9

FARMI's experiences on wealth ranking in the Philippines: different farmers have different needs

Ly Tung and F.T. Baliña

· Introduction

Farmers of differing wealth will have different problems and needs and varying ability to adopt proposed technologies. Agricultural research and development must take such differences into account to determine research priorities and to develop relevant innovations. In 1990 FARMI/ViSCA started an IDRC-funded Upland Agriculture Project in Matalom, Leyte where we wanted to try out wealth ranking.

We tried two methods of wealth ranking in three upland villages. The first method involved card sorting by individual key informants followed by the researcher's computation of average scores, and making the final grouping of households. Several lessons were learnt and recommendations made to refine the method. Building on experiences with the first method, we tested the second method which also involved card sorting but by group informants. The second method turned out to be quicker and simpler. Moreover, it avoids 'don't know' cards and the researchers' subjective judgement in final grouping of households. A few weak points of the method are pointed out below.

Difficulties with the individual key informant method were that the final grouping of households not only involves mathematical computation for the intervals but also requires subjective judgement from the researcher. Therefore, given the same set of average rank scores, different researchers might produce different results for the final grouping of households.

· Wealth ranking by the group method

We tested the group method for wealth ranking when we had a PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) activity in two upland villages (Altavista and Templanza). We did the wealth ranking by *sitio*[1] for all eight *sitios* of these two villages.

First, we requested local people to gather at an agreed place in the *sitio* at a specific time. The number of people who came varied from *sitio* to *sitio*, ranging from 11 to 20 (Table 1). We started by asking them to make a map of their *sitio* using a piece of plain paper and a pencil. All houses with names of household heads were shown on the map. While they made their map, one of our colleagues wrote the names of household heads on cards, one name per card. When they finished their map, we also had all the names written on cards.

We then discussed with them the concept of wealth (or well-being) and asked if they could sort the cards into three wealth groups. The term we used in the local dialect was *pagbana-bana sa kahimtang*, which means 'estimates of economic status'. They suggested local terms for each wealth group such as: *nagkalisod, haruhay, pobreng haruhay* and *bintaha* for rich; *nagkalisodlisod, igo-igo*, and *pobre* for average; and *nagkalisod kaayo, lisod, pobreng makalolooy* and *menos* for poor.

Each farmer present took some cards and sorted them into three piles according to his/her perception, which they finished in a very short period of time. For the cross-checking, starting with one pile, a staff

[1] A *sitio* is a cluster of houses within a village.

Source: RRA Notes (1993), Issue 18, pp.60–65, IIED London

member read aloud the name on a card for all present to hear and make changes if necessary. They in fact did, by transferring cards from one pile to another.

After the review they were asked to give principal features of the livelihoods of each category. This led into a discussion about the major differences in wealth between the piles. A household-survey-by-wealth-category conducted later (as part of the PRA activity) confirmed the important wealth indicators cited earlier by the group such as house structures, ownership of land and animals, and land size.

Strong points of the group method

- it is even faster than the individual KIs method;
- no 'don't know' cards;
- no need for computation of score and final subjective judgement by researcher; and,
- in the Philippine setting, it appears that a good gender mix can always be attained even without planning for it (Table 2).

Weak points of the method

- no assurance that there is always a good mix of rich, average, and poor households in the group. Table 2 shows that very few from the poorest category attended;
- not all people in attendance may know how to read names on cards; and,
- we observed some feeling of embarrassment of people belonging to the poor group who were present.

Comparing the two approaches

Before the PRA, we already conducted a wealth ranking using the individual KIs method in all four *sitios* of Altavista village. This enabled us to compare the results obtained by the two methods. Table 2 is an example from *sitio* Altavista Proper (highest number of households among 4 *sitios*), showing the similarities and differences in wealth ranking results. As reflected in the Table, the two methods resulted in 75% of the total households having similarity in ranks. Likewise, the two methods did not produce any extreme in ranks (e.g. richest by one method and poorest by another). Looking at specific categories, the same Table shows that higher incidence of dissimilarities in ranks occurred in categories 2 and 3, while there was almost perfect agreement in category 1 (rich). These results therefore suggest that it is less difficult for farmers to identify the rich in their community than to distinguish the average and the poor.

Table 1. Distribution of participants in attendance by gender and by wealth category

			Distribution by gender		Distribution by wealth category		
Location	**Total no. of households**	**Total no. of participants**			**I**	**II**	**III**
			Male	**Female**	**(rich)**		**(poor)**
Templanza (village)							
Tambo (sitio)	81	12	8	4	7	5	0
Alinsuob II	55	19	7	12	14	4	1
Alinsuob I	104	15	9	6	4	9	2
Canhabas	35	16	12	4	7	9	0
Altavista (village)							
Libho (sitio)	19	13	10	3	5	7	1
Altavista Proper	52	12	6	6	6	6	0
Tonggo	33	20	14	6	8	9	3
Tubo-tubo	16	11	3	8	4	7	0

Source: RRA Notes (1993), Issue 18, pp.60–65, IIED London

Table 2. Results of wealth ranking by two methods in Sitio Altavista Proper

	Results of individual Kis method		
Household No[1]	Average score[2]	Final grouping[3]	Results of group informants method (3 categoies)
1	23	1	1
2	23	1	1
3	31	1	1
4	35	1	1
5	39	1	1
6	39	1	1
7	39	1	1
8	39	1	1
9	39	1	2
10	41	1	1
11	43	1	1
12	43	1	1
13	49	1	1
14	53	2	1
15	57	2	1
16	57	2	2
17	57	2	2
18	57	2	2
19	57	2	2
20	61	2	2
21	65	2	1
22	65	2	2
23	67	2	3
24	69	2	2
25	69	2	3
26	69	2	2
27	73	2	3
28	77	3	3
29	77	3	3
30	77	3	2
31	77	3	2
32	77	3	2
33	77	3	3
34	81	3	3
35	81	3	3
36	84	3	3
37	84	3	3
38	88	3	2
39	88	3	3
40	88	3	3
41	92	3	3
42	96	3	3
43	96	3	3
44	96	3	3
45			3
46			2
47			1
48			2
49			1
50			1
51			1
52			1

Household numbers 45 and 52 were not identified during the wealth ranking using individual KIs method

Average score was computed by dividing the total score given by 5 individual KIs by 5

The final grouping is done y a compromise between having equal intervals [(96-23)/3] and using natural breaks in the average scores. In this case, our subjective judgement is:

23- 49: category 1 (rich)
53 – 73: category 2
77 – 96: category 3 (poor)

Source: RRA Notes (1993), Issue 18, pp.60–65, IIED London

- **Ly Tung** and **F.T. Baliña,** Farm and Resource Management Institute (FARMI), ViSCA, Baybay, Leyte, 6521-A, The Philippines.

FURTHER READING

Grandin, B.E. 1988. *Wealth Ranking in Smallholders Community: a Field Manual*. Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd. UK.

RRA Notes 4,8,9 and 15. Sustainable Agriculture Programme, IIED, UK.

Source: RRA Notes (1993), Issue 18, pp.60–65, IIED London