

The Happiness of the Traditional Boti People on Timor Island

Kamilaus Konstane Oki¹, Emanuel Be²

^{1,2} Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Timor, Indonesia

Correspondence: okitance@gmail.com

Article history: received October 03, 2023; revised November 26, 2023; accepted November 28, 2023

This article is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)



ABSTRACT

The Boti tribe is an inland tribe on the Indonesian island of Timor. Socio-economic and cultural life is very unique from other tribes in the world. Traditional lifestyle by relying on nature and surroundings as a source of life. Relations and interactions with outside influences are also unique because they strictly protect themselves by avoiding advances in science, technology and factory production. The Boti tribal community believes that the entry of external influences in the form of providing health facilities, modern communication facilities, government assistance, manufactured products, national religion, science and technology and other forms of external influence are threats to the sustainability of traditions and culture. Subjectively, the Boti people are very happy with the socio-economic conditions of life as measured by the dimensions of feeling, the dimensions of satisfaction and the dimensions of the meaning of life. Happy in carrying out all activities. Forms of social violations in people's lives and other violations that have a legal impact are not found in interactions and are unlawful. If there are violations and repetitions, they will be evacuated from the Boti tribe as a severe punishment.

Keywords: Happy Index, Boti Tribe

INTRODUCTION

The Happiness Index is one of the indicators used to measure people's welfare based on their level of happiness. The happiness index is intended to measure the level of acceptance of the basic dimensions of society. The level of community life includes the dimensions of personal and social satisfaction (satisfaction), the dimensions of feeling (affection) and the dimensions of the meaning of life (eudaimonia). Angela (2017), the happiness index is subjective looking at people's perceptions of what they feel in living their daily lives.

The Happiness Index is one of the indicators used to measure people's welfare based on their level of happiness. Happiness Index Happiness gives rise to pleasant feelings indicated by enjoyment, satisfaction, comfort, joy or positive emotions, life becomes good and prosperous. This means that happiness creates a sense of well-being. Thus, welfare describes the condition of material sufficiency (welfare or well-being), subjective well-being or happiness. The Boti tribe is one of the unique traditional tribes located on the Indonesian island of Timor. Unique because all life behaviors are based on the actions of the local wisdom of the community related to the socio-economic life, culture, and local religion and avoid government interference and technological developments.

The Boti Tribe community consciously distances themselves from the development of science and technology which is believed to be a medium to destroy the local cultural order. Even though education is an important factor in the progress of a region, as stated by Endang et al. (2021) that education accelerates the development of an area's civilization in following developments in all aspects, but if access to education is hampered, the development of civilization will stagnate. Formal education for the Boti tribe is believed to be a medium for acculturating foreign cultures that destroys the local cultural order. Likewise with religion or belief in God. Indonesia's national religion does not belong to the Boti tribe and they practice the traditional East Timorese religion, namely Halaika. The Boti tribe believes in God but the ritual process is in the form of offerings and offerings to nature and ancestors. The appreciation of the teachings of traditional religious beliefs through the king is strictly adhered to as an absolute teaching. Deviant behavior such as theft,

robbery, crime, immorality and other forms of violation are unlawful for society. The judgment system is in the form of social punishment, such as if there is a theft of a certain item, then each family head will collect the same type of item and give it to the thief. The Boti tribe assumes that those who steal are caused by lack, and therefore need to be assisted.

Another uniqueness is that the daily calendar and mention do not use the national calendar but use their calendar. The calculation is one week of 9 (nine) days. On the ninth day, the Boti people are on vacation but gather in the center of the kingdom to get the king's moral message about what to do and what not to do. This activity has been carried out for generations, routinely and must be carried out every weekend, followed by all components of society, from children to adults. Such conditions then create a sense of community happiness because there is no shortage of material and psychological needs. The psychological needs of the Boti Tribe are subjectively fulfilled because of a sense of peace, comfort, anxiety, and a life without conflict. Likewise, material needs for basic needs are felt to be very fulfilled. Seligman (2005) identifies happiness with the fulfillment of physiological (material) needs, such as eating, drinking, clothing, vehicles, housing, sexual life, physical health, and psychological (emotional) needs, such as feelings of security, peace, comfort, and security. , and do not suffer from inner conflict, depression, anxiety, or frustration.

