



## SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

**Ribut Purwaningrum<sup>1i</sup>,**  
**Fattah Hanurawan<sup>2</sup>,**  
**I Nyoman Sudana Degeng<sup>3</sup>,**  
**Triyono<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Candidate of  
Guidance and Counseling Program  
State University of Malang,  
Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer of Faculty of  
Psychology Education,  
State University of Malang,  
Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer of Graduate School of  
Learning Technology,  
State University of Malang,  
Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Lecturer of Guidance and  
Counseling Program,  
State University of Malang,  
Indonesia

### **Abstract:**

School counselor is an inseparable component of education in school (Lunenburg, 2010; ASCA, 2015; Omoniyi & Iyabo, 2016). School counselor's guidance and counseling service should be comprehensive for all students. In carrying out their duty, counselors need to possess adequate psychological well-being (Meyer & Ponston, 2006; Merryman, Martin, & Martin, 2015; Ismail, Jamaludin, & Sumari, 2017; Thomas & Morris, 2017). This phenomenological study was aimed at revealing an in-depth understanding of the school counselor's psychological well-being from their perspective. The subjects of the study were selected through interview and observation method. Five school counselors in state senior high schools in Central Java Province, Indonesia, were selected as the subjects of the study since they met the criteria determined by the study. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and by the subjects' narration. This study found that: a) six dimensions of psychological well-being were identified although there were different levels for each subject, b) for the subjects of the study, psychological well-being supports their role and function as a counselor. A counselor with high

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [naning\\_purwaningrum@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:naning_purwaningrum@staff.uns.ac.id)

psychological well-being is capable of balancing their condition both as a counselor and as an individual. As a result, working stress can be minimized, c) the supporting factors of school counselor's psychological well-being entail positive self-concept, religiosity, mindfulness, goal-setting, and social support, d) attempts in enhancing counselor's psychological well-being were accomplished by developing and optimizing the available supporting factors. It is recommended that a quantitative study should be conducted in the future by covering a larger sample in the same situations. Hence, it is expected that there will be a confirmation or possibility of generalization on the conclusion of the present study. It is suggested to manage the counselor candidate's through education and training that concerns with the development of supporting factors of psychological well-being.

**Keywords:** psychological well-being, phenomenological study, school counselor

## 1. Introduction

School counselor acts as one of the components of education in schools (Lunenburg, 2010; ASCA, 2015; Omoniyi & Iyabo, 2016). As an integral part of the educational process, school counselors should provide a guidance and counseling service that aims to support the achievement of the school mission. Guidance and Counseling program is designed and operationalized to optimally enhance students' personal-social, academic and vocational developments at school (ASCA, 2004).

School counselor's guidance and counseling service should be comprehensive for all students, Lopez, Higuera, & Martin (2016) state that school counselor serves as a promoter, coordinator, developer, consultant, ambassador, and educational leader. In terms of comprehensive guidance and counseling, those roles can be seen in the comprehensive guidance and counseling components management namely guidance curriculum, responsive service, individual planning, and system support.

In carrying out their duty for achieving students' success in personal-social, academic and vocational aspects (ASCA, 2004; ASCA, 2014; ASCA, 2019), school counselor needs to pay attention to themselves and possess high psychological well-being (Meyer & Ponton, 2006; Merryman, Martin, & Martin, 2015; Ismail, Jamaludin, & Sumari, 2017; Thomas & Morris, 2017).

School counselor's psychological well-being refers to a counselor's fully functioning positive psychological state emerging from the balance of his/her personal and professional role, which is shown by several indicators namely: 1) self-acceptance, 2) positive relation with other, 3) environmental mastery, 4) autonomy, 5) purpose in life, and 6) personal growth (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryff & Keyes, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Ryff, 2014).

By possessing high psychological well-being, a counselor will become an individual who is aware of his/her existence and role so that he/she may optimally dedicate himself/herself for the counselee including the institution by changing a challenge into an opportunity to achieve self-actualization (Dodge, 2012). Every

individual, including a counselor, needs a high level of psychological well-being to be capable of integrating their physical and mental health in order to increase their psychological and physiological health.

The present study focused on five counselors as the subjects of the study. They were school counselors from the state senior high schools in Central Java, Indonesia. They were considered having a high level of psychological well-being based on Ryff's psychological well-being scale (42 items). These subjects were heterogeneous in terms of 1) gender, 2) age, 3) place of origin, 4) employment status, 5) educational background, 6) counselors' psychological well-being level prevalence, and 7) experience as a counselor.

The school counselor's high level of psychological well-being was subsequently confirmed through observation and interviews. Based on the preliminary study (observation and interview) throughout 2018, it was found that the counselors exhibited the following facts:

- a. Counselors exhibited discipline toward the school regulation, it was shown by the counselors' punctuality, they always wear an educator's attribute in accordance with the stipulated regulation. They also implement the guidance and counseling service in accordance with the designed program; they do not go home before the school hours end, and they properly carry out the tasks given by the school principal.
- b. The counselors feel enthusiastic when they participate in seminars and workshops regarding Guidance and Counseling or Education.
- c. The counselors possess some kind of creativity in providing guidance and counseling service which serve as an assistance for the students to achieve their success in terms of personal-social, academic, and vocational aspects. It is shown by the various methods and techniques the counselors employ when performing guidance and counseling service.
- d. The counselors are willing to discuss with all school components (school principal, other school counselors, homeroom teacher) as an attempt of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and development of guidance including counseling practical knowledge.
- e. The counselors periodically invite the students' parents to discuss their students' development in school.
- f. There is a counselor-student proximity in which it is indicated by the fact that the counselors frequently approach and talk to the students during the break time. They also welcome the students who visit the guidance and counseling room without stating any judgment; they let the students use biblio-counseling /brochures/ other materials the students need.
- g. The counselors collaborate with workforce preparation institutions and universities to facilitate the students in continuing their career, both their educational career and professional career.

