

Subjective Well-Being of Buddhist Monks and Nuns at The Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang City

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ABSTRACT

Subjective well-being refers to individuals' subjective perceptions and evaluations of their level of peace, life satisfaction, and perceived meaning in their own lives. Researching the current state of subjective well-being among 94 Buddhist monk and nun students at the Intermediate Buddhist School of Da Nang City using the PERMA-Profiler scale, in-depth interviews, and mathematical statistics with SPSS 26.0, the survey results show that (1) 1.1% of the monk and nun students perceive themselves as very happy; 13.8% perceive themselves as happy; 64.9% have an average level of subjective well-being; 17.0% perceive themselves as unhappy, and 3.2% perceive themselves as very unhappy; (2) Among the 5 components, the monk and nun students achieve the highest score in the meaning component; (3) There are no statistically significant differences in well-being based on gender, age, education level, and number of years since ordination.

Keywords: Subjective well-being; PERMA model; Monk and nun students; Positive psychology.

INTRODUCTION

Buddhist education plays an important role in nurturing the generation to inherit the Dharma and serve society. In the Central region, the Intermediate Buddhist School of Da Nang City, with the motto "Taking wisdom as the supreme goal", has affirmed its mission of Wisdom is the ultimate career. Despite the growing interest in subjective well-being, little empirical evidence is available regarding Buddhist monastic students in Vietnam.

In the system of positive psychology, subjective well-being is established as a multidimensional construct, reflecting the optimization of intrinsic potentials rather than merely temporary emotional satisfaction. According to Seligman, happiness is not a single state but the aggregate result of five independent components in the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). In Vietnam, empirical research by Phan Thi Mai Huong also confirms that subjective well-being is a process of positive psychological experience, formed from the interaction between individual intrinsic strength and living environmental conditions (Phan, 2022).

Subjective well-being becomes even more important for religious practitioners. Several studies by Diener and Tiliouine indicate that religious belief can help the happiness index be 15% to 25% higher compared to the non-religious group, but this figure varies strongly depending on the living environment (Diener, 2000) (Tiliouine, 2011). In Vietnam, monk and nun students are a unique subject group of Buddhism, living in a disciplined practice and study environment, yet they have not received much attention from the academic community. Nguyen Huu Thu, in his research, indicated that without a solid psychological foundation, monastics easily encounter "inner voids" during the process of harmonizing their monastic ideals with the realities of modern life (Nguyen, 2013). Therefore, this study examines the subjective well-being of Buddhist monastic students in Da Nang using the PERMA framework. Compared with studies conducted in secular educational settings, research involving Buddhist monastic students remains limited.

This article focuses on analyzing the survey results regarding the current state of subjective well-being among monk and nun students at the Intermediate Buddhist School of Da Nang City. These results are synthesized from

data in which the monk and nun students self-assessed their own subjective well-being based on the PERMA scale.

Theoretical framework of research on happiness

Modern psychology conceptualizes well-being through two complementary perspectives: hedonic well-being, which emphasizes positive emotions and life satisfaction, and eudaimonic well-being, which focuses on meaning, personal growth, and self-realization (Diener, 1984; Waterman, 1993). Previous studies consistently suggest that mindfulness, compassion, and meaning in life are positively associated with subjective well-being among Buddhist monastics. Compassion and mindfulness have been linked to greater psychological resilience, reduced loneliness, and stronger social connectedness, whereas meaning in life consistently emerges as an important contributor to flourishing (Thomas, 2016; Garland et al., 2015; Sharma, 2018). Neuropsychological evidence further indicates that sustained meditation and compassion practice may enhance brain regions associated with positive emotions, supporting the view that happiness can be cultivated through systematic spiritual practice (Ricard, 2011). In addition, experienced monastics tend to demonstrate higher autonomy, stronger purpose in life, and greater resilience to adversity than newly ordained practitioners, suggesting that long-term Buddhist practice may facilitate both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being (Sharma, 2018; Garland et al., 2015).

The PERMA model has been increasingly applied to understanding subjective well-being among Buddhist monastic populations. Previous studies consistently indicate that meaning, engagement, and positive relationships are the strongest contributors to flourishing among monks and nuns. Meaning in life has repeatedly been identified as the highest-scoring PERMA dimension, while engagement in meditation and religious practice is associated with greater autonomy, resilience, and psychological well-being (Jose, 2017; Kwee, 2012; Vichitvejpaisan, 2022). In addition, mindfulness and compassion have been shown to reduce negative emotions, strengthen social connectedness, and promote psychological resilience, suggesting that long-term Buddhist practice supports both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Goleman, 2017; Lama, 2023).

