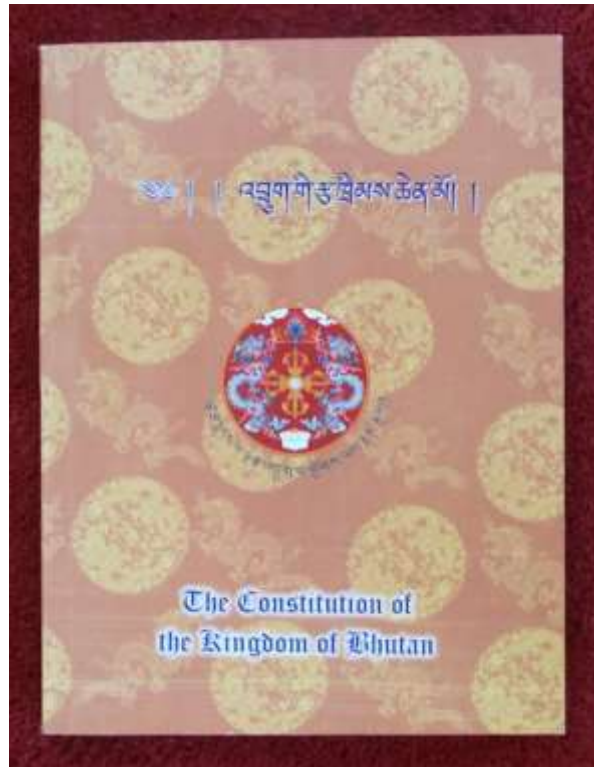
4th King of Bhutan

“Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product.”



5th King of Bhutan

“...the beneficial development of human society takes place when material and spiritual development occurs side by side to complement and reinforce each other...”



Constitution of Bhutan 2008, Article 9:

“The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness.”