- h. The counselors report their guidance and counseling activities to all school personnel during the semester meeting or annual meeting as the form of the counselor's accountability in performing their functions.
- i. The counselors have a harmonious and supportive family.
- j. Physically, the counselors seem to be generous, happy and enjoy their occupation.

The responses from Ryff's psychological well-being scale and the observation results showed interesting phenomena. It turns out that they managed to carry out their duties as a counselor, a profession that is said as a risky, challenging, and exhausting. Each counselor had achieved and applied psychological well-being Ryff described as expected while many people claimed that psychological well-being is difficult to achieve due to various reasons.

## 2. Literature Review

A study on psychological well-being is not a novel thing in the field of psychology and social study. Originated from Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, psychological well-being becomes a widely-studied concept. Originally, psychological well-being, according to Aristotle, refers to how an individual actualizes his/her potential so that he/she could be a meaningful individual for the surrounding (Barnes, 2001). This concept views an individual as a meaningful one when he/she can or is willing to show his/her ability to gain a better development. Human being exists when they are willing to bring out their potential.

Eudaimonia, which is ultimately known as psychological well-being, gains considerable attention from researchers. Rogers (1965) defined psychological well-being as a part of a fully functioning person. Bradburn (1969) describes psychological well-being as a condition where an individual can overcome various difficulties in his/her daily life. Headey and Wearing (1989) define psychological well-being as a balance psychological state when an individual is capable of harmonizing challenges and resources, resulting in a rewarding life. Ryff (1995; 1998; 2002; 2008; 2014) describes psychological well-being as a positive psychological state characterized by self-acceptance, positive relation with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. Besides, Seligman (2002) states that psychological well-being is a condition where an individual feels happiness, utilizes his/her advantages and has a meaningful life. Shah and Marks (2004) argue that it is not enough to define psychological well-being as happiness; it should be defined as a condition where an individual can develop as fully functioning person, fulfilled life, and he/she can contribute to the environment.

It can be concluded that an individual with high psychological well-being refers to those who are capable of utilizing their potential so that they could develop optimally. These individuals are characterized as an individual with good self-acceptance, good relation with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and capability to personally and professionally develop.

As a party who associates with diverse model of personality, counselors are demanded to possess high level of psychological well-being. It is in agreement with Huppert (2009) who states that psychological well-being is capable of assisting an individual in developing cognitive function, better health, and better social function.

Compared to a counselor with low psychological well-being, a counselor with high level of psychological well-being is possible to be a creative, loyal and productive individual who is capable of enhancing customer's satisfaction (Thomson, 2009).

### 3. Material and Methods

The present study was classified as qualitative research with phenomenological design. This study involved five subjects of the study. Phenomenological study itself emerges as a study that is commonly used in educational and social science settings (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

A phenomenological study aims to explicate and identify a phenomenon from the subject's perspective. Philosophically, phenomenology is defined as a method used to investigate or discover the meanings of an individual's experience perceived by the individual. Phenomenology is not difficult to be applied in the field of psychology since Edmund and Husserl, the initiators of phenomenology, also work in the field of psychology (Wertz, 2005). Phenomenology is an attempt to depict *“why of thinking about knowledge – a philosophical and theoretical viewpoint – how do we know what we know”* (Bozzi, 1990; Qutoshi, 2018).

The subjects of this study were selected through interview and observation method. This method does not provide an equal chance for every person to be the subject or sample of the study. This method set some criteria for selecting its subject. In the present study, five school counselors in the state senior high schools in Central Java Province, Indonesia, were selected as the subjects of the study since they met the criteria determined by the study. They were selected based on preliminary observation, interviews with school personnel, and interviews with students as the main subject of guidance and counseling service. Table 1 denotes a general description of the subjects of the study.

**Table 1:** Subjects of the Study

| Criteria               | Subjects                     |                             |                               |                               |                               |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                        | A                            | B                           | C                             | D                             | E                             |
| Gender                 | Male                         | Female                      | Female                        | Female                        | Male                          |
| Age                    | 42 years old                 | 37 years old                | 32 years old                  | 52 years old                  | 50 years old                  |
| Place of Origin        | Central Java, Indonesia      | Central Java, Indonesia     | Central Java, Indonesia       | Central Java, Indonesia       | Central Java, Indonesia       |
| Employment Status      | Civil Servant                | Civil Servant               | Honorary Teacher              | Civil Servant                 | Civil Servant                 |
| Educational Background | Bachelor degree in Theology, | Master degree in Psychology | Master degree in Guidance and | Master degree in Guidance and | Bachelor degree in Psychology |

|   |  |          |            |            |          |
|---|--|----------|------------|------------|----------|
|   | Bachelor degree in Guidance and Counseling |          | Counseling | Counseling |          |
| The level of psychological well-being based on Ryff's scale | High                                       | High     | High       | High       | High     |
| Experience as a counselor                                   | 11 years                                   | 10 years | 7 years    | 20 years   | 15 years |

The data were collected through in-depth interviews and the subjects' narration. It was carried out due to the fact that in phenomenological study, the data collection relies on the subject of the study without any interpretation from the researcher.

In-depth interviews were conducted based on the interview guideline that has been created. During the process, the interview was developed in accordance with the context. With regard to subject's narration, they were asked to write daily journal related to the focus of the present study. All data gained from the in-depth interview and the subjects' narration were gathered as raw data; they were eventually analyzed. Figure 1 shows the procedure of the study.