From a cultural perspective, evidence suggests that intrinsic religious orientation is positively associated with higher levels of subjective well-being, whereas externally motivated religious practice is less beneficial (Tiliouine, 2011). Similarly, Buddhist communities in Bhutan have reported high levels of psychological well-being, community vitality, and meaningful time use, indicating that spiritual practice contributes to a holistic form of happiness extending beyond material conditions (Christopher, 2010; Tshering, 2024). However, studies conducted in Thailand also reveal that young monastics continue to face challenges related to academic demands, social expectations, and adaptation to modernization, all of which may influence their well-being (Punnapotirat, 2019).

In Vietnam, empirical evidence remains limited but generally supports these international findings. Mindfulness has been found to be positively associated with happiness and life satisfaction among Buddhist monastic students, primarily through reducing negative emotions and enhancing present-moment awareness (Phan, 2022). Likewise, an intervention study by the Institute of Psychology (2021) demonstrated that meditation practice significantly improved positive emotions and life satisfaction, providing further evidence that mindfulness-based practice may promote subjective well-being in the Vietnamese context (Institute of Psychology, 2021).

Previous studies in Vietnam consistently suggest that relationships, meaning in life, and religious commitment are the key determinants of subjective well-being among Buddhist monastics. Supportive relationships with teachers and fellow monastics have been identified as the strongest contributors to happiness, highlighting the importance of the monastic learning environment in promoting social connectedness and psychological well-being (Thich, 2019). Likewise, Buddhist moral values, particularly loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, have been found to strengthen purpose in life and foster sustainable inner peace, corresponding to the Meaning dimension of the PERMA model (Le, 2020). Research in the psychology of religion further indicates that strong religious commitment is associated with greater psychological resilience and lower levels of anxiety and depression (Nguyen, 2013; Tran, 2018). Moreover, the PERMA-Profiler has been validated among Vietnamese students, with Meaning and Relationships emerging as the strongest

predictors of happiness, providing empirical support for its application to Buddhist monastic students (Đinh, 2021).

Although subjective well-being has been widely studied, empirical evidence on Vietnamese Buddhist monastic students remains scarce. To address this limitation, this study utilizes Martin Seligman's PERMA model to empirically measure and analyze the component indices that constitute the perception of happiness among student monks and nuns in Da Nang. The findings provide additional evidence regarding subjective well-being among Buddhist monastic students and may inform educational practice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Psychometric Method

To implement this research project, we primarily employ the psychometric method. The study utilizes Seligman's PERMA model to assess happiness, as developed into a scale by Butler and Kern (Butler, 2016). The perception of happiness is measured across 5 main dimensions: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning in life, and accomplishment. In addition, there are supplementary components including negative emotions, health, loneliness, and overall well-being. The scale consists of 23 items, with 3 questions dedicated to each specific domain. It features 11 response options: 0=Never; 1=Very rarely; 2=Rarely; 3=Occasionally; 4=Sometimes; 5=Fairly often; 6=Often; 7=Very often; 8=Almost always; 9=Nearly always; 10=Always. The specialized technical terms within the PERMA scale have been translated and adapted to ensure cultural and linguistic equivalence within the monastic environment in Vietnam.

Content and construct validity were established through expert review by senior Buddhist scholars and psychologists to ensure cultural and linguistic equivalence within the Vietnamese monastic context. The overall PERMA-Profiler scale demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.905$), with subscale coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.88, confirming solid psychometric properties for this monastic sample.

Statistical method

This study utilized SPSS 26.0 to process data using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and parametric inferential testing. Prior to performing difference testing (Independent Samples T-test and One-way ANOVA), statistical assumptions were verified.

Normality of data distribution across demographic subgroups was assessed via Shapiro-Wilk testing alongside evaluation of skewness and kurtosis values, all falling within the acceptable range of $[-1.5, +1.5]$. Homogeneity of variances was confirmed using Levene's test ($p > .05$). The primary statistical procedures included:

- Descriptive statistics: Used to calculate indicators such as Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), frequency, and percentage (%) to describe well-being perception and demographic profiles.
- Cronbach's Alpha reliability test: Used to assess the reliability and internal consistency of the PERMA-Profiler scale along with its subscales.
- Inferential parametric tests (Independent Samples T-test and One-way ANOVA): Used to compare and determine whether there are statistically significant differences in happiness perception based on gender, age, education level, and ordination duration.

