

Exploring Learning Happiness Among Indonesian Students Amidst Heavy Academic Workloads Through the Balinese Philosophies of Tri Hita Karana and Tri Kaya Parisudha

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Abstract

Student happiness plays an important role in promoting academic engagement, well-being, and meaningful learning experiences in higher education. This study examined the level of learning happiness among students at the Ganesha University of Education (Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha), Bali, Indonesia, within the cultural context of the Balinese philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted with 150 undergraduate students using a 27-item questionnaire measuring five dimensions of learning happiness. The five dimensions were derived from established theoretical perspectives and contextualised through the integration of the principles of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* to reflect the cultural context of students' learning experiences. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the data. The findings revealed that students reported a high level of learning happiness overall ($M = 83.64$, $SD = 10.30$). Among the five dimensions, social relationships in the lecture environment recorded the highest mean score, whereas academic workload received the lowest mean score, although it remained within the high category. High levels of learning happiness were also observed across all semester levels and both gender groups. These findings suggest that students generally experience positive and meaningful learning, despite academic demands, within an educational environment informed by the values of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. As the study was conducted at a single university and employed a descriptive design, future research should examine learning happiness across multiple universities and investigate its relationship with important educational outcomes, such as academic engagement, student persistence, and academic achievement.

Keywords: Workload; students; learning happiness; descriptive study.

Introduction

Happiness is widely regarded as an important indicator of quality of life and overall well-being (Miret et al., 2014; Tunsi & Bhalla, 2023). In higher education, it has received increasing attention because students' experiences at university extend beyond academic achievement to include their psychological, social, and personal development (Lesani et al., 2016). Students who experience greater happiness tend to engage more actively in learning, develop healthier social relationships, and achieve



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better academic outcomes, while also establishing a stronger foundation for their future well-being and professional lives (Mahmoodi Kahriz et al., 2020; Pham Tien et al., 2021; Rehman et al., 2018; Tien Nam et al., 2024). As universities place greater emphasis on supporting students' overall success, understanding student happiness has become an increasingly important area of educational research.

Although happiness is universally valued, scholars have long acknowledged that it is not understood in exactly the same way across disciplines, philosophical traditions, or societies. Diener et al. (2020) and Diener et al. (2009) describe happiness as the thoughts and feelings people experience when they believe their lives are going well, whereas Veenhoven (2008) defines it as the degree to which individuals appreciate the life they live. Philosophical traditions further broaden this understanding by associating happiness with pleasure, the fulfilment of personal goals, and the pursuit of a meaningful and worthwhile life (Bentham, 1988; Griffin, 1986; Nussbaum, 1992; Sen, 1985). Taken together, these perspectives suggest that although happiness is a universal human aspiration, its meaning is also shaped by the cultural values and lived experiences of the communities in which people live. This cultural dimension provides an important foundation for understanding happiness within diverse contexts and underscores the value of examining it through culturally grounded perspectives.

The cultural dimension of happiness is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where local philosophies continue to shape how people understand well-being and everyday life. In Bali, this perspective is reflected in two enduring philosophical traditions, *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which offer a holistic understanding of happiness that extends beyond individual emotions to include harmonious relationships and ethical living. *Tri Hita Karana* emphasises harmony with the divine, with other people, and with the natural environment (Parta & Kusuma, 2023; Tripayana et al., 2024; Widhiastini et al., 2025), whereas *Tri Kaya Parisudha* highlights the importance of cultivating positive thoughts, respectful speech, and responsible actions (Priadiarta et al., 2025; Ahma Dewi & Putra, 2022). At the Ganesha University of Education, these philosophies are not merely preserved as cultural ideals but are embedded in the university's educational vision and everyday practices. Although the university enrolls students from diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, all students participate in the same institutional learning environment shaped by these shared educational values. Rather than being promoted as religious doctrines, *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* serve as universal educational principles that guide academic life, interpersonal relationships, ethical conduct, and holistic personal development. Consequently, they shape the university's educational culture by influencing how members of the academic community interact, learn, collaborate, and fulfil their academic and social responsibilities. These values are reflected in respectful lecturer–student interactions, collaborative learning, student activities, community engagement programmes, environmental stewardship initiatives, and spiritual life on campus, making them an integral part of students' everyday learning experiences. Within this educational context, happiness is understood not only as an individual psychological state but also as an outcome of balanced relationships, ethical conduct, and meaningful engagement in university life. This distinctive cultural setting therefore provides a strong foundation for examining students' perceptions of learning happiness.