The Boti Tribe community consciously distances themselves from the development of science and technology which is believed to be a medium to destroy the order of local wisdom. Even though education is an important factor in the progress of a region, as stated by Endang et al. (2021) that education accelerates the development of an area's civilization in following developments in all aspects, but if access to education is hampered, the development of civilization will stagnate. Formal education for the Boti tribe is believed to be a medium for acculturating foreign cultures that destroys the local cultural order. Likewise with religion or belief in God. Indonesia's national religion does not belong to the Boti tribe and they practice the traditional East Timorese religion, namely Halaika. The Boti tribe believes in the existence of spirit powers and the guardians of the earth dwell in trees, water, mountains, large rocks and ancestors. The appreciation of the teachings of traditional religious beliefs through the king is strictly adhered to as an absolute teaching. Deviant behavior such as theft, robbery, crime, immorality and other forms of violation are unlawful for society. The judgment system is in the form of social punishment, such as if there is a theft of a certain item, each head of the family will collect the same type of item and give it to the thief. The Boti tribe assumes that those who steal are caused by lack, and therefore need to be assisted.

Another uniqueness is that the daily calendar and mention do not use the national calendar but use their calendar. The calculation is one week of 9 (nine) days. On the ninth day, the Boti tribe will gather at the royal place to conduct weekly evaluations related to work evaluations, and evaluations of social relations behavior followed by a moral message delivered by the king about what needs to be done and what not to do. This activity has been carried out for generations, routinely and must be carried out every weekend, followed by all components of society, from children to adults. Such conditions then create a sense of community happiness because there is no shortage of material and psychological needs. The psychological needs of the Boti Tribe are subjectively fulfilled because of a sense of peace, comfort, anxiety, and a life without conflict. Likewise, material needs for basic needs are felt to be very fulfilled. Seligman (2005), identifies happiness with the fulfillment of physiological (material) needs, such as eating, drinking, clothing, vehicles, housing, sexual life, physical health, and psychological (emotional) needs, such as feelings of security, peace, comfort, and security. , and do not suffer from inner conflict, depression, anxiety, or frustration. According to Frey (2008), happiness is an important indicator in life, regarding the achievement of happiness and is the most important determinant of human behavior.

METHOD

The study was conducted on the Boti tribe on the island of Timor, East Nusa Tenggara Province. The number of heads of the Boti family is 77 and because the number is very limited, it is used as a sample. Because this research is expected to obtain accurate information, the number of respondents is taken as a sample. The analytical tool used is the happiness index issued by the Central Statistics Agency by measures

indicators of life satisfaction, feelings and meaning of life. The level of happiness or life satisfaction of the population on a scale of 0-100. The formula for the Happiness Index or Life Satisfaction is as follows:

$$IKB = \frac{W_1 X I_{\text{life satisfaction}} + W_2 X I_{\text{feeling}} + W_3 X I_{\text{meaning of life}}}{W_1 + W_2 + W_3}$$

Information:

W1 = Weighing the dimensions of life satisfaction

W2 = Weighing the dimension of feelings

W3 = Weighing the dimensions of the meaning of life

$$W_1 + W_2 + W_3 = 1$$

I Life Satisfaction = Life Satisfaction Dimension Index

I Feelings = Index Dimensions of Feelings

I Meaning of Life = Index of Dimensions of Meaning of Life

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dimensions of happiness reflect the comfort of the soul, heart and mind in responding to every social dimension related to internal and external relationships and interactions. The main basis for measuring the happiness dimension of the Boti Dalam Tribe refers to the use of field survey instruments which are then developed based on measures of objective conditions and subjective welfare levels. The context of happiness as referenced by the theory includes three major dimensions, namely (1) evaluation of the ten domains of human life that are considered essential by the majority of the Boti tribe, (2) affect (feelings or emotional conditions), and (3) eudaimonia (meaning live) the Boti tribe.

The happiness index is the average of the index numbers owned by each individual based on the calculation results. The higher the index value means that the happier the level of life. Vice versa, the lower the index value means the more unhappy. The happiness index is a composite index based on the level of satisfaction with the basic aspects of life in the socio-cultural life and economic behavior of the community. These aspects substantially simultaneously reflect the level of happiness which includes satisfaction with; health, education, employment, household income, family harmony, availability of free time, social relations, housing and asset conditions, environmental conditions, and security conditions. According to Bruno and Alois (2001), unemployment reduces happiness but an increase in income does not reduce happiness. Meanwhile, according to Leigh and Wolfers (2006), even though there is an increase in the human development index, the level of happiness can be bad. This means that an increase in income, education and health does not necessarily describe happiness.