In-depth interview method

The study utilizes the in-depth interview method to explore the practical experiences regarding the happiness perception of student monks and nuns.

Research results

Research sample description

The study was conducted on a sample of 94 student monks and nuns currently studying at the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang City. The convenience sampling method was applied.

- Sample characteristics: The target group includes both monks and nuns, whose ages are in the adulthood stage, representing the successive generation of monastics who are receiving Buddhist education at the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies and Elementary School of Buddhist Studies levels.
- Research ethics: All participating subjects were informed about the purpose of the study and guaranteed personal information confidentiality. Participation was entirely voluntary.

Table 1. Research sample description

Criteria	Classification	Quantity	Percentage %
Gender	Monk	57	60.6 %
	Nun	37	39.4 %
Age	<25 years old	24	25.5 %
	25 - 35 years old	47	50.0 %
	>35 years old	23	24.5 %
Education level	Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies	75	79.8 %
	Elementary School of Buddhist Studies	19	20.2 %
Ordination duration	<5 years	47	50.0 %
	5 - 10 years	37	39.4 %
	>10 years	10	10.6 %

(Source: Author's data processing results)

Based on Table 1, the research sample includes 94 student monks and nuns currently studying at intermediate schools of Buddhist studies in Da Nang City, with the following demographic characteristics:

In terms of gender, the number of monks is predominant with 57 individuals, corresponding to 60.6%, while nuns account for 37 individuals, corresponding to 39.4%.

In terms of age, the research sample shows a clear trend of rejuvenation, with up to 50.0% of student monks and nuns falling into the 25 to 35 age group; the under 25 age group accounts for 25.5%, and the over 35 age group accounts for the lowest percentage at 24.5%.

In terms of education level, the vast majority of student monks and nuns are at the Intermediate level with 75 individuals, accounting for an overwhelming 79.8%, while the Elementary level only accounts for 20.2%. These results indicate that most participants shared similar educational backgrounds.

Finally, regarding the number of years since ordination, there is a notable differentiation: half of the survey participants (50.0%) have a cultivation seniority of under 5 years; the 5–10 years group accounts for 39.4%, and only 10.6% have been ordained for over 10 years.

In general, the research subjects are primarily young monks and nuns who are in the early stages of their monastic and academic journeys, with the majority pursuing intermediate Buddhist education programs. The sample primarily consisted of young monastic students receiving formal Buddhist education; therefore, these characteristics should be considered when interpreting the findings. This also establishes a reliable foundation for the author to conduct deeper analyses of psychological indicators in the subsequent sections.

RESEARCH RESULTS

General Evaluation of the Survey Results on the Happiness Perception of Student Monks and Nuns

The distribution of perception levels across different psychological aspects is illustrated in detail in the table below:

Table 2. Percentage of Happiness Perception Levels Among Student Monks and Nuns at the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang City According to the PERMA Scale

Level	Percentage	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very unhappy	3	3.2	3.2	3.2
Unhappy	16	17.0	17.0	20.2
Neutral	61	64.9	64.9	85.1
Happy	13	13.8	13.8	98.9
Very happy	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	94	100.0	100.0	

(Source: Author's data processing results)

Table 2 shows that the level of happiness perception of student monks and nuns is mainly concentrated at the normal level, accounting for the highest percentage with 64.9%. The percentage of student monks and nuns perceiving happiness accounts for 13.8%, while unhappy accounts for 17.0%. The remaining two levels have lower percentages, in which very unhappy accounts for 3.2% and very happy accounts for 1.1%.

This result shows that most student monks and nuns evaluate their own happiness state at an average level. Evidence for this, student monk N.A. (22 years old) shared in the in-depth interview: “To me, happiness is not something too explosive but is a steady peace every day. Complying with the cultivation schedule helps my mind be stable, not too happy and not too sad, that is the most natural state of happiness.”

Besides, the percentage of perceiving high or very high happiness is still relatively low. At the same time, there still exists a small group of student monks and nuns who have a low level of happiness. These findings suggest that interventions aimed at promoting well-being may benefit a subgroup of students.