Existing research suggests that university students in Indonesia generally report positive levels of happiness, although their experiences are shaped by a range of academic and non-academic factors. For example, studies involving nursing students at Padjadjaran University found that most students reported relatively high levels of happiness despite the academic pressures associated with their studies, including the demands of completing a mini-thesis (Ahmad et al., 2021; Andini et al., 2024). Other studies have shown that students' happiness is influenced not only by their academic experiences but also by meaningful relationships, opportunities for leisure, and the achievement of personal goals (Prafitrilia, 2023). Meanwhile, Budiono (2022) found no significant difference in happiness between undergraduate and professional dental students, suggesting that academic level alone does not adequately explain variations in students' well-being. Taken together, these studies indicate that student happiness emerges from the interaction of multiple academic, personal, and social experiences, highlighting the complexity of well-being within Indonesian higher education.

Building on these findings, international research has sought to explain the processes through which students develop and sustain happiness during their university experience. Rather than viewing happiness solely as an outcome of academic achievement, studies have emphasised the importance of successful adjustment to university life, supportive relationships with lecturers and peers, emotional well-being, and learning environments that foster engagement and a sense of belonging (Jiang et al., 2022). Similar findings have also been reported in Australian higher education. Gilmore et al. (2025) found that Australian university students perceived academic workload, social interactions, academic stress, and teaching quality as important factors influencing their day-to-day well-being. Earlier, Chan et al. (2005) reported that students' happiness was

associated with academic performance, friendships, lecture quality, university facilities, and opportunities for extracurricular participation. Collectively, these findings suggest that student happiness is a multidimensional educational experience shaped by the interplay between students and the academic, social, and broader educational environments in which they learn and participate. While academic experiences, social relationships, and educational quality contribute to students' well-being and happiness, the ways in which happiness is experienced and understood may also vary according to cultural values concerning relationships, learning, personal conduct, and connectedness to the wider educational community. Student happiness, therefore, may be understood not merely as an individual emotional state, but as an experience embedded within the academic, social, and cultural contexts of higher education.

Although this growing body of research has substantially advanced understanding of student happiness, an important limitation remains. Much of the existing literature, both in Indonesia and internationally, has conceptualised happiness through universal psychological frameworks or standardised measures. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the cultural values that shape how happiness is understood, experienced, and sustained within particular educational contexts. This limitation is especially relevant in culturally distinctive settings, where local philosophies may provide more than a contextual background; they may shape students' orientations towards learning, relationships, emotional regulation, personal conduct, and their sense of meaning within university life. In the Balinese context, the philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* offer culturally grounded principles that are particularly relevant to these dimensions of students' learning experiences. *Tri Hita Karana* emphasises harmonious relationships with God (*parhyangan*), with other people (*pawongan*), and with the environment (*palemahan*), while *Tri Kaya Parisudha* emphasises the cultivation of right thought (*manacika*), right speech (*wacika*), and right action (*kayika*). These principles provide a culturally meaningful basis for understanding how students experience and sustain positive learning experiences within higher education.

Viewed in this context, understanding students' learning happiness requires an approach that recognises both the universal dimensions of students' educational experiences and the cultural values through which those experiences are interpreted. Accordingly, the present study does not treat *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* as separate constructs to be measured independently; rather, these philosophies are integrated into the conceptualisation and contextualisation of learning happiness. This provides a cultural and philosophical foundation for interpreting students' experiences across five indicators: happiness with the lecture process, social relationships in the lecture environment, academic workload, positive emotions during lectures, and perceived meaning in attending lectures. To establish these indicators, the study draws on two complementary perspectives widely recognised in higher education research—student adjustment (Baker & Stryk, 1989) and the learning environment (Walker & Fraser, 2005)—and contextualises them through the principles of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. This integrated perspective therefore connects established perspectives on students' educational experiences with Balinese philosophical values without treating either philosophy as a separate measurable variable.

