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## PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF ELDERLY PEOPLE IN INDONESIA: JAVANESE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING PERSPECTIVE

*Listiyati Setyo PALUPI*

*Airlangga University, Indonesia*

Psychological well-being or sometimes called happiness is associated with mental health. Happiness has become an important goal to achieve by everyone including elderly people. The psychological wellbeing of elderly people is sometimes hard to achieve because of the health and social problem that they experienced. They often feel stress of their circumstances of being old and experiencing decline in their physiological function. Not only physical problems but also socio-economic problems such as status change from the employment status to the retirement one influence their income. The stress that they experience often reduces their sense of psychological wellbeing and as a result they have a negative mental health state. Therefore, it is important to understand the psychological state of elderly people to help them avoid a negative mental health state. It is said that culture influences how people perceive something including on how they perceive happiness or psychological wellbeing. One of the psychological wellbeing perspective is the Javanese psychological wellbeing perspective. Javanese psychological wellbeing perspective states that happiness is influence by their ability to recognize their own feeling and other people's feelings that could make them achieve *rasa bebas* or feeling free from conflict that could lead them to achieve happiness or a high level of psychological wellbeing. The aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between *pangawikan pribadi (mawas diri)* and *rasa bebas* with their psychological wellbeing in elderly people. This research belongs to a survey research in which the samples studied are elderly Javanese people living in Surabaya, Indonesia. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling.

**Keywords:** *Psychological wellbeing, pangawikan Pribadi (Mawas Diri), rasa bebas, Javanese, Indonesia*

### STAREA DE BINE LA PERSOANELE ÎN VÂRSTĂ: PERSPECTIVA JAVANEZĂ PRIVIND STAREA DE BINE

Starea de bine sau, cum mai este numită uneori, starea de fericire este în strânsă legătură cu sănătatea mintală. Fericirea este un scop important de atins pentru fiecare individ, inclusiv pentru persoanele în vârstă. Pentru persoanele în vârstă starea de bine este totuși dificil de atins, din cauza problemelor sociale și de sănătate cu care se confruntă aceste persoane. În mod frecvent, ele trăiesc stări de stres din cauza faptului că, fiind bătrâne, funcțiile lor psihice sunt în declin. Nu doar problemele fizice, dar și cele de ordin socioeconomic, cum ar fi trecerea de la statutul de angajat la cel de pensionar, care se răsfrâng și asupra veniturilor acestor persoane, condiționează acest declin. Stresul pe care îl resimt deseori diminuează starea de bine a acestor persoane și, în consecință, se înrăutățește și starea lor de sănătate. Astfel, este important să înțelegem cum se manifestă starea de bine la persoanele în vârstă, pentru a le putea ajuta să evite agravarea sănătății. Se știe că mediul cultural influențează felul în care persoanele percep ceva anume, implicit starea de fericire sau starea de bine. Una dintre perspectivele asupra stării de bine este cea javaneză. Conform acestei perspective, starea de bine este influențată de abilitatea persoanelor de a-și recunoaște emoțiile proprii și pe ale altora, ceea ce le ajută să atingă *rasa bebas*, o stare de detașare de situațiile conflictuale care le-ar împiedica să trăiască stări de fericire sau un nivel înalt al stării de bine. Scopul acestei cercetări este de a investiga relația dintre *pangawikan pribadi (mawas diri)* și *rasa bebas* și implicațiile pe care acestea le au asupra stării de bine. Cercetarea a fost realizată pe persoane javaneze de vârsta a treia din Surabaya, Indonezia, participanții fiind selectați conform scopului studiului (eșantion ilustrativ).

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *stare de bine, pangawikan Pribadi (Mawas Diri), rasa bebas, javaneze, Indonezia.*

### Introduction

Psychological well-being refers to a diverse set of measures that include: life satisfaction, environmental mastery, self-efficacy, hope, and happiness [1]. Psychological wellbeing had drawn people attention since decades. Psychological wellbeing researches are mostly aimed to investigate factors that influence people's psychological wellbeing. Researchers often related psychological wellbeing with social skills, self disclosure, and self evaluations [2]. They also investigate the relation between psychological wellbeing and social process such as social status, income, motivation and social development [3].

Guerin et al not only conduct studies to identify factors that contribute to person's wellbeing, but they also try to predict people's wellbeing based on their personality. Psychological wellbeing study also found that the country or nationalities influence people's psychological wellbeing. The influence of identity on people's

psychological wellbeing was done by several studies on the relationship between ethnic identity and psychological wellbeing of minorities (7–12). Furthermore, researchers has found that cultural internalization affect people psychological wellbeing [4,5].