Evaluation of the Reality of Manifestations of Happiness Perception Among Student Monks and Nuns

Based on positive psychology, subjective well-being is a multidimensional construct comprising Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) (Butler, 2016; Seligman, 2011). Positive emotion refers to frequent positive affect and reduced negative emotions, while engagement reflects complete absorption in meaningful activities or the “flow” state (Diener, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Previous studies have shown that mindfulness practice enhances emotional stability and overall well-being among Buddhist monastics (Phan, 2022). Within Buddhist education, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment are fostered through compassion, spiritual practice, self-discipline, and continuous learning, strengthening resilience and intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seligman, 2011). Accordingly, the PERMA framework provides an appropriate theoretical lens for understanding the happiness of student monks and nuns at the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang, where well-being is cultivated through inner peace, communal support, commitment to Buddhist ideals, and progress in study and practice.

In addition, the PERMA model according to the perspective of (Butler, 2016) is also supplemented with 4 auxiliary components to ensure comprehensiveness and enhance accuracy in evaluating the level of comprehensive well-being.

Table 3. The Reality of Manifestations of Happiness Perception Among Student Monks and Nuns

The components	Code	Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranking
Positive Emotions (P)	1. Student monks and nuns frequently feel joyful	7.00	1.81	14
	2. Student monks and nuns frequently feel positive	7.10	1.67	13
	3. Student monks and nuns frequently feel satisfied with their current studies and practice	7.09	1.53	12
Engagement (E)	4. Student monks and nuns frequently focus on the work they are doing	6.68	1.52	16
	5. To what extent do student monks and nuns feel excited and interested in everything?	6.74	1.71	15
	6. Student monks and nuns are frequently absorbed in studying to the point of losing track of time	5.81	1.82	23
Positive Relationships(R)	7. When needed, student monks and nuns receive help and support from others	6.45	1.51	21
	8. Student monks and nuns feel loved and cared for	7.18	1.62	10
	9. Student monks and nuns are satisfied with the harmony in their personal relationships at school	7.11	1.52	11

Meaning (M)	10. Student monks and nuns feel they are leading a purposeful and meaningful life	7.31	1.78	8
	11. To what extent does studying and practicing help student monks and nuns create value for life?	6.62	1.64	20
	12. Student monks and nuns think that they have developed in accordance with the set goals	6.65	1.60	17
Accomplishment (A)	13. Student monks and nuns feel they frequently make progress in their studies and practice	6.65	1.86	18
	14. Student monks and nuns achieve the learning and practicing goals they have set	6.65	1.67	19
	15. Student monks and nuns complete their learning responsibilities	6.44	1.61	22
Negative Emotions (N)	16. Student monks and nuns frequently feel anxious	7.38	1.57	6
	17. Student monks and nuns frequently feel angry	8.24	1.39	1
	18. Student monks and nuns frequently feel sad	8.02	1.14	2
Health (H)	19. How do student monks and nuns assess their own health status?	7.96	2.21	3
	20. Student monks and nuns are satisfied with their current physical health	7.56	1.63	5
	21. Compared to people of the same age and gender, how is the health of student monks and nuns?	7.31	1.60	9
Other indicators	22. To what extent do student monks and nuns frequently feel lonely in their daily lives?	7.34	1.74	7
	23. Generally, student monks and nuns perceive their current learning and practicing life to be happy	7.56	1.78	4

(Source: Author's data processing results)

Note: Items 16, 17, and 18 are reverse-coded; higher scores indicate lower frequency of negative emotions.

The descriptive analysis results show that the happiness perception of student monks and nuns is generally at a relatively positive level. The mean scores of the observed variables fluctuate from $M = 5.81$ to $M = 8.24$, reflecting a tendency to experience positive psychological states in their learning and practicing life.

Among the components of the PERMA model, positive emotions show a relatively high score of $M = 7.00$ – 7.10 , indicating that student monks and nuns frequently experience positive emotional states during their studies and practice. Engagement has a lower mean score compared to other components, at $M = 5.81$ – 6.74 , suggesting that the level of deep focus on learning and practicing activities varies to a certain extent among individuals.