Despite the value of this culturally grounded perspective, empirical evidence describing how students perceive learning happiness within a university that actively embeds these cultural values remains limited. Existing studies have generally focused on identifying factors associated with student happiness or measuring levels of well-being, while providing comparatively little descriptive evidence of students' learning happiness within culturally distinctive higher education settings. In particular, limited attention has been given to how culturally grounded principles such as *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* can be integrated into established indicators of learning happiness to describe students' everyday academic experiences. Without such evidence, it is difficult to establish a contextual understanding of how learning happiness is experienced in everyday academic and social life or to provide an empirical baseline against which future studies may be compared. Developing this descriptive understanding is therefore an important step towards advancing research on learning happiness in culturally diverse university contexts. Against this background, the present study examines the level of learning happiness among students at the Ganesha University of Education, using five theoretically established indicators that have been culturally contextualised through the principles of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*.

Guided by this conceptual and empirical rationale, the present study employs a quantitative descriptive survey to examine how students perceive learning happiness within the culturally distinctive environment of the Ganesha University of Education. Specifically, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive empirical profile of students' perceived learning happiness across five interrelated dimensions of university life: the lecture process, social relationships, academic workload, positive emotions during lectures, and the perceived meaning of attending lectures. The findings provide a culturally grounded description of learning happiness within a university where *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* are embedded in everyday academic

and non-academic practices. As such, they are expected to serve as a valuable reference for future comparative, explanatory, and intervention-oriented research. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: To what extent do students perceive learning happiness when engaging in academic and non-academic activities at the Ganesha University of Education? To address this research question, a quantitative approach employing a descriptive survey design is adopted to provide an empirical description of students' perceived learning happiness.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to describe university students' perceived learning happiness in engaging with academic and non-academic activities at the Ganesha University of Education. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to systematically measure students' responses to a set of structured statements and summarise patterns of perceptions using numerical data (Bhandari, 2023; Johnson & Christensen, 2019; Werang et al., 2026). This approach is particularly appropriate for descriptive purposes, as it allows researchers to obtain an empirical overview of a phenomenon within a specific population at a particular point in time. Consistent with this approach, a survey design was employed because surveys provide an efficient and standardised method for collecting data from a relatively large number of participants and support statistical analysis of students' responses (Williams, 2007). Previous studies have also highlighted the usefulness of survey methods in educational research due to their practicality, efficiency, and capacity to generate objective descriptions of participants' experiences (Gede Margunayasa et al., 2024; Gunada et al., 2024; Werang et al., 2023a; Werang et al., 2024; Werang et al., in press; Wolomasi et al., 2024).

The study was conducted at the Ganesha University of Education, a higher education institution characterised by diverse academic and non-academic activities that provide students with various learning and social experiences. This context was considered appropriate for examining students' perceived learning happiness because university life extends beyond classroom instruction and includes interpersonal interactions, student activities, and opportunities for personal development. The study involved 150 undergraduate students selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was employed to ensure that participants had relevant experiences within the university environment and were able to provide meaningful responses regarding their learning experiences. Data collection was conducted during the semester break to minimise disruption to students' academic responsibilities. The survey was administered once at a single point in time; therefore, this study represents a cross-sectional design rather than a longitudinal investigation involving repeated measurements of the same participants. It is important to acknowledge that the participants were drawn from a single university context. Therefore, while the sample size was adequate for describing students' perceived learning happiness in this setting, caution should be exercised when generalising the findings to students from other institutions.

To collect data, a questionnaire consisting of 27 positive statement items was developed to measure students' perceived learning happiness across five indicators adapted from Baker and Siryk (1989) and Walker and Fraser (2005): (1) happiness with the lecture process, (2) social relationships in the lecture environment, (3) academic workload, (4) positive emotions during lectures, and (5) perceived meaning in attending lectures. These five indicators were derived from established theoretical perspectives on students' learning experiences and were subsequently contextualised to the Balinese educational and cultural setting through the integration of the philosophical principles of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*.