Goal for GNH



Improve conditions for

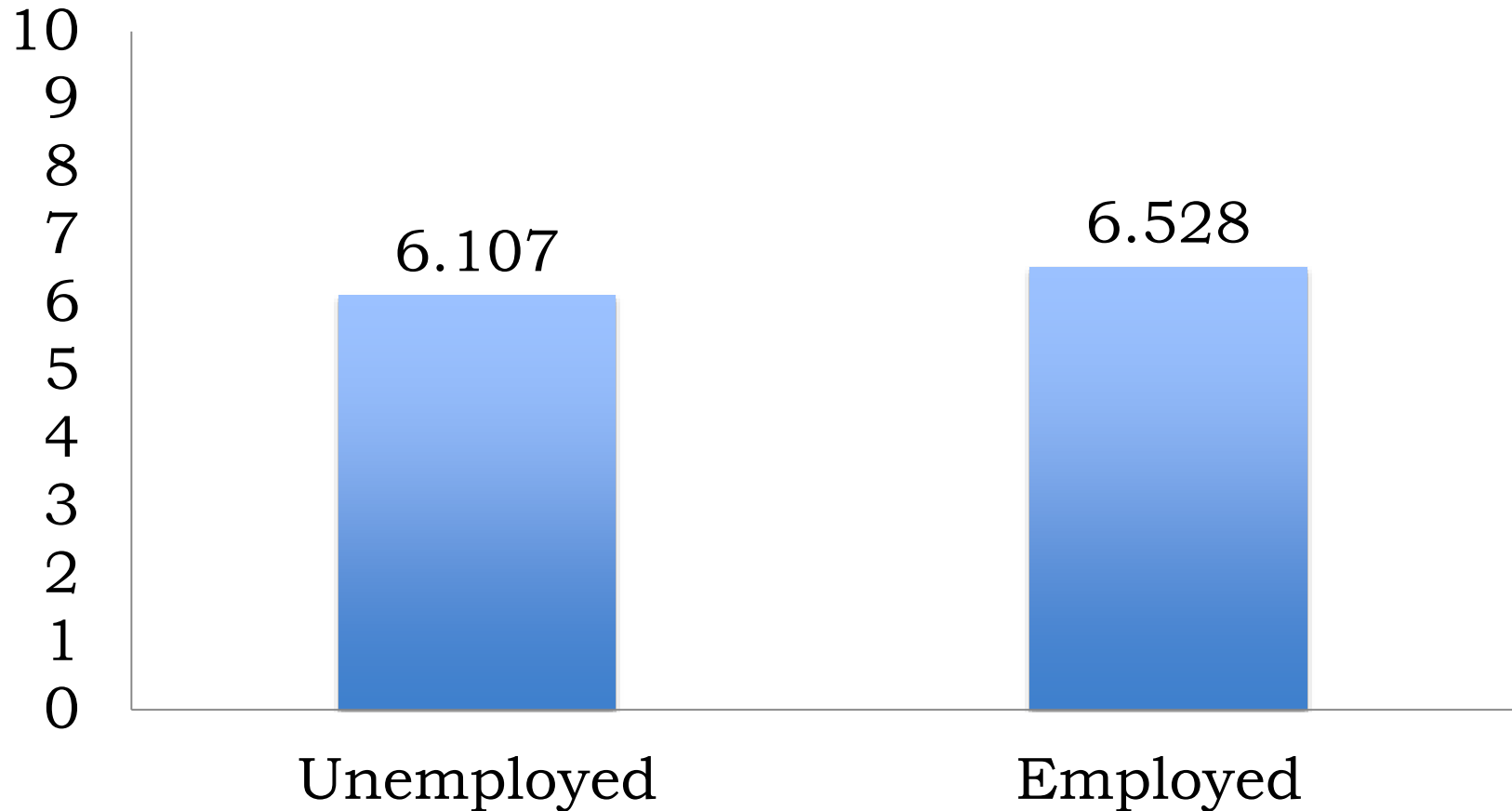
- ❖ Good physical and mental health
- ❖ High spirituality
- ❖ Good education
- ❖ Clean environment
- ❖ Vibrant community
- ❖ Strong and vibrant culture
- ❖ **Good governance**
- ❖ **Decent standard of living**
- ❖ **Work-life balance**



Survey Findings on Happiness

- *In 2010 a national survey was carried out by the Centre for Bhutan Studies in which happiness and other wellbeing (GNH) indicators were included.*
- *The survey results indicated that there was a very strong correlation between employment and happiness.*