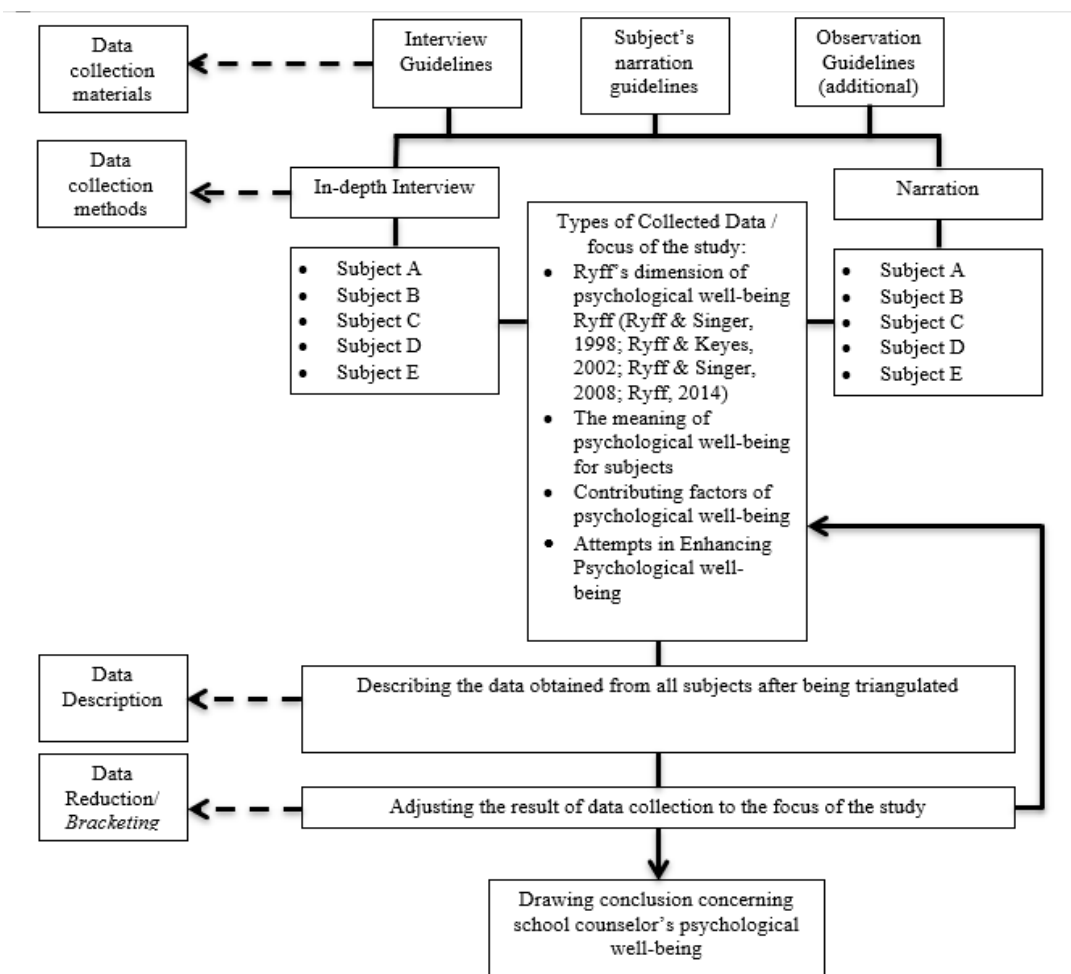


Figure 1: Procedure of the Study

In this study, the analysis focused on the following aspects: 1) six aspects of psychological well-being according to Ryff's construct (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryff & Keyes, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Ryff, 2014), 2) the meaning of psychological well-being and the urgency of psychological well-being in the subjects' life, 3) supporting factors of psychological well-being, and 4) attempts in enhancing psychological well-being in each counselor. The analysis was performed through three steps namely data description, data reduction, and conclusion drawing. The data description was made by describing the transcript of the interviews and narration using data triangulation technique. The data reduction was made by reducing insignificant data in order to achieve the goal of the study. Conclusion drawing was carried out by reflecting and concluding the analyzed data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 The Results of the Analysis on Six Aspects of Psychological Well-being

According to Ryff (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryff & Keyes, 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Ryff, 2014), psychological well-being is shown in six dimensions namely self-acceptance, positive relation with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, dan personal growth. These dimensions should be able to emerge simultaneously in each subject. In the present study, all dimensions stated by Ryff emerge in each counselor, but their levels are different from one another.

**Table 2:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

| Self-Acceptance |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Subject A       | <i>"Accepting myself as a counselor is challenging because as a professional, counselor should meet requirements. So far, my experiences prove that to be absolutely in accordance with the requirements will make someone face difficulties. Because of that, a negative judgment is often made. To overcome that problem, I always tell myself that counselor is not a perfect human; a counselor is reasonable to make a mistake as a human if that mistake is followed by improvement. To me, it is the real self-acceptance."</i> |
| Subject B       | <i>"Accepting myself as a counselor is challenging because being a counselor is not an easy profession. This profession affects the school and students success. Every counselor's decision is often evaluated by the school personnel. Because of this, counselors should give their best to show. However, my attempts to be a good counselor sometimes are not optimally achieved. When it occurs, It is important for me to accept the condition. For me, self-acceptance that I can do is by always trying to do my best."</i>    |
| Subject C       | <i>Accepting myself as a counselor means that I should be able to accept duties, responsibilities, workload, including the salary. Self-acceptance is related to how I can be happy and have positive thoughts concerning my current occupation, and keep trying to improve myself. The key of self-acceptance is being happy and 'involved' in all process of becoming a counselor."</i>  |
| Subject D       | <i>"Self-acceptance is a continuous process I have to do." Accepting this profession along with its routines and responsibility which is sometimes exhausting needs a tireless effort. For me, accepting myself as a counselor is a long-life learning which will be increased along with my maturity."</i>  |
| Subject E       | <i>"Counselor is a profession the God has given to me. In other words, that not all people are believed to be a counselor. Therefore, when I carry out duties as a counselor, I always view this profession as a mandate from God. I always try to accept the consequences and risks of this profession."</i>  |

According to all counselors in this study, self-acceptance is an aspect that can be exhibited in daily life, especially when performing their functions as a counselor. They concluded that self-acceptance is a part of self-development which always grows over time. It can be stated that self-acceptance is the easiest aspect to achieve compared to other aspects. They point out that self-acceptance develops along with an individual's idealism maturity and rationality.

