Balinese People's Happiness in Socio-Economic and Cultural Perspectives

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Happiness becomes a benchmark of how people assess their lives, not only in terms of economic but also social and cultural. This research analyzes how Balinese people perceive happiness in terms of social, economic, and artistic. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were combined in the study. Denpasar City was chosen as the research location considering that Denpasar City is the capital of Bali Province, which acts as the centre of government and economy but still has traditional cultural values that its people closely carry. Data collection using questionnaires was distributed to 100 respondents. Data was analyzed descriptively, and correlation analysis was used to see how much economic, social, and cultural influences on people's happiness in Denpasar City. Information from in-depth interviews was analyzed using word clouds to see how people perceive happiness. The results show that happiness is viewed in terms of economy, income, life, culture, and satisfaction. Both economic, cultural, and social are still variables that influence happiness. The interview results also show that compared to those with high incomes, people feel happier when they gather with family and the surrounding community while doing various religious activities closely related to Balinese culture.

Keywords: *Happiness; Economy; Social; Culture*

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is one thing that almost all people in the world want to achieve. The definition of happiness is incredibly diverse; for example, in the World Happiness Report, happiness is divided into three main classes: life satisfaction, positive feelings, and negative feelings (Michalos, 2012). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines *happiness* as a good mental state, including various positive and negative evaluations that people do and how they feel about their life experiences (OECD, 2013). Several ideologies of research emerged simultaneously in the history of research on happiness. The primary influence in this field comes from sociologists and researchers on quality of life who survey how demographic factors such as income and marriage affect happiness. Other influences in this field come from researchers who work in the health field, including psychologists who want to enrich the idea of mental health, including happiness and life satisfaction. Various influences in the field of study, various survey methods, laboratory experiments, and intensive studies show diverse results. The advancement of economic development, which has been viewed more from economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita income, still needs to be improved to assess the actual level of happiness.

Economics of Happiness is one of the approaches that can be used to measure the correlation between income and the well-being of a community in a region (Delsignor et al., 2023). This approach links economic indicators with psychological measurements. As an approach, the word "happiness" becomes a relevant indicator that can be examined in measuring the economic development of a country. From a scientific perspective, this development also shows a change in economic tendency that emphasizes quantitative data and functionality towards the qualitative and more value-focused ones (Ferrer-i-Carbonell & Ramos, 2021; Kaklauskas et al., 2020).

Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) published that the happiness index in Indonesia in 2022, based on the results of the Happiness Level Measurement Survey (SPTK), was 70.69 on a scale of 0 to 100. The BPS Indonesia version of happiness comprises three dimensions: life satisfaction, feelings (affective), and the meaning of life (eudaimonia). Life satisfaction is a reflective assessment of one's life or specific aspects of life.

Feelings are a person's feelings or emotional states that are usually measured at a particular time. Eudaimonia is meaning in life or good psychological functioning. Happiness involves quality of life, but not all is associated with happiness. Individuals can have a good life but be unhappy with their life or feel happy with their not-so-good life (BPS, 2023).

There are three approaches to the study of happiness. First, scientists can examine happiness in humans as a whole. To comprehend people who are made of flesh and blood and are in their situation, they must overcome the existing information compartmentalization and confront the complexity of human beings. The most challenging strategy that happiness researchers can handle is this one, which necessitates a transdisciplinary viewpoint (Rojas, 2007). Secondly, researchers may attempt to comprehend human happiness from a disciplinary standpoint by concentrating on the connection between happiness and pertinent factors within their field. A political scientist might be more interested in the relationship between political regimes and happiness than an economist in the relationship between unemployment rates or free-trade agreements and happiness. Although it is the primary variable of interest and the final goal, in this case, the researchers approach happiness from a disciplinary standpoint. Therefore, our understanding of happiness is constrained since it ignores several essential aspects outside the discipline's purview (Rojas, 2006).

Third, the happiness hypothesis can be used to explain various phenomena. In this instance, happiness is now an instrumental rather than the primary study variable. A political scientist might, for example, investigate if a person's level of happiness influences their political choices or whether their level of happiness mediates the effects of specific political campaigns. An economist can examine how happiness affects people's migration tendency or productivity (Rojas, 2006).

