Private University Students' Perspectives on Happy School: Building a 3P Plus Model Based on the UNESCO 3P Model

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Abstract – Quality education for all is a key goal among the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), directly tied to SDG Goal 4, with an emphasis on quality education, equity, and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities. Based on UNESCO's "3P" model of people, process, and place, this study expands the understanding of quality education from the perspective of student happiness. The purpose of this study is to answer the question of whether the factors that contribute to university students' happiness are similar to the 3P model. Are there any additional 3P model characteristics that are particularly interesting to college students, beyond those included in the 3P model? By conducting in-depth interviews with students, the study explores and tests these hypotheses, contributing additional elements to the 3P model. Afterward, the quantitative results also contribute to validating the research by expanding the survey scope to 169 students. These findings led to a 3P plus framework adapted for college students. The study does not only provide empirical insight into the components of well-being in schools but also proposes a model that can inform educational practices and policies that promote student happiness.

Keywords – Private university, happy school, 3P, people, process, place.

1. Introduction

In the current educational context, the concept of "happy schools" is increasingly receiving widespread attention. Studies have been conducted to identify the characteristics of happy schools and the level of happiness among students. Sustainable education and positive psychology interventions in schools can contribute to students' well-being [1]. The variables that lead to student pleasure in learning include implementing student-centered learning [2], providing a good learning environment [3], and using effective learning media to make learning more enjoyable [4]. Students' happiness in school is influenced by their ability to adapt to the school environment and their perception of comfort and enjoyment in learning. Moreover, studies indicate that students' satisfaction at school is positively impacted by family support for academic performance [5]. Furthermore, children' subjective well-being and capacity for school adaptation are impacted by social support from a variety of sources, including parents, teachers, and friends [6]. This study applies and enhances UNESCO's "3P" paradigm (people, process, and place) to analyze the characteristics that produce a positive teaching environment at universities in Vietnam. Expanding upon this fundamental framework, "3P Plus" is presented as an add-on, to offer a more thorough understanding of the factors that influence happiness and satisfaction in the context of environmental research.

2. Literature Review- Happy School Concept on University Student Perspectives

The concept of a "happy school" focuses on creating a conducive atmosphere for learning and teaching, emphasizing aspects such as positive life views, compassionate attitudes, family participation, academic achievement, and friendships [7].

Children and teenagers have different opinions about how much they enjoy school with an emphasis on variations in autonomy and closeness [8]. Incorporating gaming components into the classroom can improve middle school students' engagement [9].

In higher education, the "happy university" concept prioritizes student well-being, encompassing academic, social, and health aspects. A supportive university environment, characterized by effective communication and respectful culture is crucial [10]. There are significant gender differences in the relationship between happiness and physical exercise in a study conducted at a Chinese university [11]. Indicators of a positive university experience such as satisfaction with learning environment, learning anxiety, satisfaction with learning, enthusiasm to learn, self-satisfaction, and readiness to learn [12]. Academic support services are essential for lowering anxiety and boosting confidence, and a supportive university environment is essential for students' well-being and learning outcomes [13]. Appropriate feedback is crucial to fostering a happy learning environment in the classroom [14].

Building on this foundation, current research has highlighted how happiness in school environments has long-term effects. Positive psychology and happiness education in schools have been associated with better work performance, longer lifespans, successful relationships, and better health [15]. Positive psychology programs implemented in schools have demonstrated efficacy in cultivating positive qualities and overall well-being [16]. Furthermore, regardless of socioeconomic status or cognitive capacity, school happiness is highly correlated with subsequent academic achievement [17]. Students who love their education tend to do better on tests and receive higher mark [17]. This suggests that school happiness is important for educational outcomes and should be a major focus of treatments meant to improve academic accomplishment [18].

School-based happiness positively impacts students' mental health and creativity [19]. Teacher happiness is related to their efficacy and creativity [20]. There are differing opinions about what makes students happy in higher education. Some researches emphasize social justice and the family environment [21], [22], while other studies concentrate on the quality of school life and the relationships between faculty and students [7], [23].

2.1. Theoretical Basis of the "3P Model"

"People, Process, Place" make up the 3P model that serves as the foundation for the UNESCO Happy Schools Framework [24]. This framework was established by carefully examining the Happy Schools survey responses to reach a common understanding of what constitutes a happy and stimulating learning environment.

People: The emphasis of this component is on the value of fostering solid social ties within the school community. It entails fostering camaraderie and constructive relationships, arguing for tolerance of variety and distinctions, and advancing cooperative ideals and methods. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of teachers' professional growth and well-being, stressing the importance of their abilities and competencies as necessary components of a successful learning environment.