In developing the questionnaire, the principles of *Tri Hita Karana*—harmony with God (*parhyangan*), harmony with others (*pawongan*), and harmony with the environment (*palemahan*)—were embedded within relevant aspects of students' learning experiences. Similarly, *Tri Kaya Parisudha* was reflected through the principles of *manacika* (right thought), *wacika* (right speech), and *kayika* (right action), particularly in relation to students' self-regulation and interpersonal conduct during learning activities. These philosophical principles were not treated as separate variables or independently measured constructs. Rather, they served as cultural and philosophical foundations for contextualising the five learning-happiness indicators and their corresponding questionnaire items. Thus, students' learning happiness remained the single overarching construct measured in this study, while the questionnaire incorporated culturally relevant meanings derived from Balinese philosophical values.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The questionnaire was administered in Indonesian to ensure that participants could understand each statement clearly and respond based on their actual learning experiences. Within the context of this study, the lecture process refers not only to classroom instruction but also to students' interactions with lecturers and peers,

participation in classroom discussions, collaborative learning activities, feedback received during learning, and the overall classroom climate that supports meaningful learning experiences.

Because the questionnaire items were adapted from previous theoretical perspectives, a careful adaptation procedure was undertaken to maintain conceptual consistency while ensuring cultural appropriateness within the Indonesian higher education context. The original items were translated into Indonesian and subsequently back-translated by an independent bilingual translator to examine semantic equivalence. The translated version was then reviewed by experts in educational research and higher education to assess item clarity, relevance, and contextual suitability. During this process, potential item redundancy was examined by ensuring that each statement represented a distinct aspect of the intended indicator rather than repeating similar meanings. In addition, a pilot administration was conducted with a small group of students to evaluate the readability and comprehensibility of the items. Feedback obtained from the pilot stage was used to refine minor wording issues before the final questionnaire was administered.

Examples of questionnaire items illustrating the five dimensions of learning happiness include: “I am satisfied with the way the lecturer delivers lecture material,” “I feel I have gained useful knowledge from lectures,” “I have good relationships with my classmates,” “I feel appreciated by lecturers and peers during lectures,” “I feel capable of handling academic demands well,” “The workload assigned is still within reasonable limits,” “I am satisfied with my academic achievements so far,” “I feel value and meaning in the material I study,” and “I feel motivated to continue learning and growing in college.” These examples represent the broader dimensions assessed in the questionnaire and illustrate how students’ perceptions of learning happiness were operationalised in the context of their academic experiences.

To assess the robustness of the questionnaire, internal consistency reliability was examined using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients based on 150 valid student responses included in the final analysis. The reliability assessment of this study was conducted using responses collected at a single point in time to determine whether items within each indicator consistently measured the intended dimension of learning happiness. As presented in Table 1, all five indicators demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients ranging from 0.714 to 0.861, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. These results demonstrate that the items within each indicator were sufficiently consistent for measuring students’ perceived learning happiness in this study context.

Table 1

Internal Consistency Reliability of the Learning Happiness Questionnaire

Indicator	Number of Items	Valid Responses (n)	Completion Rate (%)	Cronbach’s Alpha
Happiness with the Lecture Process	5	150	100	0.814
Social Relationships in the Lecture Environment	7	150	100	0.839
Academic Workload	5	150	100	0.808
Positive Emotions during Lectures	5	150	100	0.714
Perceived Meaning in Attending Lectures	5	150	100	0.861

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that all indicators of students’ perceived learning happiness demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability, as all Cronbach’s alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Beyond internal consistency assessment, additional procedures were undertaken during the instrument adaptation process to support the quality and appropriateness of the questionnaire. Content validity was established through expert judgment to ensure that each item adequately represented the intended indicator and was relevant to the Indonesian higher education context. Face validity was supported through pilot administration, which confirmed that the items were clearly understood by the target respondents. Furthermore, item redundancy was carefully considered during the adaptation and review process by examining

whether each statement contributed a distinct aspect of the intended indicator rather than unnecessarily repeating similar meanings. These procedures ensured that the questionnaire was both theoretically grounded and contextually appropriate for measuring students' perceived learning happiness.

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, specifically through the calculation of mean scores and standard deviations for each indicator of learning happiness. The mean scores were used to describe the overall tendency of students' perceptions, while standard deviations were calculated to indicate the extent of variation among students' responses. The combination of these two statistical measures enabled a clearer interpretation of both the general level and distribution of students' perceived learning happiness across the five measurement indicators. All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, which was selected because it provides reliable procedures for managing survey data and conducting descriptive statistical analysis.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any academic consequences. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the questionnaire. To protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were used exclusively for research purposes. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles for research involving human participants and received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Ganesha University of Education (Approval Number: 216/UN.48.16.04/PT/2025).