The concept of utility was revolutionized in the 1930s. Economists, especially those inspired by the work of Lionel Robbins in 1932, were convinced that utility could not be measured cardinally. Utility should be used to explain the choices made by individuals among various goods. Empirically, utility must be inferred from the choices that are made. A movement in economics claims that utility should be given content regarding happiness (Peart & Levy, 2005). If we distinguish between two types of utility, several instances of human conduct that

appear contradictory or unreasonable in light of the utility maximization principle can be justified as rational. The first type is the conventional utility, which rational economic actors are supposed to maximize. It can be either cardinal or ordinal. The latter category pertains to behaviours that satisfy specific psychological requirements and may seem illogical when considering the cost-effectiveness. Two examples of the latter category are excessive spending and, on the one hand, philanthropy and altruism (Kirsh, 2017).

There are growing pieces of evidence that indicate individual preferences and happiness vary. Most importantly, many behaviours observed in real life, such as donating to charity organizations or doing volunteer work, cannot be explained well by egocentric preferences. To the extent that such behaviour is attributed to altruistic motives, it is no longer possible to establish a direct link between the observed behaviour and individual preferences, as postulated by preference theories that are traditionally expressed. The same principle applies if consumers must be better informed or pay attention to the future exaggeratedly and inconsistently. This failure has not only been observed in real life but has also been isolated in many laboratory experiments conducted by economists.

As the capital of Bali Province, Denpasar City is the centre of government and economy, making it a destination for population migration from regencies in Bali and various regions outside Bali Island. Statistical data from 2023 states that the happiness index of the people of Denpasar City reached 84.37 and became the highest in Bali Province. This figure is based on life expectancy and the human development index, which also shows people's access to health and education. The Denpasar City data bank also indicates that in terms of local wisdom, poor households in Denpasar City show that their highest level of happiness indicates feeling happy together rather than meeting their needs.

A study conducted by Setyari et al. (2019) showed that, in Balinese society, material variables tend not to affect one's level of happiness. However, feelings of acceptance and satisfaction with the environment and social relationships make them happier, so when the frequency of existence has a positive effect on the level of happiness, it can be justified. The more often they are involved in customary activities and religious rituals, the better their relationship with their social environment.

This study analyzes the happiness of the people

living in Denpasar City, the capital of Bali Province, from social, economic, and cultural perspectives. As a society with solid customs and culture dependent on the tourism sector, Bali will have a unique perspective on viewing happiness. Which side is more dominant in influencing people's happiness will be able to show how far Bali's economic development is.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research combines how economic, social, and cultural factors affect people's happiness. It was conducted in Denpasar City, the capital of Bali Province. Denpasar City is the centre of government, and the economy still upholds customs and culture in its people's lives. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed in this study to obtain more in-depth research results related to community happiness.

Qualitative analysis using informants determined by the sample snowballing method. Data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews, which were then processed using the word cloud to answer problems related to the perception of the people of Denpasar City towards happiness. Meanwhile, data was obtained through distributing questionnaires for quantitative analysis. Given the large population, the number of samples in this study was determined by considering the number of samples that could be analyzed quantitatively. According to Sugiono, the minimum sample size for multivariate analysis is 10 (ten) times the number of variables, so the researcher used 100 respondents to get good analysis results. The sample was determined by purposive sampling with the criteria that the sample is already working and is a native of Denpasar City who is a member of a traditional Banjar. Descriptive and correlation analyses were used to answer the problem objectives related to the influence of socioeconomic aspects on community happiness. The relationship between socioeconomic and cultural aspects of happiness is illustrated in Figure 1 as follows.
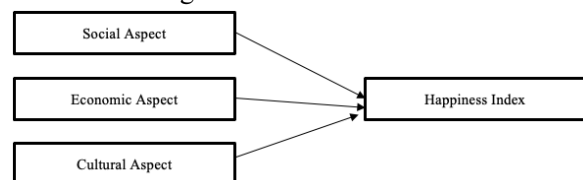

Figure 1. Correlation between Social-Economic-Cultural Aspects and Happiness Index

Correlation is an analytical tool to find the relationship between independent/free variables and dependent/bound variables (Roflin & Zulvia, 2021). The relationship between two variables can be due to mere coincidence, or it can indeed be a causal

relationship. Two variables are correlated if the other changes occur regularly, in the same or opposite directions. In correlational analysis, besides measuring the suitability of the regression line to sample data, it also measures the closeness of the relationship between variables. The correlation in this study is to see the relationship closeness between the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the happiness index.