Process: This component has to do with the teaching tactics and educational approaches used in classrooms. It emphasizes the significance of providing students with a reasonable and well-balanced workload, encouraging cooperation and teamwork, and making sure that the teaching and learning procedures are both efficient and interesting.

Place: The last component focuses on the surrounding circumstances of the educational setting. It ensures that the school is emotionally and physically healthy, which promotes learning and general well-being.

3. Methodology

In this study, we used the UNESCO "3P" model as a basis and combined it with both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand its suitability for university students. We started with 30 interviews of students from different majors and years. Each interview was about 10-20 minutes, depending on how much the student could contribute by focusing on finding out if students have their "own version" of the "3P" model. After the interviews, the researcher created a survey based on the most common responses, which was then given to 169 students using a Likert scale. The researchers checked the survey's reliability with Cronbach's alpha, T-Tests, and one-way ANOVA to be used to see if there were any significant differences based on gender, year of study, or major. Our goal was to combine the interview and survey results to develop a more comprehensive "3P Plus" model. This study mainly aimed to get insights into Vietnamese university students' satisfaction with their schools.

4. Results

Figure 1. 3P plus model
Note: New findings are indicated by text in red.

Figure 1 describes the 3P plus model, with 22 factors available in the 3P model and 13 factors added based on the results of the study. In the following sections, the research team will highlight how 3P Plus was formed

Students' views on the factors that create a happy school, through in-depth interviews:

Through in-depth interviews, students provided views that overlap with UNESCO's inherent 3P model. In addition, we also have some new findings from students' responses.

"People" concept addition on the 3P plus model:

Positive Competition among Peers: Students preferred the positive competition in the academic environment.

The respondents shared experiences of happiness stemming from engaging in educational challenges and discussions with peers, emphasizing the motivational aspect of such competitions.

Respondent 21: "I enjoy the competition among classmates. It makes me happy to pose questions to presentation groups and to have questions asked in return to discover more insights."

Respondent 25 had a similar view: "I think fair competition with my peers helps me progress and feel happier every time I go to school."

Respondent 17 shared the sentiment: "The feeling after giving my all in competitions, whether I win or lose, is incredibly rewarding."

Finding a Soulmate: According to interviews, university students often feel lonely and isolated when moving to a new city for studies.

They find university friends not as close as high school friends. Therefore, having a close group of friends to share academic and life issues makes them much more comfortable.

Respondent 12: "I love how he cares for me, being in the same environment helps us understand and empathize with each other."

Respondent 8: "I found a sweet and gentle girlfriend at university. She is caring and loving, and we have overcome many challenges together. She is the best thing I found at this school.

"Process" concept addition on the 3P plus model:

Training in Hard and Soft Skills: Students recognize the importance of both technical and soft skills training, emphasizing its role in enhancing employability and self-confidence.

Respondent 6: "Soft skills training at my school has made my education more complete, potentially making a good impression on future employers."

Respondent 10: "The combination of technical and soft skills training has significantly improved my confidence and abilities."

International Exchange and Cooperation: Participants appreciate these opportunities for expanding their perspectives and understanding global viewpoints, underlining the value of exposure to different cultures in education.

Respondent 2: "The exchange program I participated in was a turning point in my education, broadening my horizons."

Respondent 28: "International cooperation projects expanded my worldview, allowing me to network and grow with experts in my field. The school facilitating my global exposure brings me great happiness."

Studying the Desired Major: Responses indicate a strong link between academic satisfaction and studying a chosen major, emphasizing the need to align educational paths with personal interests and passions.

Respondent 1: "Studying my passion has made a significant difference in my university experience."

Respondent 22: "Pursuing my passion for software technology is extremely exciting and motivating."

Clear Career Orientation in Programs: Students value practical and future-oriented program approaches, providing clarity and direction for their career goals.

Respondent 3: "Clear career orientation and practical focus in my major are tools that help shape my future career plans."

Respondent 19: "The curriculum's focus on what we need to do in the business world makes my learning clearer and significantly motivates me in my career orientation."

Business Networking Events and Job Fairs: These events are crucial for bridging the gap between academia and industry, providing real opportunities and insights into the professional world.

Respondent 2: "I found my first internship through a job fair. I'm very grateful for these events organized by the school."

Respondent 7: "I understand what businesses need through job fairs, helping me choose the right direction for my future work."

These responses illustrate the positive impact of the "Process" factor on students' experiences and satisfaction in the educational environment.