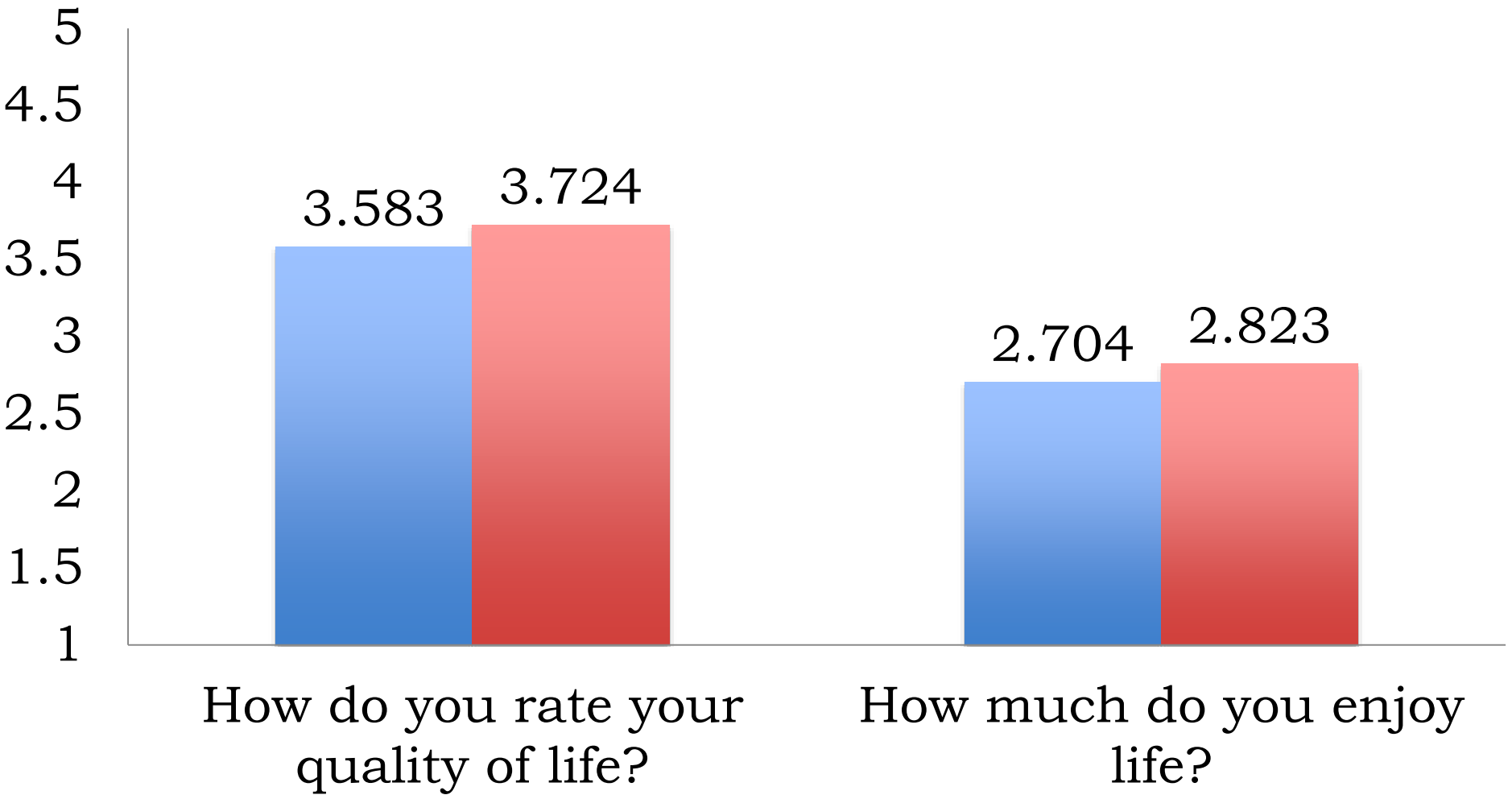
From a scale of 0-10, how happy do you consider yourself to be?



Sample taken from survey carried out by CBS
Sample size: 1901
Employed include Civil service, Ngos, Corporate and
GYT/DYT members