The statements in the questionnaire are answered using a 1-10 Likert scale where a value of 1 indicates a strongly disagreeing perception, and 10 indicates a strongly agreeing perception. The happiness scale used here is the subjective level of happiness respondents feel. The proposed model is relatively the same as the first, except that the dependent variable is the perceived happiness scale in living a life ranging from 1 - 10 (lowest-highest). The following indicators measure social, economic, and cultural aspects.

Table 1. Research Indicators

	Indicator
Social Aspect*	Working status
	Health Access
	Education level
	Residential environment
	Involvement in a social group
Economic Aspect**	Income
	Savings
	Inheritance ownership
	Number of family dependents
Cultural Aspect***	Intensity in religious activities
	Intensity in custom activities
	Rank in ceremony practices
	Understanding of values and norms

* Source: Hans (2014)

(** Source: Yun Su & Azizan Sabjan Muhammad (2023)

*** Source: Schyns, 1998)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Happiness: A Community's Perspective
Happiness is a scientific term used to evaluate individuals about their lives. People can review and assess their lives based on general assessments, such as life satisfaction or feelings of happiness, or to assess specific areas of their lives, such as marriage or work, or their emotional feelings on what happens to them, either pleasant emotions caused by positive evaluations of personal experiences or unpleasant emotions caused by negative evaluations of individual experiences (Diener et al., 2002).

The term happiness in Indonesia is preferred to the term subjective well-being. This refers to the survey instrument used. This instrument was developed by BPS from a measure of objective conditions and subjective welfare levels, covering three major dimensions, namely (1) evaluation of ten domains of human life that are considered essential/important by most of the population, (2) affect (feelings or emotional conditions), and (3) eudaimonia (meaning of life) because the measure of happiness is the result of a composite index of the three dimensions above (BPS, 2022).

As a part of Indonesia, Bali is one of the proud tourist destinations that still survives today. Bali is well-known as an area that maintains culture and customs and is a unique tourist attraction. For example, *the Ngaben Ceremony has become* a spectacle for tourists that they cannot find anywhere else. The same thing also applies to various religious ceremonies. Although it is not a regularly scheduled activity, like other performing arts in Bali, in certain areas such as Ubud, the ngaben ceremony has become a tourist destination. This religious ceremony is what attracts more tourists to Bali.

Bali's status as a tourist area will impact the regional economy, which will then impact the socio-economic conditions of the community. It is then believed that Balinese people will have different views on happiness. Interviews were conducted with the community on the topic of happiness. The interview results produced a word cloud presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Word Cloud of Balinese Happiness

(Source: primary data, 2023)

The word cloud presented in Figure 1 shows the most frequently spoken words in the interviews with the informants. These frequently spoken words are organized into a collection of words, where the most visible word becomes the key to the interview results that indicate the meaning related to happiness. These interviews were conducted with informants regarding their definition, meaning, and perception of happiness.

Happiness, economics, culture, life, and satisfaction are the most readable words in the word cloud. This can be used as an indicator that informants, in this case the people of Denpasar City, associate their happiness with economic conditions, culture, life, and satisfaction as expressed by one of the informants, it is quoted as follows:

"Happiness is when all needs are met. It's more about income. Because whatever you need can be bought if you have money. But gathering with friends and family also makes me happy. Tired of coming home from work, there are activities in the Banjar, gatherings, and telling stories ranging from politics to household problems, and it becomes happiness on its own. Meeting people makes you feel less tired from the office routine." (KA, Bank Employee, 33 years old)

A similar opinion was also expressed by one of the lecturers at the State University who concentrates on population science and gender.