"Place" concept addition on the 3P Plus model:

Besides the 7 factors already present in UNESCO's 3P model, our open-ended interview questions uncovered an additional 6 factors contributing to university students' happiness.

Environmental and Social Activities: Students highly value school participation in activities benefiting the environment and society, enhancing community awareness and social responsibility.

Respondent 4: "I am proud to participate in the school's environmental sustainability initiatives."

Respondent 9: "Joining social outreach programs and volunteer clubs at school brings me happiness."

Transparency in Fees: Students appreciate clear information about educational costs for its honesty, aiding in financial planning and reducing stress.

Respondent 11: "Clear fee information helps me manage finances better."

Respondent 29: "I value the school's honesty about all costs."

Theme-Based Decorations for Festivals: Campus decorations for cultural and festive themes create a lively and inclusive atmosphere, enhancing student participation.

Respondent 24: "The school's Christmas decorations make me feel warm and happy."

Respondent 13: "We enjoy the vibrant atmosphere created by festival decorations on campus."

Respondent 30: "Organizing cultural events at school is fascinating."

Dormitories for Students Living Far Away: Dormitories provide a sense of belonging and security, reducing stress for distant students.

Respondent 18: "Having a dormitory eases my transition to university life."

Respondent 27: "Dorms offer a sense of community and security."

Well-Equipped Classrooms: Students appreciate modern facilities tailored to their majors, enhancing learning and comfort.

Respondent 16: "Modern lab equipment and air-conditioned classrooms significantly enhance my learning experience."

Respondent 14: "I, as an IT student, particularly like our modern computer labs."

Spacious and Airy Parking Areas: Adequate parking facilities are important for students who mostly commute by motorcycle, reducing daily commuting stress.

Respondent 5: "Easy access to parking saves time and reduces stress."

Respondent 26: "The spacious parking area is convenient and comfortable."

The research team has incorporated additional elements into the 'People' concept, specifically factors PE7 and PE8. Within the 'Process' dimension, factors from PR10 to PR14 have been integrated. In the context of the 'Place' concept, the factors range from PL8 to PL13. These inclusions complement the existing factors within UNESCO's 3P model framework. Furthermore, this refined set of factors constitutes the scales incorporated in our quantitative survey methodology.

Students' views on the factors that create a happy school, through expanding the survey to a larger scale:

4.1. Mean Analysis

Through the completed questionnaire in section A, we continue to conduct a mass survey with students at a private university in Can Tho.

Table 1. Mean analysis and summary of observed variables of the 3P Plus

Factors	Elements	Mean
People	PE1: A happy school is where friendships and relationships within the school community are good.	4.2249
	PE2: A happy school is where teachers always maintain a positive attitude and encourage students.	4.3018
	PE3: A happy school is a place where differences are respected and valued.	4.2426
	PE4: A happy school is a place where the values of collaboration and practice are encouraged and developed.	4.3136
	PE5: A happy school is where teachers have good health and favorable working conditions.	4.2308
	PE6: A happy school is where teachers have high professional skills and competencies.	4.1479
	PE7: A happy school is a place where there is positive competition between peers.	4.2308
	PE8: A happy school is where you can find someone special, like a soulmate.	4.1065
Process	PR1: A happy school is where the workload is divided reasonably and fairly.	4.1716
	PR2: A happy school is where teamwork and cooperation are encouraged.	4.2249
	PR3: A happy school is a place with interesting and attractive teaching and learning methods.	4.3373
	PR4: A happy school is where students are free to be creative and actively participate.	4.3905
	PR5: A happy school is where students are conscious of achieving.	4.0888
	PR6: A happy school is a place with many extracurricular activities and events.	4.1183
	PR7: A happy school is where group learning between teachers and students is encouraged.	4.1302
	PR8: A happy school is one where learning content is useful, relevant, and engaging.	4.3018
	PR9: A happy school is a place that cares about students' mental health and stress management.	4.2722
	PR10: A happy school is a place that trains both hard and soft skills.	4.355
	PR11: A happy school is a place to enhance international exchange and cooperation activities.	4.1716
	PR12: A happy school is where you can study exactly what you love.	4.284
	PR13: A happy school is a place where majors are clear and future career-oriented.	4.2426
	PR14: A happy school is the place to organize business connection sessions through job fairs.	4.2544
Place	PL1: A happy school is a place with a friendly and warm learning environment.	4.3373
	PL2: A happy school is a safe place with no bullying.	4.284
	PL3: A happy school is a place with green and environmentally friendly spaces.	4.3077
	PL4: A happy school is a place where leaders have a clear vision and excellent leadership.	4.2189
	PL5: A happy school is a place where positive and fair discipline is applied.	4.3254
	PL6: A happy school is a place that focuses on the health, hygiene and nutrition of students.	4.3314
	PL7: A happy school is a place managed democratically and fairly.	4.2959
	A happy school is a place where many activities for the environment and community are implemented.	4.1953
	PL8: A happy school is transparent about fees during the learning process.	4.4615
	PL9: A happy school is a place decorated with the right theme on festive occasions.	4.0237
	PL10: A happy school is a place that provides dormitories for students living far away.	4.1361
	PL11: A happy school is a place with modern classroom equipment suitable for each major, and the school has air conditioning.	4.4201
	PL12: A happy school is a place with spacious and airy parking.	4.3491