The study conducted by Downie et al (2004) found that internalization of cultural belief and standards maximized individuals psychological wellbeing [6]. Therefore, it is important to understand the cultural context where people live in order to have a comprehensive understanding of their psychological wellbeing.

One of the psychological wellbeing concepts in Indonesia is Javanese Concept of psychological wellbeing. According to the theory there are two concepts that relate to the psychological wellbeing which are *pangawikan pribadi (mawas diri)* and *rasa bebas*. *Mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)* had a significant contribution in the realm of psychological functioning. It is explained that people that try to search for him/her self would understand and recognise him/her self. The understanding of him/her self as a result of the quest is what he called as *pangawikan pribadi (mawas diri)* [7]. Research on the relationship between *mawas diri* and emotion regulation, define *mawas diri* as a method used to classify our own feeling and other people's feeling in order to better understand the feelings of others [8]. The difficulty to recognize one's own feelings and the feeling of the others will lead to an internal conflict (conflict inside him/her self) and an external conflict (conflict with other) [9]. Lack of *mawas diri* will hinder them to feel free from conflict or known as *rasa bebas* or the feeling of free from conflict either internally or externally [10].

This research aimed to investigate the Javanese elderly males and females on their psychological wellbeing. In this investigation, psychological wellbeing is operationalized with a diverse set of measures that include: life satisfaction, environmental mastery, self-efficacy, hope, and happiness [11].

## Method

### Participants

Participants in this study were 49 elderly (29 male, 20 female) who volunteered to complete a questionnaire. Participants' age was normally distributed and ranged from 45 to 60 years old. All of the participants are Javanese people in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia.

### Procedure

Participants were given consent form that stated that they are willing to be a volunteered in this research and to complete a questionnaire that is given to them. The self-paced questionnaires were completed in a room that typically had 49 people in it. Participants generally completed the questionnaire in 20-30 min.

### Measures

*Pangawikan pribadi (mawas diri)* were assessed with *Mawas Diri Inventory*. This 11-item instrument contains statements that assess the individual ability to recognize themselves and their feeling. The social skills inventory is based on Javanese theory of personality developed by Ki Suryo Mentaram (1986). This inventory had an  $a = 0.64$ .

*Rasa Bebas* were measured with the *Rasa Bebas scale*. This 7-item instrument is composed of seven statements that reflect the free from conflict feeling on the level of themselves and others. The *Rasa Bebas scale* is based on Javanese theory of personality developed by Ki Suryo Mentaram (1986). The internal consistency of this scale was  $a = 0.55$

*Psychological well-being* was assessed by means of five instruments which are life satisfaction inventory, environmental mastery inventory, self efficacy inventory, hope inventory, happiness in life inventory. This dimension in the inventory is developed from a group of instrument used in the research on Positive interpersonal relationships that mediate the association between social skills and psychological well-being. *Life satisfaction* has 4-item that measure subjective satisfaction with life (e.g., "I feel that I get everything that I need in life"). *Environmental mastery* was measured with the 4-items that assess a sense of being in control of one's environment and having the ability to manage challenges posed by the environment. Sample items include "I am quite good on finishing my routine activities". Five items of *Self-efficacy* measure individual self efficacy in social situations (e.g., "I can easily adapt with new situation,"). *Hope* was assessed with 4-items that ask participants to respond statements that suggest a sense of goal directed determinism and wherewithal for planning ways to meet goals. It has items such as "Failure can not stop me for trying to achieve my goal". *Happiness in life* was measured with a 8-item instrument which contains items that tap into subjective feelings of global happiness with one's life (e.g., "I have a happy life"). The total number of items in psychological wellbeing inventory is 25. This scale had an internal consistency of  $a = 0.74$ .

## Results

The result of correlation between *mawas diri* (*pangawikan pribadi*) and *rasa bebas* among Javanese elderly female and male are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

### Correlations between *Mawas Diri-Rasa Bebas* Among Javanese elderly Female and male

	Sex		<i>Mawas Diri</i>	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>
1.	Female	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>	1	
		<i>Mawas Diri</i>		1
2.	Male	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>	0.80	
		<i>Mawas Diri</i>		0.80

All r coefficients  $p < 0.01$

Results in table 1 are clearly show that there was a strong and positive relationship between *Mawas diri* (*pangawikan pribadi*) and *rasa bebas* both for elderly men and elderly women. The aforementioned findings are proved that the individual ability to recognize themselves and their feeling or "*Mawas diri* (*pangawikan pribadi*)" resulted in a feeling of freedom from conflict with themselves and with others. People who are able to recognize themselves and their feeling will feel freedom from conflict with themselves and others.