"Happiness is now a more familiar term to express the well-being of society. Happiness is balance, not just in terms of income but also physical and mental. Relationships within the family will also be an indicator of happiness. In Bali, happiness is the balance between man and God, other humans, and the universe, which we know better as Tri Hita Karana. And each person's happiness differs depending on which side they look at." (AM, Lecturer, 58 years old).

Happiness is often defined as one's level of liking one's life, or more officially, as the degree to which one has a favo**u**rable overall life evaluation. Subjective "evaluation" or "liking" of life—also known as "satisfaction" with life—is a critical component of this definition.

Correlation between social, economic, and cultural factors and Balinese people's happiness

The happiness index is used as a benchmark to see the prosperity of a country. The happiness index is a subjective measure of development used to view people's perceptions of what they feel in living their daily lives. The happiness index provides a general overview of the population's living conditions. Happiness in this study will be viewed from the social, economic, and cultural perspectives, summarized in

Table 1.

Table 1. Community's Perception and Correlation Between Social, Economic, and Cultural Aspects and Happiness Index

Indicator		Mean*	Correlation Coefficient
Social Aspect	Working status	7.62	0,78
	Health Access	6.72	
	Education level	6.63	
	Residential environment	7.62	
	Involvement in a social group	7.22	
Economic Aspect	Income	7.23	0,74
	Savings	6.76	
	Inheritance ownership	6.05	
	Number of family dependents	6.56	
Cultural Aspect	Intensity in religious activities	8.86	0,82
	The intensity of custom activities	8.75	
	Rank in ceremony practices	8.55	
	Understanding of values and norms	7.35	

*Average score is the people's perception score towards each indicator using the Likert scale (score 1-10)

(Source: primary data, 2023)

1. Happiness viewed from the social aspect

The social aspect is about how humans and their environment interact and how people and their lives are socialized. Indicators of this social aspect include employment status, access to health, living environment, and involvement in social groups (Hans, 2014). The results of the correlation analysis based on Table 1 show that the correlation coefficient between social aspects and happiness is 0.78. This figure shows a strong relationship between social elements and happiness. Meanwhile, based on indicators of social factors, perceptions from the community place, employment status, and place of residence are indicators with the highest perceived value for happiness.

Examining happiness from a community perspective is fascinating. Communities play an essential role in shaping individual happiness and vice versa. One of the primary sources of happiness within a community is social relationships. Strong social networks, supportive relationships, and a sense of belonging can significantly affect an individual's well-being. Communities that foster social interaction through shared events, gatherings, and activities often have happier residents.

Since humans are social beings, interacting with other individuals is unavoidable. The degree of social capital and the quality of one's social interactions are two elements that might enhance communal well-being. Bartolini & Sarracino (2014) found that, over the medium and long terms, the association between happiness and social capital is

significantly stronger than the relationship between happiness and GDP. Belliotti (2004) reveals that even though we need solitude, a keen sense of individuality, uniqueness, idiosyncrasy, and independence, individuals also need a measure of community. Humans seek bonds and connections and expand subjectivity through family, friends, and lovers. One needs to extend the range of concern for others and feel that others also have concerns for others. Intimacy, sharing, and social belonging are the most essential ingredients for happiness. Social scientists estimate that around 70 percent of individual happiness depends on the number and quality of friendships, family closeness, and healthy relationships with neighbours and coworkers. Social support, mutual respect, and the ability to share are essential for happiness. These are highly dependent on and can be nurtured through communication. Letting others know that they are important to us can deepen mutual bonds. Sharing problems with loved ones can ease the pressure of a problem.

According to research by Bartolini et al. (2013), happiness is positively and significantly connected with social interactions and faith in institutions. According to empirical data from Helliwell (2001), there is a positive correlation between social capital and subjective well-being and trust levels. According to Sarracino's (2012) research, happiness and life satisfaction positively correlate with several social capital proxies. According to Helliwell & Putnam (2004), social capital promotes subjective well-being and physical health regarding the quality of relationships with family, neighbours, churches, and other communities. According to Han's (2014) research conducted in South Korea, happiness is positively impacted by social capital variables at the personal level, namely attitudes toward volunteering and assisting.