Results

As stated earlier, this study aimed to describe the level of learning happiness among students enrolled at Ganesha University of Education. Of the 150 questionnaires distributed, all were returned and deemed complete for analysis, yielding a response rate of 100%. The participants comprised students from Semesters 2, 4, and 6 and included both male and female students. Prior to the descriptive analysis, the data were examined for normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The results indicated that the data were approximately normally distributed ($p > .05$), supporting the use of the mean and standard deviation as appropriate measures of central tendency and dispersion. The data were subsequently analysed using descriptive statistics with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, and the findings are presented in Tables 2 to 4.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Learning Happiness by Indicators

Indicators	n	Mean	SD	Category
Happiness with the Lecture Process	150	15.01	2.00	High
Social Relationships in the Lecture Environment	150	22.45	2.59	High
Academic Workload	150	14.49	1.90	High
Positive Emotions during Lectures	150	15.99	1.78	High
Perceived Meaning in Attending Lectures	150	15.70	2.03	High
Overall Learning Happiness	150	83.64	10.30	High

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 2 indicate that the overall level of students' learning happiness at Ganesha University of Education was high ($M = 83.64$, $SD = 10.30$). Across the five indicators, all mean scores fell within the high category, suggesting that students generally experienced positive learning experiences despite the academic demands of university study.

Among the five indicators, social relationships in the lecture environment recorded the highest mean score ($M = 22.45$, $SD = 2.59$), indicating that students perceived positive interactions and supportive relationships within the university environment. In contrast, academic workload obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 14.49$, $SD = 1.90$), although it remained within the high category. This finding suggests that, despite recognising the demands associated with their academic responsibilities, students generally maintained positive perceptions of their learning experiences. The remaining indicators—positive emotions during

lectures ($M = 15.99$, $SD = 1.78$), perceived meaning in attending lectures ($M = 15.70$, $SD = 2.03$), and happiness with the lecture process ($M = 15.01$, $SD = 2.00$)—also demonstrated high mean scores.

Overall, the findings reveal a consistently high level of learning happiness across all measured dimensions. Although academic workload recorded the lowest mean score among the five indicators, students generally maintained positive learning experiences, characterised by meaningful engagement in lectures and supportive social relationships within the campus environment. Viewed through the conceptual lens of this study, these descriptive patterns are broadly consistent with the educational values embodied in the Balinese philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which provide the cultural foundation for the learning environment at Ganesha University of Education. The prominence of social relationships reflects the importance of harmonious interpersonal connections (*pawongan*). Similarly, students' positive engagement in lectures, favourable perceptions of the learning process, and sustained sense of meaning in attending classes are consistent with the emphasis of *Tri Kaya Parisudha* on cultivating positive thoughts (*manacika*), respectful communication (*wacika*), and constructive actions (*kayika*) as essential foundations of personal well-being and meaningful learning.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Learning Happiness by Semester

Semester	n	Mean	SD	Category
Semester 2	14	83.43	7.32	High
Semester 4	79	82.97	9.44	High
Semester 6	57	83.73	7.71	High

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 3 indicate that students' learning happiness was consistently categorised as high across all semesters. Of the 150 participants, 14 (9.3%) were enrolled in Semester 2, 79 (52.7%) in Semester 4, and 57 (38.0%) in Semester 6. The mean scores ranged from 82.97 to 83.73, indicating only slight variation in students' learning happiness across the three semester groups.

Semester 6 students recorded the highest mean score ($M = 83.73$, $SD = 7.71$), followed by Semester 2 students ($M = 83.43$, $SD = 7.32$), while Semester 4 students reported the lowest mean score ($M = 82.97$, $SD = 9.44$). Although minor differences in mean scores were observed, all three groups remained within the high category, suggesting that students experienced similarly high levels of learning happiness regardless of their stage of study. The relatively larger standard deviation among Semester 4 students indicates greater variability in their responses compared with those of students in Semesters 2 and 6.