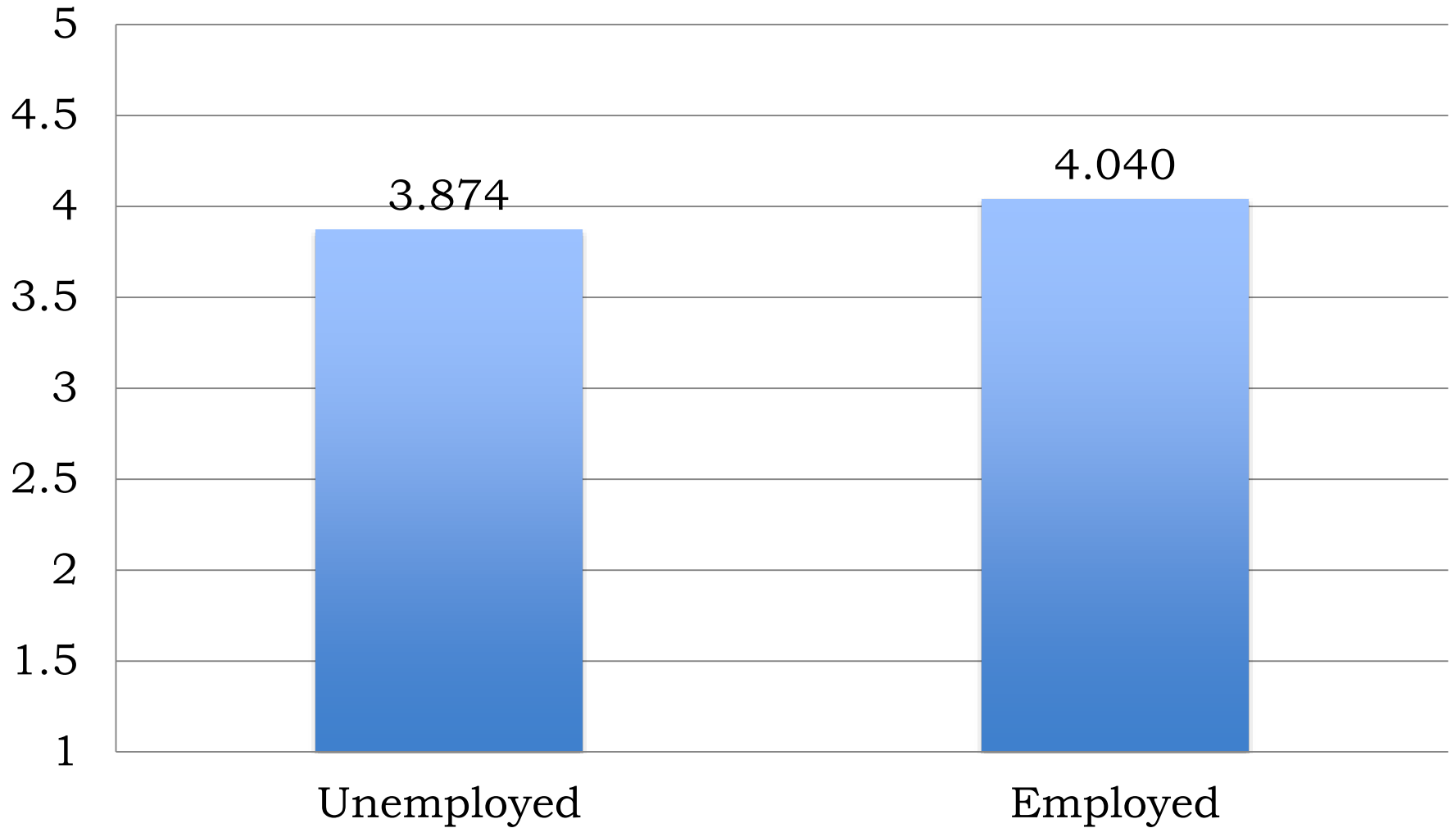
■ Unemployed

■ Employed