2. Happiness viewed from the economic aspect

The analysis results in Table 2 show that the correlation value between economic aspects and happiness scores is 0.74. This value indicates a strong relationship between the economy and happiness. The indicators of the financial aspects used are savings income, inheritance ownership, and the amount of savings. The questionnaire results show that the highest perception of economic aspects is in the exposure indicator. Following various economic theories, income is the primary measure of welfare. Multiple studies support this, showing a positive relationship between income and welfare.

Research on the economy and the happiness index was conducted by Rahayu (2016), who suggested that income is positively associated with happiness for Indonesians in general and specific ethnic communities. This means that income remains an essential factor for Indonesians' happiness. In addition, there are indications of the Easterlin Paradox in Indonesia, albeit in the short term. Second, income referrals are not related to happiness. Third, given the ethnic diversity in Indonesia, there is no difference in happiness between ethnic groups. Income positively affects the happiness of Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese. Balinese are happiest as their income increases. Referral income is also unrelated to people's happiness in the three ethnic groups. Other important variables that can be mentioned are ethnic trust and trust in others. People who have more faith in their ethnicity are more likely to be happier.

The publication released by katadata.com also shows the relationship between income and the happiness index. The survey results published in 2023 show that the higher the household income, the higher the level of happiness. The happiness level of people with income below Rp 1.8 million was recorded at 67.99. Then, people with an income of IDR 1.8 million to IDR 3 million have a happiness level 70.8 (katadata.com, 2022). This information supports the analysis of the relationship between income and happiness levels.

People with higher incomes have more opportunities to achieve whatever they want; in particular, they can buy more goods and services. In addition, they also have a higher status in society. The idea of the correlation between income and happiness at any given time and country has been the subject of extensive empirical literature. As a result of robust and generally accepted research, it has been found that wealthy people, on average, report higher levels of happiness ((Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004a, 2004b; Di Tella & MacCulloch, 2006; Frey & Stutzer, 2000). Higher income may lead to happier people, and happier people may also generate higher incomes. (Gardner & Oswald, 2002) UK lottery winners of £50,000 expressed higher happiness with a standard deviation between 0.1 and 0.3. This suggests that higher income does cause people to be happier. Various processes can explain why higher income does not have more of an effect on happiness. The most important thing is that individuals adapt to their new living standards and compare themselves to others. This condition is called relative income (Chang, 2013). Humans are unable and unwilling to make absolute judgments. Instead, they constantly compare their environment and past or future expectations.

3. Happiness viewed from the cultural aspect

The correlation result based on Table 2 between culture and happiness is 0.82. Like social and economic aspects, cultural aspects are closely related to happiness. The correlation between culture and happiness is higher than the social and economic aspects. Indicators of cultural elements in this study include the intensity of religious activities, intensity of traditional activities, level of ceremony implementation, and understanding of values and norms. The results of the descriptive analysis also show that the highest average perception indicates the intensity of religious activities. The relationship between man and God is still a determining factor of happiness for Balinese people, especially those of Denpasar City.

Culture is one of the main focuses of poverty studies. For decades, sociologists, demographers, and even economists have sought to uncover the role of culture in explaining various aspects of poverty. Culture can also clearly define the behaviour of low-income people. Culture is often seen as a societal structural change rather than an inheritance. However, the distinction between the two is still controversial, making distinguishing between structural and cultural differences difficult. Some studies show that culture is correlated with poverty (including (Heath et al., 2015; Norcia & Rissotto, 2013)). In countries like India, wealth, poverty, and philanthropy are correlated to poverty levels. Social values are organized in the form of a caste system. In Indian Hinduism, wealth is seen as valuable and positively valued. Groups with religious prestige dominated social status in ancient India. The view is that economic success and wealth accumulation occur in different ways.