Overall, these findings suggest that learning happiness remained consistently high throughout different stages of university study. Viewed through the conceptual lens of this study, the consistently high levels of learning happiness across semesters are broadly consistent with the educational values embodied in the Balinese philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. The relatively stable pattern of students' learning happiness throughout different stages of university study suggests that positive learning experiences are sustained by harmonious relationships within the academic community, meaningful engagement in the learning process, and the cultivation of constructive thoughts and behaviours. These descriptive patterns provide an empirical context for understanding how culturally grounded educational values may contribute to fostering students' well-being and positive learning experiences throughout their academic journey.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of Students' Learning Happiness by Gender

Gender	n	Mean	SD	Category
Male	23	84.14	12.73	High
Female	127	82.92	7.42	High

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4 indicate that both male and female students reported high levels of learning happiness. Of the participants included in the analysis, 23 were male and 127 were female. Male students recorded a slightly higher mean score ($M = 84.14$, $SD = 12.73$) than female students ($M = 82.92$, $SD = 7.42$). However, the difference in mean scores was relatively small, indicating that students of both genders experienced similarly high levels of learning happiness.

The larger standard deviation among male students indicates greater variability in their responses, whereas the smaller standard deviation among female students suggests a more consistent pattern of perceived learning happiness. Overall, the findings demonstrate that learning happiness remained high across both gender groups. Viewed through the conceptual lens of this study, these descriptive patterns are broadly consistent with the educational values embodied in the Balinese philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. The consistently high levels of learning happiness observed among both male and female students suggest that positive learning experiences, supportive interpersonal relationships, and meaningful engagement in academic life are shared across genders within the university environment. Although descriptive in nature, these findings provide an empirical context for understanding how culturally grounded educational values may foster students' learning happiness irrespective of gender.

Discussion

Student happiness has long been recognised as an important indicator of educational success because it is closely associated with students' psychological well-being, academic engagement, and learning outcomes (Astin, 1993; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Ochoa et al., 2023; Rastelli et al., 2021; Seligman et al., 2009; Werang et al., 2023b). Within this broader perspective, the present study explored the level of learning happiness among students at the Ganesha University of Education, a university whose educational environment is shaped by the cultural philosophies of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. Overall, the findings indicate that students experienced high levels of learning happiness across all indicators, semesters, and gender groups. Among the five dimensions examined, social relationships within the learning environment emerged as the strongest contributor to students' happiness, whereas academic workload was perceived as the most challenging aspect of university life. Taken together, these findings suggest that although university students inevitably encounter academic pressures, they generally experience their learning environment in positive ways. They also provide a useful basis for considering how supportive learning relationships, together with the cultural context in which the university operates, may contribute to students' learning happiness.

The findings of this study suggest that social relationships play a particularly important role in shaping students' learning happiness. Among the five dimensions examined, relationships with peers and lecturers received the highest ratings, indicating that students value a learning environment characterised by mutual support, trust, and a sense of belonging. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that positive relationships within the university environment contribute not only to students' psychological well-being but also to their academic engagement and overall satisfaction with university life (Huebner et al., 2006; Seligman et al., 2009). In contrast, academic workload emerged as the most challenging dimension of learning happiness. This finding is understandable because university students are expected to manage multiple academic and non-academic responsibilities simultaneously. Nevertheless, students continued to report a high level of learning happiness overall, suggesting that academic demands do not necessarily reduce students' well-being when they are accompanied by supportive relationships and a positive learning environment.

Although the findings suggest that students experienced a high level of learning happiness, they should be interpreted with some caution. The data were obtained through self-report questionnaires, and responses may have been influenced by the way students perceived and reported their own experiences. This is particularly important in collectivist cultural contexts, where maintaining harmonious relationships, showing respect for others, and avoiding open expressions of dissatisfaction are often regarded as important social values (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). As a result, some students may have been more comfortable expressing positive experiences than openly reporting negative ones. This does not diminish the value of the findings, but it suggests that the reported levels of learning happiness should be understood within their cultural context. Future research could enrich these findings by combining survey data with qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to gain a deeper understanding of how students experience and express learning happiness.