Regarding positive relationships and meaning in life, the mean values fluctuate within the ranges of $M = 6.45$ – 7.18 and $M = 6.62$ – 7.31 , respectively, reflecting a relatively high level of satisfaction with social relationships as well as a clear perception of the purpose and meaning of their learning and practicing life. The accomplishment component also records a fairly stable score ($M = 6.44$ – 6.65), indicating that student monks and nuns generally have positive perceptions of achieving their learning and practicing goals.

Notably, after being reverse-scored according to the PERMA-Profilers scale standards, the variables belonging to the Negative Emotions (N) construct—including anxiety, anger, and sadness—all achieved very high mean scores ($M = 7.38$ - 8.24). This means that, in reality, the raw scores for the frequency of occurrence of these negative emotions among student monks and nuns are very low (ranging only from 1.76 to 2.62 on a 10-point scale). This result indicates that the frequency of experiencing negative emotions among the surveyed subject group is at a low level. These findings may suggest that a disciplined learning and practicing environment, along with mind-training methods, may be associated with lower levels of negative emotions in controlling negative psychological states.

Additionally, the health indicators fluctuate from $M = 7.31$ to $M = 7.96$, and the overall happiness perception reaches $M = 7.56$, showing that participants evaluate their health status as well as their overall level of happiness quite positively.

Overall, the research results show that the components constituting the happiness perception of student monks and nuns all reach a relatively positive level, indicating a co-occurrence between a structured monastic learning environment and positive subjective well-being, though causal inferences cannot be drawn given the cross-sectional nature of the data.

Comparison of differences in the level of happiness perception among student monks and nuns based on demographic characteristics

The differences in the level of happiness perception among student monks and nuns based on age, gender, education level, and ordination duration are shown in the chart below:

Table 4. Comparison of differences in the level of happiness perception among student monks and nuns based on demographic characteristics

Group	Very unhappy	Unhappy	Neutral	Happy	Very happy
Under 25 years old	4.20%	12.50%	70.80%	12.50%	0.00%
25–35 years old	0.00%	14.90%	72.30%	10.60%	2.10%
Over 35 years old	8.70%	26.10%	43.50%	21.70%	0.00%
Monk	1.80%	15.80%	68.40%	14.00%	0.00%
Nun	5.40%	18.90%	59.50%	13.50%	2.70%
Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies	1.30%	20.00%	65.30%	12.00%	1.30%

Elementary School of Buddhist Studies	10.50%	5.30%	63.20%	21.10%	0.00%
Under 5 years	6.40%	19.10%	57.40%	17.00%	0.00%
5–10 years	0.00%	16.20%	73.00%	8.10%	2.70%
Over 10 years	0.00%	10.00%	70.00%	20.00%	0.00%

(Source: Author's data processing results)

The results in Table 4 show that the level of happiness perception among student monks and nuns has certain differences based on demographic characteristics.

In terms of age groups, the 25–35 age group has the highest neutral evaluation rate, accounting for 72.3%, followed by the under 25 age group with 70.8%. Meanwhile, the over 35 age group records a higher happiness rate of 21.7% compared to the remaining groups, but at the same time, also has a relatively large unhappiness rate of 26.1%.

In terms of gender, the difference between student monks and student nuns is insignificant. However, student nuns have a higher very happy rate of 2.7% compared to student monks. In terms of education level, the elementary level group has a higher happiness rate of 21.1% compared to the intermediate level group with 12.0%, while the intermediate level group records a higher unhappiness rate. In terms of ordination duration, the group with 5–10 years of ordination has the highest neutral evaluation rate at 73.0%, while the group with over 10 years has a higher happiness rate of 20.0%.

The results of the Independent Samples T-test and One-way ANOVA indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of happiness perception based on gender, age, education level, and ordination duration ($p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that subjective well-being did not differ significantly across demographic groups.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the Overall Level of Happiness Perception and Index Differentiation

Most student monks and nuns rated their happiness as **neutral** (64.9%), whereas only 14.9% reported being happy or very happy. Although this proportion is lower than that reported in studies of religious populations (Diener, 2000; Tiliouine, 2011), qualitative findings suggest that this “neutral” state reflects the Buddhist concepts of *Mudita* and *Upekkha*, emphasizing inner peace and emotional balance rather than intense positive emotions (Kwee, 2012). Furthermore, after reverse scoring, the PERMA-Profilier showed very low levels of negative emotions, indicating strong emotional stability. This finding is consistent with evidence that mindfulness and meditation reduce anxiety and enhance emotional regulation by promoting decentering and psychological resilience (Garland, 2015; Ricard, 2011; Goleman, 2017; Phan, 2022; Institute of Psychology, 2021).