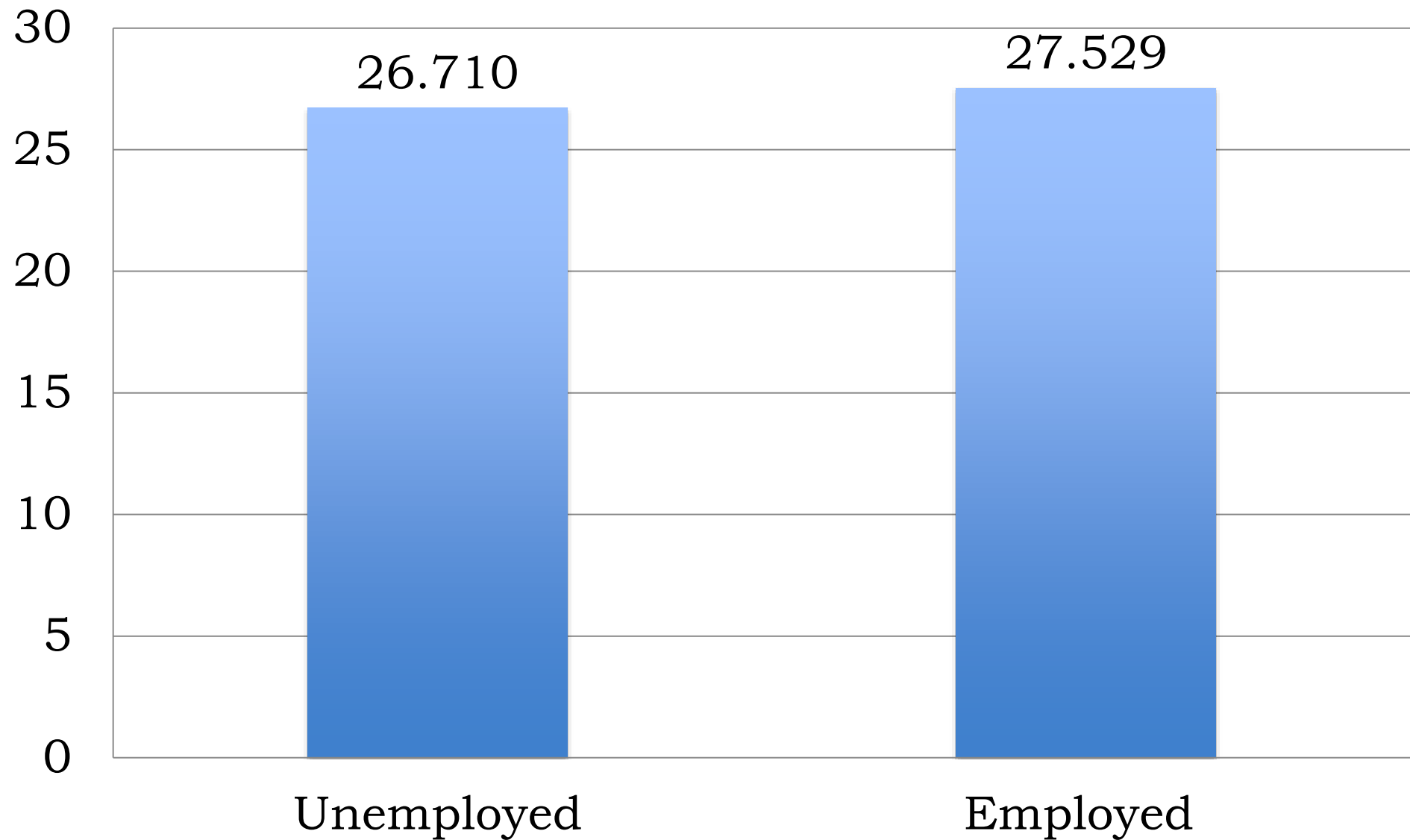


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