As indicated in the Table 1, the factors received substantial agreement from the students, including both the pre-existing 3P model, and the newly added variables. This demonstrates a consensus between the two methods of deep interview and survey. Furthermore, it distinctly reveals that university students place the highest importance on the 'Place' factor.

4.2. Demographics

A total of 169 students were polled as part of a thorough study to determine what influences students' pleasure in the classroom.

The participants were well-distributed across different academic years, with freshmen making up 9.5% of the sample (16 students), sophomores comprising 37.9% (64 students), juniors accounting for 33.1% (56 students), and seniors representing 19.5% (33 students). In terms of socioeconomic status, 78.7% of the participants had annual incomes of less than 5 million VND. A mere 17.2% of the participants were categorized as having an income between 5 million and 10 million VND, while 4.1% had an income beyond 10 million VND. The distribution shows that the students that were polled came from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

4.3. Reliability Analysis

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha result

Factor Category	Item Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
People (PE)	**Cronbach's alpha = 0.828**	
	PE1: Friendships and relationships are good.	0.493
	PE2: Teachers maintain a positive attitude.	0.5
	PE3: Differences are respected.	0.649
	PE4: Collaboration and practice are encouraged.	0.563
	PE5: Teachers have good health and working conditions	0.602
	PE6: Teachers have high professional skills.	0.582
	PE7: Positive competition between friends.	0.56
	PE8: Finding someone with the same soul, like a soulmate.	0.465
Process (PR)	**Cronbach's alpha = 0.898**	
	PR1: Workload is divided fairly.	0.655
	PR2: Teamwork and cooperation are encouraged.	0.607
	PR3: Teaching methods are interesting and attractive.	0.658
	PR4: Students are free to be creative and participate actively.	0.558
	PR5: Students are conscious of achieving results.	0.464
	PR6: Variety of extracurricular activities and events.	0.578
	PR7: Group learning between teachers and students is encouraged.	0.462
	PR8: Learning content is useful, relevant, and engaging.	0.646
	PR9: Care about students' mental health and stress management.	0.533
	PR10: Training in both hard and soft skills.	0.59
	PR11: Enhancing international exchange and cooperation activities.	0.646
	PR12: Studying the exact major you love.	0.597
	PR13: Clear majors and career orientation.	0.641
	PR14: Business connections through job fairs.	0.592
Place (PL)	**Cronbach's alpha = 0.906**	
	PL1: Friendly and warm learning environment.	0.641
	PL2: Safety and no bullying.	0.65
	PL3: Green and environmentally friendly space.	0.568
	PL4: Leaders have clear vision and excellent leadership.	0.653
	PL5: Positive and fair discipline is applied.	0.653
	PL6: Focus on health, hygiene, and nutrition.	0.702
	PL7: Managed democratically and fairly.	0.633
	PL8: Activities for the environment and community.	0.645
	PL9: Transparency about fees during learning.	0.685
	PL10: Decoration according to festival themes.	0.502
	PL11: Dormitories for students living far away.	0.577
	PL12: Modern classroom equipment and air conditioning.	0.64
	PL13: Spacious and airy parking lot.	0.588

Cronbach's alpha scores for various factors related to school happiness revealed good to excellent internal consistency. Specifically, the alpha scores were as follows: 0.828 for people (PE) factors, 0.898 for process (PR) factors, and 0.906 for place (PL) factors (Table 2). These values indicate that the survey items within each category were consistent and reliable in measuring students' perceptions of what constitutes a happy school environment. The scores, being above the generally accepted threshold of 0.7, underscore the reliability of the survey in capturing distinct aspects of school happiness across these domains.