Religious and cultural activities carried out by Balinese Hindus contribute to the increase in the poverty rate. The opinion that religious and cultural activities carried out by Balinese Hindus cause an increase in the poverty rate is supported by data on the large portion of expenditure for these activities. Spending on ceremonies for the community is one of the reflections of religious understanding. In the Hindu context, this can be done through three approaches (Sukrawati, 2017). First, by understanding the philosophy of religion (*tattwa*); second, by performing ritual ceremonies in the form of ceremony (*yadnya*); third, through the implementation of ethics in social life (*susila*). In the course of Hindu development, a shift in religious understanding occurs, namely an increase in the practices of ritual ceremonies. The shift also leads to philosophical knowledge and increased ritual ceremonies and practices. This causes the time and

cost required to improve. One's religious understanding and local customs greatly influence the size of the ceremony held. The size of the ceremony can be categorized into large-scale (*uttama*), medium-scale (*madya*), and small-scale or *vista* expenditures (Sukarsa, 2005).

Frequent participation in cultural activities and religious rituals positively and significantly impacts a person's happiness. The more often he is involved in activities in his environment, the greater his sense of happiness. This result contradicts most people's view that the time taken up by various cultural activities and religious rituals in Bali will cause them to feel disturbed and reduce their happiness. This result also confirms that welfare can be measured by asset ownership and the feeling of being recognized in one's social environment. It can be seen that satisfaction in social relationships is the most dominant factor affecting one's level of happiness. The greater an individual's level of satisfaction with the social environment's acceptance of them, the higher the level of happiness that person can feel.

Much empirical evidence suggests that the correlation between well-being and happiness is culture. (Compton, 2005) says that individuals have different ways of seeking happiness according to their culture. (Oishi & Diener, 2009) Suggests that what makes happiness in individualist and collectivist cultures is entirely different. People with an individualist culture will be happy when their self-esteem increases and they have the freedom to do things. People in collectivist cultures are more concerned with harmonious relationships and being able to fulfil the wishes of others. One of the things that makes people happy is when they can live their lives following their cultural values and norms (Wijayanti & Nurwianti, 2010).

Character strengths that contribute to happiness vary from one community group to another. An internet survey (Park et al., 2004) of 5,299 adults from various races and ethnicities proved the association between happiness and the character strengths of hope, enthusiasm, gratitude, love, and curiosity. Furthermore, in Switzerland, it was found that the character strength that contributes the most to happiness is longevity, while in America, it is gratitude (Peterson et al., 2007). The correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction is much more robust in individualist and collectivist cultures. Each culture must be understood from its frame of reference, including its ecological, historical, philosophical, and religious contexts (Kim et al., 2006). Culture contributes to the formation of individual psychological concepts, such as

happiness (Anggoro & Widhiarso, 2010). (Uchida et al., 2004) In their research on the cultural construction of happiness, they found differences in the meaning of happiness in the context of Western (individualistic) and Eastern (collectivistic) cultures. Social relationship problems and environmental demands to increase self-achievement and personal inability to meet these demands can cause stress.

The Javanese life principle that greatly influences peace of mind is *ikhlas* (*nrima*). (Wijayanti & Nurwianti, 2010). With this principle, Javanese people are satisfied with their fate. Whatever has been held in his hands is done happily. *Nrima* means not wanting what others have and not being jealous of other people's happiness. They believe the Almighty arranges human life, so there is no need to work hard to get something (Herusatoto, 2008). There is a correlation between character strength and happiness in Javanese, and character strength contributes significantly to the happiness of Javanese. The level of happiness of the Javanese is above average. The five main character strengths in Javanese are gratitude, kindness, citizenship, justice, and integrity, and the character strengths that contribute significantly to happiness in Javanese are persistence, creativity, perspective, justice, vitality, curiosity, and forgiveness (Wijayanti & Nurwianti, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the happiness of the people of Denpasar City is closely related to social, economic, and cultural aspects. The happiness index of the community does not always become higher when their income increases, but more on social life and community intensity in traditional and religious activities. This is evidenced by the higher correlation value of cultural and social aspects compared to economic aspects. The results of this analysis are also supported by the interviews, which show that the happiness of the people of Denpasar City is closely related to culture, community life, and life satisfaction.

Despite combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research can still be developed further, especially by strengthening the use of non-economic factors in measuring happiness levels. Many studies still use the term well-being rather than happiness, which also limits the references in this study.

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