The findings of this study can also be interpreted within the cultural context in which the university operates. Ganesha University of Education is located in Bali, where *Tri Hita Karana* has long influenced community life as well as many educational and social practices (Andayani et al., 2017; Lodra, 2020; Syahriyah & Zahid, 2022). Rather than suggesting that

all students personally embrace these philosophical values, the findings may be viewed through *Tri Hita Karana* as a contextual framework for understanding why supportive relationships appear to play such an important role in students' learning happiness. The philosophy emphasises harmony in the relationships between humans and God (*parhyangan*), among people (*pawongan*), and between humans and the natural environment (*palemahan*). Within the university setting, these principles provide a useful perspective for understanding how a learning environment that values connectedness, mutual respect, and social support may contribute to students' positive learning experiences. Viewed in this way, *Tri Hita Karana* helps foster a strong sense of community and supports a peaceful and harmonious learning environment, conditions that may help explain why social relationships emerged as the strongest contributor to students' learning happiness in the present study (Suterji et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2023).

A similar interpretation can be drawn from the perspective of *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, which emphasises the importance of positive thinking (*manacika*), positive speech (*wacika*), and positive actions (*kayika*) as guiding principles for harmonious living. The practical relevance of these principles has also been demonstrated in organizational settings, where *Tri Kaya Parisudha* has been applied as an ethical framework for promoting responsible practices and preventing fraud in procurement processes (Priadiarta et al., 2025). In the context of this study, the philosophy is not presented as evidence that all students consciously practise these values. Rather, it provides a useful lens through which the findings may be understood within the broader cultural environment of the university. The high ratings for social relationships are consistent with the view that respectful communication, mutual care, and responsible behaviour help create a learning environment in which students feel accepted, supported, and connected (Noddings, 2004; Seligman et al., 2009). At the same time, these values may help explain why students continued to report high levels of learning happiness despite recognising academic workload as one of the more challenging aspects of university life. This is particularly relevant because contemporary learning activities may place substantial cognitive demands on students, requiring them to engage in higher-order processes such as critical and creative thinking. These demands may shape how students experience learning, particularly when academic tasks require sustained cognitive engagement and active participation. Previous research has also shown that innovative instructional approaches, such as interactive learning videos based on problem-based learning, can enhance students' motivation in science learning (Wibawa et al., 2024).

Although the findings are rooted in the cultural context of Bali, they also invite reflection on how learning happiness may be understood in other educational settings. Previous studies have shown that the factors associated with students' well-being are influenced by cultural values and social expectations. In more individualistic societies, learning happiness is often associated with personal autonomy, individual achievement, and self-expression. In contrast, students in collectivist cultures tend to place greater value on supportive relationships, social connectedness, and a sense of belonging (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suh & Koo, 2008; Triandis, 1995). From this perspective, the prominent role of social relationships found in the present study may reflect not only the quality of the university learning environment but also the broader cultural values within which students live and study. Rather than suggesting that one cultural perspective is more beneficial than another, these findings highlight that learning happiness is shaped by the interaction between educational experiences and the cultural contexts in which those experiences occur. This cross-cultural perspective does not weaken the findings; rather, it helps explain why learning happiness may be expressed differently across educational settings. It also suggests that student happiness is not a single universal experience but is shaped by cultural expectations surrounding emotions, relationships, and what it means to live well (Diener et al., 2003). At the same time, subjective happiness may also be influenced by individual psychological factors, including how students respond to anxiety and whether they possess psychological resources that help them maintain positive well-being (Kaya et al., 2022).

In an increasingly interconnected higher education landscape, the implications of this study extend beyond the Balinese context. Rather than suggesting that *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* should be adopted in their original cultural or religious forms, the findings point to the broader principles that underpin these philosophies. Universities in other cultural settings may likewise enhance students' learning happiness by fostering supportive relationships, encouraging respectful communication, promoting responsible behaviour, and creating opportunities for students to develop a sense of meaning and belonging within their learning communities. How these principles are expressed, however, will naturally vary according to each institution's cultural traditions, educational philosophy, and the diverse beliefs and values of its students. Viewed in this way, the contribution of the present study lies not in proposing a universal model for higher education but in illustrating how culturally grounded philosophies can enrich broader discussions of learning happiness while remaining respectful of local cultures and individual differences.

Although the broader principles discussed in this study may offer useful perspectives for higher education institutions beyond Bali, their application should not be understood as the transfer of a particular cultural or religious tradition. Rather, any adaptation should be guided by the cultural, institutional, and social contexts in which students learn. What contributes to learning happiness in one setting may take different forms in another, depending on local educational values; institutional priorities; and the diversity of students' backgrounds, beliefs, and lived experiences. For this reason, the value of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* lies less in providing a universal model than in offering culturally grounded perspectives that can inspire contextually appropriate approaches to supporting student well-being.