**Table 3:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being (Positive Relation With Other)

| <b>Positive Relation With Other</b> |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Subject A                           | <i>"Establishing relationship with other people is my daily activity. As a counselor, it is impossible to live without other people' intervention I do not see creating a good relation as a responsibility, i see it as a need. Although in establishing that relation, sometimes conflict occurs."</i>                       |
| Subject B                           | <i>"Every individual possess different characteristic I should understand. Creating a good relationship with others is my daily routine. To create a good and harmonious relationship, I always try to understand other people."</i>   |
| Subject C                           | <i>"I love to establish a good relationship. As a counselor, I am happy when I could contribute to other people, especially students, teacher, students' parents, or other parties. By establishing a positive relationship, I can grow to be a better person."</i>  |
| Subject D                           | <i>"I cannot carry out this duty as a counselor without helps from other parties". My colleague counselors, school principal, teachers, students, parents, and all school components are my partner who supports me doing this job. In this case, of course, having a good relationship with any party is pivotal for me."</i> |
| Subject E                           | <i>"How other people treat you is the reflection of how you treat other people. I always believe and hold that proverb. I am open and willing to establish relationship with other people who can help me become a better counselor."</i>  |

The aspect of positive relation with others also emerges as a dimension the counselors achieve properly. Such a good achievement of this aspect may be caused by the frequency of communication with various parties, both individuals and groups. The relation can be created among the students, other counselors, teachers, school principals, or the students' parents. This aspect is gained through tireless attempts, developed experiences, and needs on the ability to carry out guidance and counseling program optimally. They realize that it is impossible for a counselor to work alone without establishing a good relation with other people.

**Table 4:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

| <b>Environmental Mastery</b> |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Subject A                    | <i>"In performing duties, sometimes I face obstacles. Those obstacles can be caused by curriculum, policy, or disharmonious relation with others. But, I am triggered to overcome the obstacles properly."</i>   |
| Subject B                    | <i>"In carrying out duties, I have a map containing my to-do-list. It also contains what I should do when I encounter difficult situations. It helps me accomplish my duties which are never obstacle-free."</i>   |
| Subject C                    | <i>"To me, mastering environment means how I can adapt to various environmental condition, even the worst ones. Mastering environment means that I should be able to put myself in the various positions given to me. By doing so, I always learn and keep improving over time."</i> |
| Subject D                    | <i>"Being a counselor requires me to be able to face various conditions I have never imagined. But, that is</i>  |



|           |  |
|-----------|--|
|           | <i>the exciting point. I love how to develop ideas for solving problems and I am surprised that it always arises every day during my job as a counselor."</i>  |
| Subject E | <i>"It is impossible for a counselor to be loved by everyone. It is impossible for a counselor to always perform as expected. Yet, it is the art of working and serving. By employing self-potential, whatever the obstacles are, it will be lighter and fun."</i> |

The third aspect the counselor may achieve is environmental mastery. Environmental mastery describes how a counselor is capable of adjusting him/herself to the environment regardless of the condition. The subjects described that in the field, guidance and counseling, along with its duties and responsibilities, cannot be separated from the overall educational process. In its implementation phase, they frequently face challenges, hindrances, or difficulties. However, through good cooperation with all personnel, those challenges can be turned into an opportunity to improve and develop their potential.

**Table 5:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration Related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

| <b>Autonomy</b> |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Subject A       | <i>"Counselor is a party who can direct him/herself. A counselor can make his/her own decision and have a healthy consideration for his/her decision."</i>                                     |
| Subject B       | <i>"For me, for some cases I have met in this profession, I have to be able to solve it alone without discussing with others, and I can do it."</i>  |
| Subject C       | <i>"I am the type of person who can make my own decision. I cannot make a decision that is not in line with my condition. This is my principle and I always do it."</i>                        |
| Subject D       | <i>"Indeed, other people's intervention is needed to perform duties as a counselor, but not all duties involve other people. In some circumstances, autonomy and independence are needed."</i> |
| Subject E       | <i>"I can be an autonomous person, but it does not mean I do not care about other's suggestions and opinions. For me, autonomy is needed in some portions."</i>                                |

It could be concluded that autonomy is a dimension that is able to arise in subjects' lives when it is related to certain matters. Being a counselor demands them to establish a collaboration with other personnel. Accordingly, they always have a discussion before making a decision. Autonomy emerges when it is related to each individual's self, such as "What should I do, what can I do to accomplish my tasks, how should I overcome the challenges or difficulties, and how should I assist students who need me?". In other words, autonomy emerges in a certain situation requiring it without eliminating teamwork or discussion related to certain matters.

**Table 6:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration Related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

| <b>Purpose in life</b> |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Subject A              | <i>"Being a counselor for me is to adjust the life purpose to the work purpose professionally. Without a good purpose, as a counselor, I cannot work professionally. Life purpose becomes my guidance on what I should do in work."</i>                          |
| Subject B              | <i>"I always relate work to my life purpose. Everything I do in this world, I do it to reach my life purposes. Accordingly, in carrying out duties, I try to map it as detail as possible to gain my life purpose."</i>  |
| Subject C              | <i>Every person of course possesses a life purpose, so do I. Without purpose, life means nothing. I don't want to be a person with no purpose. For me, what I do should be in accordance with my life purpose so that my life becomes more meaningful.</i>       |
| Subject D              | <i>I usually make long-term and short-term life purposes. By doing so, I know what to do to obtain those purposes. However, I am not a person who is allergic to failure. There are purposes that have not been achieved even if I have mapped it properly".</i> |
| Subject E              | <i>"My life purpose is to serve God whatever the way, including job. If I do my job with my best, I believe that I will reach my life purpose."</i>  |

The aspect of purpose in life is a dimension that has already been possessed by every subject. They correlate the purpose in life with the purpose that should be achieved in a certain period of time. As a counselor, the subjects' purpose in life is divided into two, namely short-term and long-term purposes. However, they realize that not all their purposes are achieved. Commonly, the purpose that has not been achieved becomes the object of their self-reflection. Therefore, it serves as feedback for self-improvement in the future. Failing in achieving the purpose indicates the needs for changing strategy.