The results of the analysis of the Boti tribal happiness index can be seen in the calculation, the Boti tribal happiness index is 72.87 on a scale of 0–100. These results are a description of the satisfaction index 72.56 with a weighted dimension of life satisfaction 0.45, a feeling index 71.55 with a feeling dimension weighing 0.34 and a meaning of life index 75.70 with a weighting dimension of the meaning of life 0.21. The taste-forming indicators that measure the happiness of the Boti tribe are subjective factors of education, health, work, household income, family harmony, availability of free time, social relations, housing and asset conditions, environmental conditions, and security conditions. The Boti tribal community does not have a national religion but is an animist who believes in the existence of spirits in water, trees, mountains and large rocks. Socio-economic life based on the culture of the local community and rejecting the influence of technology and all government assistance subjectively feels happy, safe and comfortable. Other deviant behavior elsewhere, for the Boti tribe does not exist because it is already a teaching and believes in the law of karma. According to Benet & Oishi (2008), culture affects personality development.

Health according to the subjective view of the Boti tribal community is a condition where the community feels not sick and is not disturbed by health in carrying out all day-to-day activities. Society is very integrated with nature and is believed to form immunity against viruses and other diseases. As stated by Henna et al (2014) environmental factors play a role in forming susceptibility and protection against disease and creating an immune body against viruses. The Boti tribe is truly one with nature, including health matters. The food consumed is dominantly hygienic and prepared by nature without engineering technology and chemicals. The Boti people believe that the food provided by nature contains carbohydrates, proteins fats

and vitamins for a healthier body. The staple foods for daily consumption are corn, rice and beans prepared independently. Foodstuffs from farming only have a function to fulfill consumption needs for one year and reserve seeds for planting the following year. It is forbidden for the community to sell agricultural products and it is also forbidden to receive agricultural products and other food needs from the government in various programs. Happiness by Oki (2022) will create prosperity because people have the freedom to meet their own needs without interference from other parties. Meanwhile, according to Vasques and Hervas (2013), happiness raises well-being because it is related to what is thought and experienced.

Government programs related to various aids were rejected by the Boti tribe. The main reason is the process of creating lazy people to work and high levels of dependence. This means that the approach is not educating but creates a pattern of community dependence on the government. The influence of the entry of food and beverage ingredients produced by factories is very limited because people value business results more than those provided by the market. Likewise, with personal hygiene and household furniture, people still use clay as a substitute for bath soap and laundry soap. Even so, a small part of the Boti tribe slowly uses soap as a washing and other cleaning tool. According to Dwi et al. (2018), the public health development index functions to measure the health status of individuals in an area through access to water, access to sanitation, ownership of health insurance, family planning programs, and delivery and provision of adequate health facilities. Efforts were made by the government with various approaches and even the provision of health facilities and medical personnel in the village but did not have an impact on establishments with a very strong understanding of culture and tradition.

The education factor for the Boti tribe is considered an obstacle and even kills the sustainability of community traditions in the future. This belief then has an impact on barriers and very limited interest in entering formal education. Thus, the access of the Boti tribe to education is very limited, even at the basic level of education. Each household is given the opportunity to enter education but is limited to only 1 (one) person and is limited to basic education while others are not allowed. Various efforts and approaches from the government to provide an understanding of every opportunity and even provide educational facilities do not affect the Boti tribal community. According to Sanjay (1999), resources increase opportunities and capabilities for new growth. This shows that access to resources is a potential development opportunity.

The aspect of education in the community is a driving force for the progress of the development of a region. According to Amaliah (2015), education is a process of community participation that is more meaningful and quality when the community has sufficient capacity to participate in the public policy advocacy process. This means that education is important in the development process. However, this is not the case for the Boti Tribe, who believe that education is the eroding of the basic values of culture and traditions passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, cultural protection continues to be carried out and one of the measures taken is to limit public participation and access to formal education through school. The majority of the Boti tribe do not have basic and advanced education.

The Boti tribal people all farm dry land with the traditional approach of slashing, burning and shifting land. Apart from farming, they also raise livestock such as chickens, pigs and cows for consumption and economic needs. The sale of livestock and crops of long-lived agricultural products such as tamarind and candlenuts are sources of income that are used for other needs such as kerosene for lighting needs. Even though the village electricity program has entered the Boti village area, it is not utilized by the community. The basic reason is that electricity will lead to the use of electrical technology and will damage the local cultural fabric.

The dry land agriculture sector the slash-and-burn system and shifting land are the main professions apart from dependence on natural products. Short-lived crops such as rice, maize, and beans are still dominant, followed by long-lived plants such as candlenuts and others. However, there are still many people who have quite a lot of pets such as cows, pigs and chickens. The produce from the garden and its business is used for daily consumption in every cycle of the season and is arranged in such a way as to be sufficient and not create hunger. The interesting thing to note is that the people of Boti do not want to close themselves off with various kinds of government assistance, such as direct cash assistance and other assistance in any form.