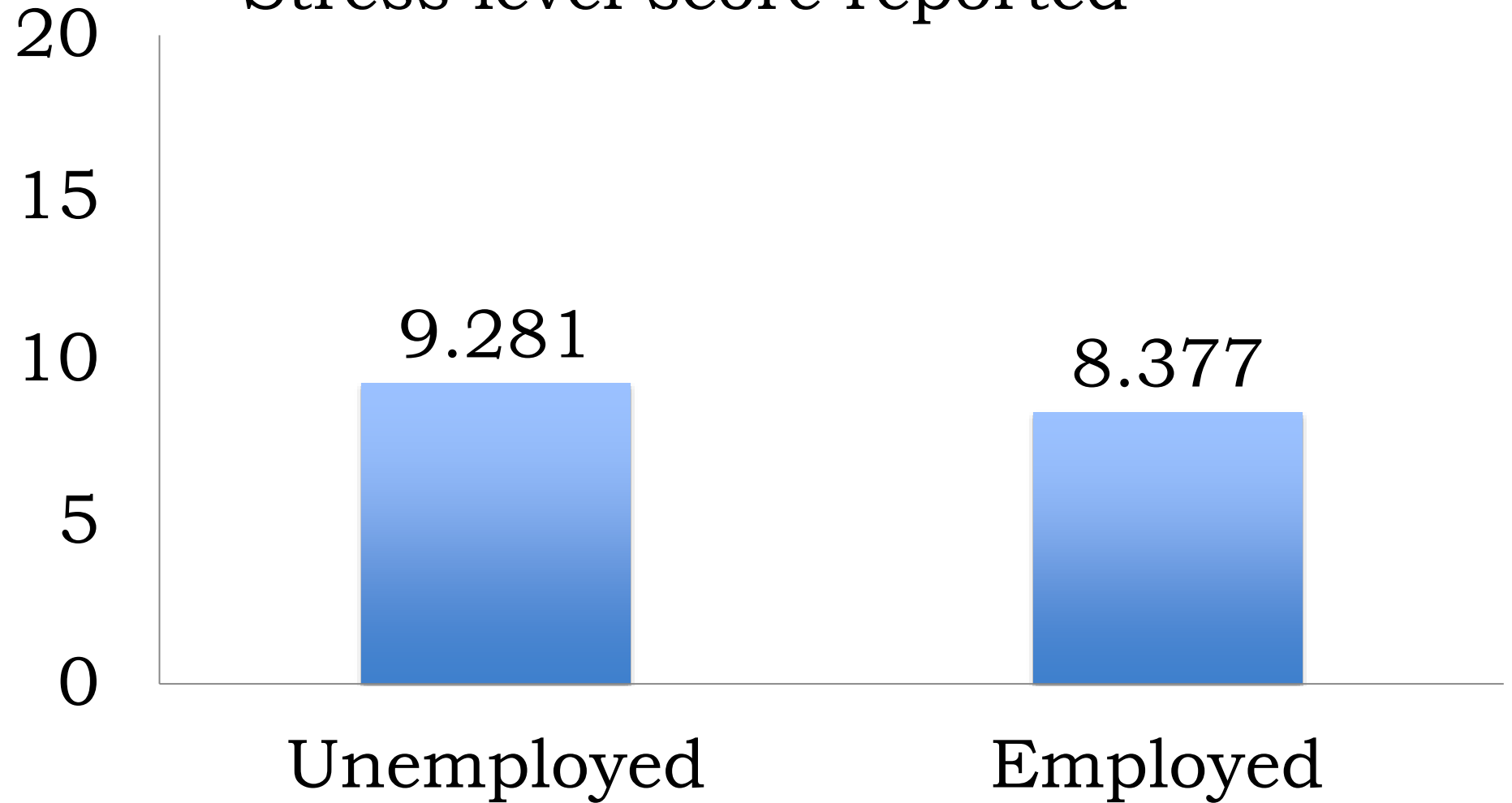
In general, how would you rate your health status?