Differentiation Among the Constituent Components of Happiness According to the PERMA Model

Among the five PERMA dimensions, Meaning recorded the highest score, indicating that a clear sense of purpose is central to the well-being of Buddhist monastic students. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that commitment to Buddhist ideals, compassion, and spiritual practice provides a stable source of life meaning and psychological flourishing (Jose, 2017; Le, 2020). In contrast, Engagement received the lowest score, suggesting that student monks and nuns may experience difficulty achieving sustained “flow” in academic learning. A possible explanation is the need to balance formal education with meditation, monastic discipline, and daily communal responsibilities, which has also been reported in studies of Buddhist education in Thailand (Punnapotirat, 2019; Vichitvejpaisan, 2022). Meanwhile, Positive Relationships remained relatively

high, highlighting the importance of teacher–student relationships and Dharma brotherhood in providing emotional support and fostering a sense of belonging within the monastic community (Thich, 2019).

Furthermore, no statistically significant differences in subjective well-being were found across gender, age, educational level, or years of ordination. This finding suggests that the shared values, disciplined lifestyle, and communal learning environment of Buddhist education may contribute to relatively homogeneous levels of well-being among student monks and nuns, regardless of demographic characteristics. Such findings are consistent with the collectivist and egalitarian nature of monastic life, where common spiritual goals may outweigh individual differences.

Homogeneity in Happiness Perception Based on Demographic Variables

No statistically significant differences in subjective well-being were found across gender, age, educational level, or years of ordination ($p > .05$). This finding suggests that the shared values, disciplined lifestyle, and communal learning environment of the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang may contribute to relatively homogeneous levels of happiness among student monks and nuns. Although descriptive statistics showed slightly higher happiness scores among elementary-level students and those with longer ordination experience, these differences were not statistically significant, indicating that demographic characteristics may play a less important role than the shared monastic environment.

Practical Implications and Limitations of the Study

The findings suggest several practical implications for Buddhist education. First, schools should continue strengthening Meaning and Positive Relationships by fostering supportive teacher–student and peer relationships while reinforcing Buddhist values and service ideals. Second, improving Engagement through more interactive and practice-oriented teaching may enhance learning motivation. Third, although demographic differences were not statistically significant, older student monks and nuns may benefit from targeted psychological support during adaptation to monastic life.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the reliance on a non-probability convenience sample ($N = 94$) from a single institute in Da Nang City introduces potential sampling bias and limits the external validity of the findings to broader monastic populations across Vietnam. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes any causal inferences regarding the impact of monastic education on well-being. Third, self-report measures may be susceptible to social desirability bias, particularly within a religious setting where spiritual ideals are emphasized.

Future studies should utilize larger, stratified random samples across multiple Buddhist academies nationally. Incorporating longitudinal research designs would help track changes in well-being over time during monastic formation. Furthermore, combining quantitative measures with mixed-methods approaches and qualitative interviews would provide deeper contextual insights into the lived psychological experiences of monastics.

CONCLUSION

The empirical study on the happiness perception of student monks and nuns at the Intermediate School of Buddhist Studies in Da Nang City based on the PERMA model shows that the majority of participants have a stable level of happiness. This state may reflect the characteristics of Buddhist practice and monastic life, where happiness is defined by inner peace and the capacity for self-regulation, effectively managing negative emotions through a disciplined monastic life. Among the constituent components, a firm cultivation ideal oriented toward a high purpose in life, alongside the emotional support from the teacher-student relationship and Dharma brotherhood/sisterhood in the spirit of the “Six Harmonies”, appear to be important contributors to subjective well-being among monastic students. Conversely, engagement in formal or academic learning remains limited due to the dual pressure of balancing a highly academic internal curriculum with a strict cultivation schedule at their root temples. No statistically significant differences were found across demographic groups.

From these research findings, the school needs to implement solutions to innovate teaching methods and reduce purely academic overloads in order to enhance learning motivation. Concurrently, emphasis should be placed on timely psychological counseling mechanisms for specific groups, such as late-ordained individuals, aiming to comprehensively improve spiritual well-being for successive generations of the Dharma lineage.

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