The principle of the Boti community is that if they receive assistance, it will cause a high level of community dependence on other parties, laziness to work and not creative.

The work calendar of the Boti tribe does not use the national calendar but has its calendar from generation to generation which in the calculation of the weekly calendar is 9 (nine) days a week and is used as a holiday. Even so, this day is used as a day for self-evaluation in the previous week as well as getting advice, instructions and directions from the user (king) about what not to do and what to do. Thus, social life related to social relations, comfort and security, is perceived by the Boti tribe as a gift that cannot be obtained anywhere else. According to the king of Namad Benu, the community feels very free to carry out activities without fear and being threatened. Social conflicts, and other social violations such as cases of theft, infidelity, and fights, never for the Boti tribe.

CONCLUSION

The Boti tribe is a traditional inland tribe whose lifestyle depends on nature and hereditary habits. Health facilities, education, and subsidies provided by the government are avoided and live from customs and traditions. Belief in spirits and spirits is the principle of religious belief of the Boti tribe through the media of caves, trees, mountains, water and large rocks. Calendar year and weekly calculations are based on their calculations and the 9th day are holidays and evacuation days. The Boti tribe is very happy in carrying out all activities. Social violations that have legal implications and even imprisonment for the Boti tribe have never existed and are very unlawful. If there are violations, they will be given social sanctions and will be expelled from the Boti tribe.

REFERENCES

- Amaliah, Dini. 2015. Pengaruh Partisipas Pendidikan Terhadap Persentase Penduduk Miskin. Faktor Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan Vol. 2 No. 3 Nopember 2015, hal 231-239.
- Angela, A.L. (2017). Analisis Indeks Kebahagiaan Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Ekonomi Daerah (JEDA)* 7(1),1-14.
- Benet-Martinez, V., & Oishi, S. 2008. Culture and personality. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 542-567). New York: Guilford.
- Bruno S. Frey, Alois Stutzer. 2001. Happiness, Economy and Institutions. *The Economic Journal*. Carmelo Vazques, Gonzalo Hervas. 2013. Addressing Current Challenges in Cross-Cultural Measurement of Well-Being: The Pemberton Happiness Index. DOI:10.1007/978-94-007-4611-4_3. In book: Well-Being and Cultures (pp.31-49). Project: Positive Psychology: Basic research and interventions.
- Dwi Hapsari Tjandra, Rofingatul Mubasyiroh, Ika Dharmayanti. 2018. Pencapaian Indonesia Sehat Melalui Pendekatan Indeks Pembangunan Kesehatan Masyarakat Dan Indeks Keluarga Sehat. *Buletin Penelitian Sistem Kesehatan*. Vol 21 No 2.
- Endang Susilawati, Getar Rahmi Pratiwi, Ilham Abdullah. 2021. Peran Pendidikan Dalam Kemajuan Peradaban Bangsa. Prosiding Seminar Pascasarjana UIN Sultan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Program Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Vol.1 No.1 Tahun 2021.
- Frey, B. S. (2008). *Happiness A Revolution in Economics*. The MIT Press Cambridge:London.
- Henna Kallionpää, Essi Laajala, Viveka Öling, Taina Härkönen, Vallo Tillmann, Natalya V. Dorshakova, Jormallonen, Harri Lähdesmäki, Mikael Knip, Riitta Lahesmaa. 2014. Standard of hygiene and immune adaptation in newborn infants. *Clinical Immunology*. Volume 155, Issue 1, November 2014, Pages 136-147.
- Leigh, A., & Wolfers, J. 2006. Happiness and the Human Development Index: Australia Is Not a Paradox *Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Vol. 39, No. 2*.
- Oki, Kamilaus Konstanse. 2022. Perdagangan Lintas Batas. Kekuatan Modal Sosial dan Perubahan Kelembagaan. Edisi Kedua. Percetakan Qiara Media-Pasuruan Jawa Timur.
- Sanjay Prasad Thakur. 1999. Size of investment, opportunity choice and human resources in new venture growth: Some typologies. *Journal of Business Venturing*. Volume 14, Issue 3, Pages 283-309. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026\(98\)00002-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(98)00002-0).
- Seligman, Martin E P · Tracy A Steen · Nansook Park · Christopher Peterson. 2005. *Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA. Randomized Controlled Trial · Research*

Support, Non-U.S. Gov't. DOI: [10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410](https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.60.5.410). Volume110, Issue 466. Pages 918-938. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0297.00570>.