The final step is to examine the prediction that *rasa bebas* is associated with the five indicators of psychological well-being (i.e., life satisfaction, environmental mastery, self-efficacy, hope, happiness). The relationships were assessed with Spearman correlations. These results indicate positive and statistically significant associations between *rasa bebas* and psychological wellbeing among elderly men and women. The association between *rasa bebas* and psychological wellbeing among elderly male is strongly significant,  $r = 1$ ,  $p < 0.01$  as its shown in Table 2.

Table 2

### Correlations between *Rasa Bebas*-Psychological Well-Being of Elderly Male

		Psychological well-being	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>
1.	Psychological well-being	–	
2.	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>	1	–

All r coefficients  $p < 0.01$

Table 3

### Correlations between *Rasa Bebas*-Psychological Well-Being of Elderly Female

		Psychological well-being	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>
1.	Psychological well-being	–	
2.	<i>Rasa Bebas</i>	0.66	–

All r coefficients  $p < 0.01$

Although the relationship between *rasa bebas* and psychological wellbeing among elderly female is not as strong as for elderly male, but it's shown a significant result with  $r = 0.66$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This result is described in Table 3 above.

## Discussion

Results from this study show that there is no significant difference in psychological wellbeing of elderly male and female. In other words, both elderly males and females are satisfied with life, feeling of mastery over one's environment, self confident in social situation, hopeful, and happy with his/her life.

The assumption that there is no difference in psychological wellbeing of Javanese elderly people is well supported by the findings from this investigation ( $p = 0.304 > 0.025$ , (two tailed)). Javanese people hold the concept of "*mawas diri* (*pangawikan pribadi*)", person ability to recognize their feeling, that lead to "*rasa bebas*" feeling free from conflict. It is understandable why people with *mawas diri* (*pangawikan pribadi*) would experience *rasa bebas* or feeling free from conflict.

According to Javanese psychological wellbeing theory, people who had *mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)* will be able to recognize their feeling that would make them feel free from conflict, either internal or external conflict, which is known as "*rasa bebas*". Failure to differentiate their feeling will make people feel the opposite feeling such as bad and good, happy and sad, etc. The opposite feeling that people had will result on internal conflict (inside him/her self) and external conflict (between him/her self with others). Internal and external conflict experienced by people who are lack of *mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)* will hinder them to feel free from conflict or known as *rasa bebas*. This feeling of freedom from conflict will influence their mental health and lead them to have positive psychological wellbeing.

It can be said that people who had the ability to recognize their feeling or *mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)* will feel free from internal and external conflict or *rasa bebas* which will influence their mental health and lead to a positive state of psychological wellbeing. The noteworthy aspect of these findings is that there is no difference in the psychological wellbeing of Javanese elderly people. It is reasonable to assume that as people, whether male or female, acquired the ability to recognize their feeling then they will feel freedom from internal and external conflict and achieve what it called "*rasa bebas*". Feeling freedom from conflict increases their sense of happiness, hope, self-efficacy, environmental mastery, and satisfaction with life. We can say that people who can achieve "*rasa bebas*" will influence their mental health that will lead him/her to have a positive state of psychological wellbeing.

Interpretation of these findings is constrained by the fact that all variables were measured by self-report. In addition to problems associated with common method variance, self-reports may yield somewhat incomplete measures of certain constructs which can also be assessed through behavioral assessment and peer ratings. It would be useful for future research to replicate these findings with other methods of assessment.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that there is no significant difference in psychological wellbeing of Javanese elderly people because they hold what is called "*mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)*" by Ki Suryo Mentaram. The reason for this association is fairly clear from these data: *rasa bebas* or feeling freedom from conflict yielded from *mawas diri (pangawikan pribadi)* will lead to the positive state of psychological wellbeing both for Javanese elderly males and females.

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### Date despre autor:

**Listyati Setyo PALUPI**, lecturer, Faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University, Indonesia.

**E-mail:** listyati.palupi@psikologi.unair.ac.id

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