Number of healthy days reported in the past one month



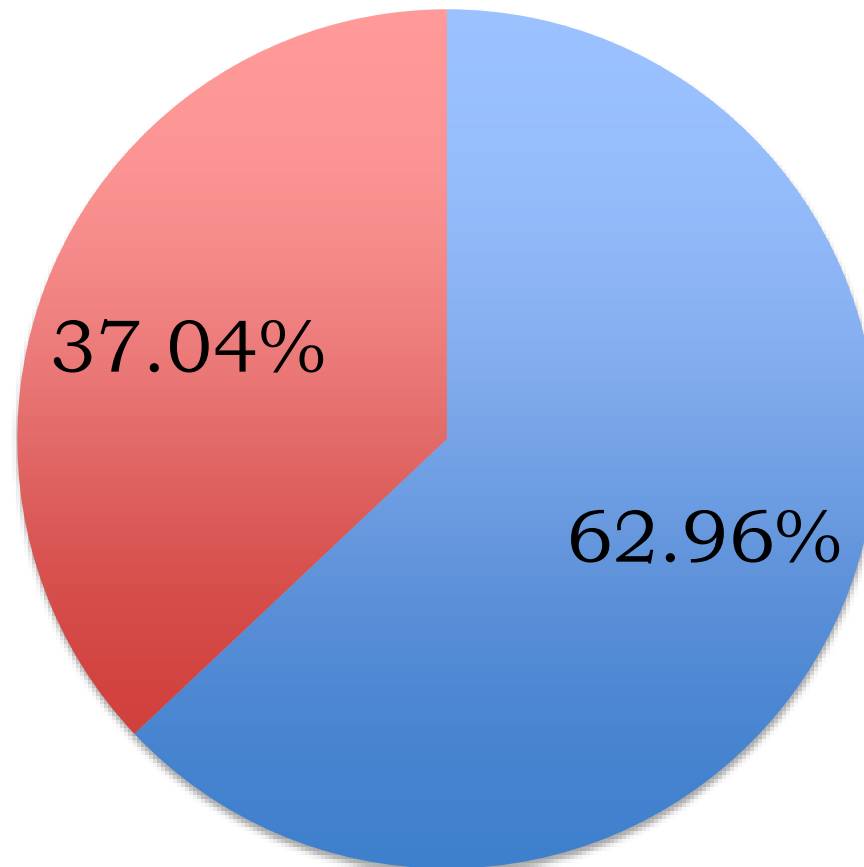
Stress level score reported



Stress level score is based on 12 items General Health Questionnaire that detects minor distress in people

**Of those who had suicidal thoughts
in the past 12 months, 63% were
unemployed**

■ Unemployed ■ Employed



Why Gainful Employment Is Important?

- Gainful employment is one of the most effective ways to increase happiness and wellbeing of individuals, their families, their communities and the nation at large.
- Employment, especially long term employment and job stability is one of the most obvious causes of satisfaction in life, according to OECD's Chief Media Officer

Why gainful employment of Bhutanese is crucial to the Royal Government of Bhutan?

- In Bhutan unemployment has much more ramifications as the joint family system is still very strong
- If a Bhutanese is unemployed, not only his/her parents and siblings, but also his/her relatives such as uncles and aunties and in some cases, even his/her friends feel obliged to support him/her and his her family
- Thus around 20 Bhutanese are unhappy if one Bhutanese is unemployed

Current unemployment in Bhutan

- Currently there are around 10,000 Bhutanese unemployed (unemployment rate 2.9%).
- This means around 200,000 Bhutanese (27% of the population of 745,000) are unhappy caused by unemployment.
- This situation is unacceptable in a GNH country, a country that has adopted Gross National Happiness as its development philosophy

Challenges

- An estimated 120,000 new job seekers, mainly school leavers and university graduates are expected to enter the labour market during the current plan period and 82,000 new jobs need to be created by the economy to meet the target of full employment for 97.5% of Bhutan's labour force.
- For a small country with a small economy, which is also facing economic downturn like most of the countries, it is by no means an easy task for the government to meet its employment target

Employment Creation and Promotion Strategies

- a. Some of prominent Employment Creation Strategies:
- The Royal Government has recently approved the National Employment Policy and has declared full employment (for 97.5% of the labour force) as one the 16 National Key Result Areas of the current Five year Plan (11FYP)
 - An economic stimulus plan of Nu. 5 billion has been approved out of which Nu. 550 million is allocated for pre-employment activities
 - Development of three Industrial estates approved and work will begin soon

Employment Promotion Strategies

- Skills development for job seekers both for domestic and international labour markets
- School based career counseling for students as well as job seekers
- Overseas employment in selected countries (introduced for the first time in 2013)
- Guaranteed employment program for school leavers and university graduates (introduced in July, 2014)

**Thank you for your kind
attention**