**Table 7:** The Results of the Conclusion Drawing from the Interview and Narration Related to Dimensions of Psychological Well-being

| <b>Personal growth</b> |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Subject A              | <i>"Being a counselor makes me to always learn. Through various ways, being a counselor "forces" me to be a better person."</i>   |
| Subject B              | <i>I love to learn and I will always do, to be a good counselor. Pragmatically, I am willing to participate in any training. Also, I am happy to do self-reflection to improve and develop myself."</i>   |
| Subject C              | <i>"Counselor should not be a passive and undeveloped individual. A counselor should be willing to develop themselves (personally and professionally) to work and serve well."</i>  |
| Subject D              | <i>"With regard to personal growth, there is no better way than self-reflection and evaluation to be a better and positive person, and I always do it."</i>   |
| Subject E              | <i>"I am not a perfect counselor, but for me it is not important to be perfect. The point is to have the willingness to develop ourselves. Accordingly, I am never shy to have a discussion with people who are able to help me improve myself. I am not reticent to learn through seminars, workshops, periodic meetings, and advanced studies."</i> |

Personal growth signifies the last dimension which has also been shown by each subject. Personal growth is defined as an individual's process to keep developing themselves as a person and as a professional. Personal growth can be accomplished by doing reflections and having discussions with colleagues, close friends, and self. Furthermore, to professionally develop themselves, subjects are always encouraged to

keep improving their understanding and skills as a counselor through available media of self-development. The available media of self-development refer to seminars, workshops, counselors' periodic meetings, and advanced studies.

#### **4.2 The Analysis Results on the Meaning and Urgency of Psychological Well Being for the Counselor**

School counselor's psychological well-being refers to a counselor's fully functioning positive psychological state emerging from the balance of his/her personal and professional roles demonstrated by several indicators namely: 1) self-acceptance, 2) positive relation with other, 3) environmental mastery, 4) autonomy, 5) purpose in life, and 6) personal growth. A counselor with high level of psychological well-being can balance his/her condition as an individual and as a counselor. Accordingly, they may reduce their work stress. Every day, the subjects of the study face a condition potentially leading to stress, depression, exhaustion, and physical illness. Hence, psychological well-being is crucial to be obtained. This is in line with the statement from the subject A.

*"..... Being a counselor means that we should be ready to lose much spare time. This condition--when it occurs along with many unfinished jobs--often leads to stress. Accordingly, it is important for me to care about myself and obtain psychological well-being...."*

For a counselor, psychological well-being does not refer to happiness. Psychological well-being refers to a condition where a counselor can still carry out his/her duties properly without burdening them. This is in agreement with the statement from the subject D.

*"..... For me, there is something more important than having a high salary and a sound financial life. Psychological well-being for me is when I can work happily, give a maximum result in my work, and have a chance to develop myself ...."*

They are still capable of managing their happiness. Even, by being involved and carrying out their counselor duties, they can still reach their true happiness. In addition, they can reach psychological well-being when they can balance their professional and personal state. A counselor should not only be carried away with the tasks they carry out, as it is stated by subject C in her narration.

*"..... There are always opportunities for me to be myself, not a counselor who thinks about school, students, and their problems..."*

The results of the data collection indicate that the subjects of the study are fully involved in carrying out their duty as a counselor without 'forgetting' themselves. Counselors find it important to possess and maintain psychological well-being. By

possessing psychological well-being, it means that a counselor is ready to improve his/her service for students' success.

### **4.3 The Analysis Results on the Supporting Factors of the Counselor's Psychological Well-being**

Counselor's psychological well-being that emerges in each subject is affected by numerous factors. These factors are diverse from one another. However, it is concluded that there are five main factors leading to the emergence and the increase of school counselor's psychological well-being. The first factor is counselor's positive self-concept, it refers to how the subject views him/herself as personal and as a counselor. He/she also accepts it wholeheartedly so that in carrying out their functions as a counselor, they will not encounter difficulties. This factor is in line with a statement conveyed by the subject B,

*"The strongest supporting factor of psychological well-being is a good self-concept. Without good self-concept, it is difficult to carry out the functions as a counselor. Otherwise, positive self-concept allows me as a counselor to be as sincere as possible and upgrade my knowledge as wide as possible."*

The second factor is an adequate level of religiosity in which it refers to how the subject views his/her present profession as something related to God. Even they state that their current occupation is God's mandate. Accordingly, they should carry out this duty wholeheartedly as a devotion to God. This factor is described by the subject E and the subject A. The subject E states,

*"There is nothing in this world that happens without God's will. Therefore, this profession is one of the God interventions. Throughout the process, carrying out this profession is as the same as performing God's order".*

This statement is in agreement with the statement revealed by the subject A who states,

*"... I always think that everything I do in this world is the form of my service to God. I will accept anything God has given me, and do it sincerely, including my job..."*

The third factor is proper goal-setting in which it refers to how the counselors are capable of setting short-term and long-term purposes in carrying out their roles as a counselor. This is in line with the results of the interview with the subject D who states;

*"...I have organized my work properly, even I have decided what I should achieve this year, this month, this week, and this day. Such an organization allows me to prioritize my work which reduces stress and failure level in performing duties as a counselor..."*