In addition to the Cronbach's alpha analysis, correlation coefficients were examined for all factors, with each correlation exceeding the threshold of 0.3. This indicates a moderate to strong relationship among the items within each factor category, further supporting the internal consistency and reliability of the survey. Such significant correlations reinforce the validity of the instrument, affirming that the survey items are interrelated and collectively contribute to a cohesive understanding of the constructs of school happiness in the domains of people, process, and place.

4.4. Independent Sample T-Test and One-Way ANOVA

Table 3 shows gender differences across the three primary factors - people, process, and place - the independent sample t-tests were rigorously used. The statistical analysis repeatedly revealed no discernible variations between male and female students' perceptions of various components of school satisfaction in each category. The p-values across these factors systematically exceeded the standard threshold for statistical significance, indicating that gender does not play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions in these areas.

Table 3. Independent sample t-test for gender

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig	Sig (2-tailed)
People	Male	4.239	0.549	0.523	0.727
	Female	4.208	0.591		
Process	Male	4.236	0.526	0.470	0.948
	Female	4.242	0.563		
Place	Male	4.268	0.547	0.404	0.716
	Female	4.300	0.592		

The one-way ANOVA tests in table 4 investigated perception differences based on the academic year. All three components (People, Process, and Place) produced F- and p-values in the analysis that indicated no significant variance.

This showed consistency in opinions on what makes a positive school environment across the various academic years. The findings imply that students' opinions on these elements don't change as they advance through the educational system.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA on student year

Factor	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Value	p-Value
People	Between Groups	0.267	3	0.089	0.273	0.845
	Within Groups	53.72	165	0.326		
	Total	53.987	168			
Process	Between Groups	0.715	3	0.238	0.809	0.49
	Within Groups	48.582	165	0.294		
	Total	49.296	168			
Place	Between Groups	0.288	3	0.096	0.294	0.83
	Within Groups	53.845	165	0.326		
	Total	54.132	168			

5. Discussion

This study focuses on developing UNESCO's 3P Plus model based on the 3P model (people, process, place) as a reliable framework for understanding student satisfaction in Vietnamese institutions. The consistency of the high Cronbach's alpha values across each component not only corroborates the consistency of the model but also reflects its robustness in diverse educational contexts. This is further supported by the ANOVA and t-test results, which revealed no significant differences in students' perceptions, indicating a unanimous agreement on the constituents of a conducive learning environment.

Notably, qualitative results gathered from in-depth interviews help deepen these findings. These interviews not only contribute to strengthening the existing elements of the 3P model but also introduce additional elements that make this model richer. From there, it helped develop the 3P plus model, intended especially for college students. In the "People" section, the findings also have similarities with previous studies.

This study emphasizes the importance of cultivating strong social connections within the school community, which involves fostering camaraderie, respect for diversity, and the professional growth of educators. These elements are fundamental to a thriving academic atmosphere (consistent with the perspectives of [7], [8] and [20]). The 'Process' aspect emphasizes the role of innovative teaching strategies and classroom approaches in stimulating student engagement and creativity [9], [21]. This research also underscores the importance of managing academic workload, encouraging collaborative learning, and emphasizing mental health, reflecting a holistic approach to education. For the 'Place' component, the findings shed light on an organization's physical environment and highlight the impact of healthy and supportive physical environments on student health [12], [13]. This research affirms the need for appropriate and nurturing physical spaces in educational settings. Furthermore, the long-term benefits of positive learning environments are also discussed [15], [17]. These benefits go beyond academic success to include improved health and life satisfaction, which are important for overall development.

6.   Conclusion

The one-way ANOVA and independent sample t-test results showed no significant differences, indicating a high level of consensus among students. This is further corroborated by the high Cronbach's alpha scores, validating the hypothesis of uniform perceptions. In-depth interviews revealed new insights into what constitutes a 'happy school,' expanding the understanding beyond traditional measures. The quantitative survey confirmed unanimous agreement among students on the 22 existing factors of the UNESCO 3P model, as well as the newly added factors, with mean acceptance rates for all 35 factors in the model exceeding 4. This research successfully extends the 3P model, providing a more comprehensive framework for understanding school happiness from the student's perspective.

In this conclusion, we acknowledge that while our ANOVA and t-test results indicated a high consensus among students, suggesting a robust agreement on the existing and newly identified factors contributing to school happiness, future research could explore further nuances in these factors. Educational institutions might leverage these findings to enhance student experiences. However, our study has limitations in terms of sample size and diversity, and future research could extend to a broader demographic to validate these results further.

This study's successful expansion of the 3P model offers a more holistic framework for understanding student happiness, providing valuable insights for educational policy and practice development

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