These broader considerations also highlight several limitations of the present study. The research was conducted in a single university using a descriptive survey design, and the findings should therefore be interpreted within this context. In addition, although the findings were discussed through the perspectives of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*, this study did not examine students' personal beliefs, ethical commitments, or the extent to which they identified with these philosophical values. Consequently, the discussion should be understood as an interpretation of the findings within the university's cultural environment rather than as evidence that all students shared or internalised these perspectives. Future research would benefit from longitudinal and qualitative approaches that explore how students from different cultural, religious, and personal backgrounds experience learning happiness and how their own values interact with the educational philosophies of the institutions in which they study. Such research would provide a richer understanding of learning happiness across diverse higher education contexts while offering a stronger basis for considering how culturally grounded philosophical frameworks may be thoughtfully adapted to different educational settings.

Conclusion

This study explored learning happiness among students at the Ganesha University of Education within the cultural context of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha*. Overall, the findings indicate that students reported high levels of learning happiness across all measured indicators, semesters, and gender groups. Among the five dimensions examined, social relationships within the learning environment emerged as the strongest contributor to students' happiness, highlighting the importance of supportive interactions with peers and lecturers. In contrast, academic workload represented the most challenging aspect of students' learning experiences. Nevertheless, students continued to report high levels of happiness, suggesting that positive learning relationships and personal resources may help students maintain well-being despite academic demands.

The findings can be further understood through the perspectives of *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* as contextual frameworks for interpreting learning happiness within the university setting. *Tri Hita Karana* highlights the importance of harmonious relationships among individuals, the community, and the wider environment, while *Tri Kaya Parisudha* emphasises the role of positive thoughts, respectful communication, and responsible actions in supporting students' well-being. Rather than suggesting that these philosophies directly determine students' happiness or are equally embraced by all students, this study views them as cultural perspectives that help explain how values of harmony, mutual respect, and personal responsibility may contribute to a supportive learning environment.

Beyond describing students' levels of learning happiness, this study contributes theoretically by suggesting that learning happiness should be understood not only as an individual psychological outcome. It should also be conceptualised as an educational experience shaped by the interaction between students, their learning relationships, and the broader cultural context in which learning takes place. From this perspective, culturally grounded philosophies such as *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* enrich existing understandings of learning happiness by illustrating how educational values and institutional culture may influence students' experiences in higher education. From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of creating learning environments that support both students' academic development and their well-being. Universities should therefore seek to balance academic demands with appropriate institutional support while fostering learning environments characterised by supportive relationships, mutual respect, and meaningful engagement between students and lecturers. Such efforts may contribute to sustaining students' well-being even in academically demanding contexts.

Although *Tri Hita Karana* and *Tri Kaya Parisudha* are deeply rooted in Balinese culture, the findings of this study may also offer broader insights for higher education institutions in other cultural contexts. Rather than transferring these philosophies in their cultural or religious forms, universities may draw on their underlying educational principles—such as relational harmony, mutual respect, and personal responsibility—to strengthen students' learning experiences in ways that are

meaningful within their own institutional and cultural environments. In doing so, institutions should remain sensitive to the diversity of students' beliefs, values, and cultural backgrounds, recognising that learning happiness is shaped through the interaction between educational experiences and the contexts in which students learn.

The conclusions of this study should be interpreted within the context of the study design and setting. Future research would benefit from longitudinal and qualitative approaches that examine how students' personal values, cultural backgrounds, and institutional contexts interact in shaping learning happiness across diverse higher education settings. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of viewing learning happiness not only as an educational outcome but also as a culturally and socially situated experience that should be recognised as an integral component of student well-being in higher education.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available as they are owned by the authors but are available from the corresponding author, Ni Luh Gede Erni Sulindawati (Ganesha University of Education), on reasonable request.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in strict accordance with the Helsinki Ethical Principles and International Conference of Harmonisation – Good Clinical Practice (ICHGCP) and was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Ganesha (Approval Number 216/UN.48.16.04/PT/2025).

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before beginning the survey to ensure they were willing to participate. All participants were provided with clear information about the purpose, procedures, and benefits of the research. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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