The fourth factor is counselor's mindfulness, *mindfulness* konselor, it refers to the level of the subject's awareness in terms of carrying out their roles as a counselor. It involves the awareness of consequences and opportunities when they decide to be a counselor. This factor is in agreement with subject B,

*"... The first thing that should exist in me is to be aware that I am a counselor, this duty, this responsibility, and the reason why I am willing to be a counselor..." It makes me feel happy, relax, and keep growing as a counselor."*

The fifth factor is social support in which it refers to any non-material support from anyone (colleague, family, partner, superior, students, institution, and students' parents). One of the subject (subject A) conveyed that

*"...by having family support and positive appreciation, I am happy and comfortable with my profession as a counselor..."*

#### **4.4 The Analysis Results on the Attempts for Enhancing Counselor's Psychological Well-being**

Psychological well-being is different from financial condition that can be easily calculated. It refers to a psychological state that can be achieved through various factors. The previous analysis explained various supporting factors of the school counselor's psychological well-being. The subjects described that maintaining six dimensions of psychological well-being is not an easy matter. Often, the condition of each aspect ascends and descends in different period of times. However, by utilizing the supporting factors discovered in the interviews, the subjects are able to manage and enhance their psychological well-being. This was carried out by the subject C.

*"For me, psychological well-being emerges and develops through supports from the environment. Accordingly, I use that support to develop psychological well-being. I try to gather support as many as possible to help my work..."*

### **5. Discussion**

Psychological well-being is a condition that is expected to emerge in every professional like a counselor. Many previous studies agreed that maintaining psychological well-being is vital for any individual, including a counselor. By possessing psychological well-being, an individual will (a) focus more on their purpose, (b) be able to obtain meaning of all acts he/she does, (c) be able to improve his/her life quality, and (d) be prevented from psychological distress (Ryff, 2014).

In order to measure counselor's psychological well-being, Ryff's six dimensions of psychological well-being (self-acceptance, positive relation with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth) (1995; 1998; 2002; 2008; 2014). These dimensions are often adopted in many studies in the field of

psychology. Ryff's dimensions fit the condition of the counselor including its various duties and responsibilities. These six dimensions are determined in accordance with Ryff's (1989a, 1989b) stating that psychological well-being is a complex condition which will be easier to measure and learn if it is divided into these smaller dimensions. Most of similar previous studies in the educational field also adapt Ryff's dimensions of psychological well-being (e.g Kamil, 2014; Saricaouglu & Arslan, 2014; Mansuri, 2017). These six dimensions are suitable to describe the counselor's conditions that should reach psychologically well-being state characterized by possessing self-acceptance, positive relation with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Mansuri, 2017).

In the present study, some factors that may result in psychological well-being are positive self-concept, an adequate level of religiosity, mindfulness, proper goal setting, and adequate social support. Positive self-concept significantly contributes to an individual's psychological well-being. It is in agreement with the study conducted by McConnel and Strain (2007); Locke (2006); Craven and Marsh (2008). These factors have also emerged in previous studies. It is suggested that religiosity is the determiner of the individual's psychology (Ismail and Desmukh, 2012); Aflakseir, 2012, Joshi, et al.. 2008; dan Chime, 2015). Mindfulness is directly associated with school counselor's psychological well-being (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Shapiro, Brown, dan Biegel, 2007; Keng, Smoski, and Robins, 2011; May and O'Donovan, 2011; Pidgeon and Keye 2014; Sarma, 2014); goal-setting is one of the determiners of psychological well-being and it is supported by the study carried out by Locke and Latham (2006); Street, et al. (2004); MacLeod, et al., (2008); Messersmith and Schulenberg (2010); Gregoire et al. (2012). Social support, like other factors, contributes to the individual's psychological well-being as it is also found in a study conducted by Ates (2016).

Not all of the predictors are exhibited by the subjects. This is understandable since psychological well-being is a condition that is different from one another. Based on the findings of the study, the most supporting factor of the school counselor's psychological well-being is their religiosity (Weinert, 2011; Dadkhah-Tehrani T., Habibian N., Ahmadi R., 2015).

## **6. Recommendations**

The present study found that the school counselors who were the subjects of the study possess a high level of psychological well-being. It is supported by the high score obtained from Ryff's psychological well-being scale (42 items). Based on the drawn conclusion, it was found that each counselor was capable of developing their psychological well-being due to some factors. The present study found that there are five factors resulting in the school counselor's psychological well-being. These factors entail positive self-concept, religiosity, mindfulness, goal-setting, and adequate social support. Qualitatively, these factors are identified and confirmed by the subjects as the contribution for the development of the counselor's psychological well-being. However, there has been no quantitative evidence. It is suggested that the future researchers

should conduct a study by employing Structural Equational Modelling to find out how these five factors affect the school psychological well-being. It is also recommended that the next researchers involve a larger number of samples with the same scope of the present study. Quantitative confirmation is expected to result in generalization of the conclusion drawn in the present study.

In addition to quantitative study, it is suggested that the counselor candidate education institution should attempt to develop school counselor's psychological well-being through internalization programs and training on the supporting factors of the psychological well-being this study found (positive self-concept, religiosity, mindfulness, goal-setting, and social support). By implementing this suggestion, it is expected that the school counselor possesses sufficient educational preparation to minimize counselor's stress level and burnout, including assisting the counselor in managing their psychological well-being since they are in education program.

## **7. Conclusion**

The present study was conducted by involving five school counselors in the state senior high schools in Central Java. The present study was conducted throughout 2018. Counselor's psychological well-being is selected as the topic of the study since, in Indonesian context; studies on this topic are still scarce, while it is necessary to be investigated. A phenomenological study is selected in order to obtain an in-depth understanding based on the reflection done by the subjects of the study. The basic matters the present study attempted to gather are the depiction of the school counselor's psychological well-being, its meaning for the school counselors, its supporting factors, and attempts in enhancing psychological well-being.

The present study found that each counselor has reached the dimensions as stated by Ryff (1995; 1998; 2002; 2008; 2014) namely self-acceptance, positive relation with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. Each counselor, however, holds a different level of each dimension. Psychological well-being is a state that is helpful for the counselor in carrying out his/her duties and functions at school. With high psychological well-being, counselors are capable of improving their performance and developing themselves. Besides, it encourages counselors to be more motivated in carrying out their roles. The supporting factors of counselor's psychological well-being encompass positive self-concept, religiosity, mindfulness, goal-setting, and adequate social support. In order to enhance the school counselor's psychological well-being, they optimize each supporting factor that has been discovered. It is recommended conducting a quantitative study to confirm the conclusion of this qualitative study. Moreover, it is also recommended for the institution of counselor candidate education to plan internalization and training on the factors leading to counselor's psychological well-being to develop the school counselor's psychological well-being

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank State University of Malang and Sebelas Maret University Surakarta for supporting this research.

## About the Authors

**Ribut Purwaningrum** is a doctoral candidate in State University of Malang. Her field of study is guidance and counseling education. Her research interests are counseling and career development. She is a lecturer in Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, Indonesia.

**Fattah Hanurawan** is a lecturer in Psychology department of Graduate School of State University of Malang. His research interests are philosophy and psychology.

**I Nyoman Sudana Degeng** is a lecturer in the department of Learning Technology of Graduate School of State University of Malang. His research interests are instructional technology, learning technology, educational technology, and education.

**Triyono** is a lecturer in the department of Guidance and Counseling of Graduate School of State University of Malang, his research interest is counseling.

## References

- Aflakseir A. 2012. Religiosity, Personal Meaning, and Psychological Well-being: A Study among Moslem Students in England. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* Volume 10 Number 1: 27-31.
- American School Counselor Association. 2004. *ASCA National Standards for Students*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association (2014). *Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American School Counselor Association. 2017. *The School Counselor and Comprehensive School Counseling Programs*. [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org). Accessed 22 April 2019.
- American School Counselor Association (2019). *ASCA School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Ates B. 2016. Perceived Social Support and Assertiveness as a Predictor of Candidates Psychological Counselor' Psychological Well-being. *International Educations Studies* Volume 9 Number 5: 28-39. ISSN 1913-9020 E-ISSN 1913-9039. DOI:10.5539/ies.v9n5p28
- Barnes, J. 1984. *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*. Princeton/ Bollingen Series.
- Bozzi, P. 1990. *Fisica Ingeneua Oscillazioni, Piani Inclinatie Alter Storie: Studi di Psicologia della Percezione*. Millano: Garzanti.
- Bradburn, N. 1969. *The Structure of Psychological Well-Being*. 1969. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company. Accessed 22 April 2019.



- Brown K., Ryan R. 2003. The Benefits of Being Presents: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Volume 84 Number 4: 822-844.
- Burke, R. J., Moodie, S., Dolan, S., Fiksenbaum, L. 2012. Job Demands, Social Support, Work Satisfaction, and Psychological Well-being among Nurses in Spain. *ESADE Working Paper*. Accessed 20 April 2019.
- Chime E. 2015. A Study of Religiosity and Psychological Well-being. Thesis. Ireland: The School of Social Sciences at National College of Ireland.
- Craven R., Marsh H. 2008. The Centrality of the Self-Concept Construct for Psychological Well-being and Unlocking Human Potential: Implications for Child and Educational Psychologist. *Journal of Educational and Child Psychology* Volume 25 Number 2: 104-118.
- Dadkhah-Tehrani T., Habibian N., Ahmadi R. 2015. The Relationship between Religious Attitudes and Psychological Well-being of Nurses Working in Health Centers in Qom University of Medical Sciences in 2014. *Health Spiritual Med Ethics*. Volume 2 Number 4: 15-21.
- Dodge R., Dally A., Huyton J., Sanders L. The Challenge of Defining Wellbeing. 2012. *International Journal of Wellbeing* Volume 2 Number 3: 222-235. doi:10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4.
- Grégoire S., Bouffard T., Vezeau C. 2012. Personal Goal Setting as Mediator of the Relationship between Mindfulness and Wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, Volume 2 Number 3: 236-250. doi:10.5502/ijw.v2.i3.5
- Headey B., Wearing A. 1992. *Understanding Happiness A Theory of Subjective Wellbeing*. Australia: Longman Cheshire Pty Limited. Accessed 20 April 2019.
- Huppert, F. A. 2009. Psychological Well-being: Evidence Regarding its Causes and Consequences. *Journal of Applied Psychology: Health and Wellbeing* Volume 2: 137-164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01008.x>
- Ismail Z., Deshmukh S. 2012. Religiosity and Psychological Well-being. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Volume 3 Number 11: 20-28. [www.ijbssnet.com](http://www.ijbssnet.com). Accessed 17 April 2019.
- Ismail M., Jamaludin S., Sumari M. 2017. The Counselors' Psychological Well-being. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* Volume 7 Number 3: 733-738. ISSN: 2222-6990. doi: 10.6007/IJARBS/v7-i3/2773.
- Joshi S., Kumari S., Jain M. 2008. Religious Belief and Its Relations to Psychological Well-being. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology* Volume 34 Number 2: 345-354.
- Kamil, Y. 2014. Main Factors' of Professional Well-being. *Educational Research and Reviews* Volume 9 Number 6: 153-163. doi: 10.5897/ERR2013.1691.
- Keng S., Smoski M., Robins C. 2011. Effects on Mindfulness on Psychological Health: A Review of Empirical Studies. *Journal of Clinical Review* XXX: 1-16. doi: [10.1016/j.cpr.2011.04.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2011.04.006)
- Locke, K. 2006. What Predicts Well-being: A Consistent Self Concept or A Desirable Self-Concept?. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* Vol. 25 No. 2 Hal. 228-247.

- Locke E., Latham G. 2006. New Directions in Goal Setting Theory. *Journal of Association for Psychological Science* Volume 5 Number 5: 265-268.
- Lopez G., Higuera A., Martin, C. 2016. The Role of the School Counselor in Service-Learning. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* Volume 4 Issue 1: 355-366. ISSN: 2374-9466
- Lunenburg F., 2010. School Guidance and Counseling Service. *Schooling* Volume 1 Number 1: 1-9.
- MacLeod A., Coates E., Hatherton J. 2008. Increasing Well-being Through Teaching Goal-Setting and Planning Skills: Result of a Brief Intervention. *Journal of Happiness Studies* Volume 9 Issue 2:185-196. doi: [10.1007/s10902-007-9057-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-007-9057-2)
- Mansuri, L. 2017. A Profile of Psychological Well-being of Student: Teachers of College Education. *Educational Quest: An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Science* Volume 8 Special Issue: 309-314. DOI: 10.5958/2230-7311.201700069.1.
- May S., O'Donovan A. 2007. The Advantages of the Mindful Therapist. *Journal of Psychotherapy in Australia* Volume 13 Number 4: 46-53.
- McConnell A., Strain L. 2007. *Content and Structure of the Self. The Self in Social Psychology*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Messermith E., Schulenberg J. 2010. Goal Attainment, Goal Striving, and Well-being during the Transition to Adulthood: A Ten U.S. Longitudinal Study. *Journal of New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* Number 130 Winter 2010. Online library. Accessed 23 April 2019.
- Merryman, W., Martin, M., & Martin, D. 2015. Relationship Between Psychological Well-Being and Perceived Wellness in Online Graduate Counselor Education Students. *The Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, Volume 7 Number 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7729/71.1073>.
- Meyer D., Ponton R. 2006. The Healthy Tree: A Metaphorical Perspective of Counselor Well-being. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*. Volume 28 Number 3: 189-201. <https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.28.3.03411y2tyq9mwk7b>
- Omoniyi, Iyabo M., 2016. History and Development of Guidance and Counselling: The Missing Dimension of Nigeria School Counselling Services. *International Journal of Education and Research* Volume 4 Number 11: 413-424. ISSN: 2411-5681.
- Padilla-Diaz, M. 2015. Phenomenology in Educational Qualitative Research: Philosophy as Science or Philosophical Science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence* Volume 1 Number 2: 101-110. ISSN 2373-5929.
- Pidgeon A., Keye M. 2014. Relationship Between Resilience, Mindfulness, and Psychological Well-being in University Students. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science* Volume 2 Number 5: 27-32. ISSN: 2307-924X.
- Qutoshi, S. 2018. Phenomenology: A Philosophy and Method of Inquiry. *Journal of Education and Educational Development* Volume 5 Number 1: 215-222.
- Ryff, C. 1989a. Beyond Ponce de Leon and life satisfaction: New directions in quest of successful aging. *International Journal of Behavioral Development* Volume 12: 35-55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016502548901200102>

- Ryff, C. 1989b. Happiness in Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Volume 57: 1069-1081. <https://DOI.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- Ryff, C. 1995. Psychological Well-being in Adult Life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*: 99.
- Ryff, C., Singer, B. 1998. The Contours of Positive Human Health. *Journal of Psychological Inquiry* Volume 9 Number 1. Accessed 23 April 2019.
- Ryff, C., Keyes, C. 2002. The Structure of Psychological Well-being Revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Volume 65 Number 4: 719-727.
- Ryff, C., Singer, B. 2008. Know Thyself and Become What You Are: A Eudaimonic Approach to Psychological Well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies* Volume 9:13-39 DOI 10.1007/s 10902-006-9019-0
- Ryff, C. 2014. Psychological Well-being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia. *Journal of Psychother Psychosom* Volume 83: 10-38.
- Saricaoglu H., Arslan, C. 2014. An Investigation into Psychological Well-being Levels of Higher Education Students With Respect to Personality Traits and Self-Compassion. *Educational Science: Theory & Practice* Volume 13 Number 4: 2097-2104. DOI: 10.12738/estp.2013.4.1740.
- Sarma, M. 2014. Mindfulness, Psychological Well-being, Emotional Regulation, and Creativity among South Asias-Americans. Thesis. University of Michigan.
- Shah, H., & Marks, N. 2004. A Well-being Manifesto for A Flourishing Society. London: The New Economics Foundation. Accessed 24 April 2019.
- Shapiro S., Brown K., Biegel G. 2007. Teaching Self-Care to Caregivers: Effect of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on the Mental Health of Therapist in Training. *Journal of Training and Education in Professional Psychology* Volume 1 Number 2: 105-115. DOI: 10.1037/1931-3918.1.2.105
- Street H., Nathan P., Durkin K., Morling J., Dzahari M., Carson J., Durkin E. 2004. Understanding the Relationship between Well-being, Goal-setting, and Depression in Children. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* Vol. 38 Issue 3. Accessed 23 April 2019.
- Thomas D., Morris M. 2017. Creative Counselor Self-Care. ACA Knowledge Center [counseling.org/knowledge-center/vistas](http://counseling.org/knowledge-center/vistas). Accessed 23 April 2019.
- Thomson K. 2009. Wellbeing at Work A Review of Literature. NEF Consulting. Accessed 23 April 2019.
- Weinert, I. 2012. The Influence of Religiosity on Psychological Well Being and Life Satisfaction in an Elderly Population. Dissertation. State Arizona University.
- Wertz F. 2005. Phenomenological Research Methods for Counseling Psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* Volume 52 Number 2: 157-177.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).