

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF VOLUNTEER TEACHER TRAINERS IN THE REMOTE AREA IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Indonesia is a wide country and it consists of thousands of islands. This condition makes many regions in Indonesia do not get the proper educational facilities. In addition, the quality of teachers in the remote areas is still poor. People who concern with the condition of education in the remote areas are still rare because of the limited access and high cost to get there. However, there is one group of volunteers who care about the condition of education in the remote areas of Indonesia called RUBI (Ruang Berbagi Ilmu). RUBI is a voluntary movement of professionals that focus on improving teachers' competence in the remote areas. The purpose of this study was to explore the motivation of the volunteer and to understand how the dynamics of the volunteers in achieving psychological well-being.

The research was conducted by a qualitative method using phenomenology approach. The respondents in this study were professionals who had already traveled to remote areas to become a volunteer teacher trainer. The results of this study indicated that becoming volunteer requires a lot of sacrifices, such as material and time. In addition, being a volunteer also has great challenges because they have to adapt to a new environment. However, despite these sacrifices and inconveniences, many volunteers feel addicted to get involved in this activity. There are many benefits perceived as volunteers such as 1) increasing insight and knowledge from any source and any region, 2) developing their competence, 3) gaining inner satisfaction and meaningful life, 4) becoming more widespread the social relations, and 5) becoming more positive and more grateful. In general, being volunteers in the remote area has affected the six dimensions of psychological well-being, that is self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. The dynamics of psychological well-being of the volunteer trainers are discussed further in this paper.

Keywords: psychological well-being, volunteer, remote area, Indonesia, qualitative

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a wide country and it consists of thousands of islands. This geographical condition has an effect on the quality of education in Indonesia. Some areas with extreme geographical condition and difficult to reach by public transportation will be difficult to get the access to improve the quality of the education. The

data from Statistics Indonesia (2017) shows that in 2016 there were 4,62% of people over 15 years were illiterate. This amount does not meet the standards set by UNESCO that is 4%. The illiterate people are mostly from Papua, one of the remote areas in Indonesia. Such condition is exacerbated by a lack of concern from the local people. Some local people prefer to go to the city and get jobs with higher salaries, so that the education in their region is getting left behind. If only relying on government and local people, then the education in remote areas will be difficult to move forward. Therefore, the role of an NGO in advancing education in the region becomes very important.

One of the NGOs that actively invites volunteers to get involved in its program and achieve its vision is Gerakan Indonesia Mengajar/GIM (Indonesia Teaches Movement). GIM is an educational organization. The greatest goal of GIM is to invite all parties to take part in solving education problems in Indonesia. By the end of 2016, more than 25,000 people have been involved as volunteers of GIM (Apriyanti, 2016). One group of volunteers who are in the auspices of GIM is named Ruang Berbagi Ilmu (RUBI). RUBI was first initiated in 2015 aimed at improving the teacher capacity in the remote areas through training and mentoring for various material themes. RUBI volunteers come from various professional circles. These volunteers traveled to various parts of the region independently to provide training to teachers in remote areas. In this paper, the volunteer teacher trainer in remote area in Indonesia will refer to the RUBI volunteers.

Volunteering is a unique aspect of the lives of many people. Every year, millions of people devote a significant amount of time and energy to help others (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, Miene, 1998). Volunteering activities are generally defined as any activity in which time and effort are provided free of charge for the benefit of others, groups, or organizations (Wilson, 2000). In the history of the Indonesian Nation, volunteer is actually not something new. Since ancient times, volunteerism has been rooted in tradition and practiced in the life of the community, such as “*gotong royong*” (mutual cooperation) in the development of public facilities, marriage, and death (Savitri, 2005).

Almost all NGOs need volunteers. Without the help of volunteers many activities in various sectors can not be run (Wu, Lo, Liu, 2009). Savitri (2005) reveals several reasons why NGOs are important for involving volunteers in several programs, among others: 1) volunteers will strengthen the responsibilities, participation, and interactions of civil society; 2) volunteer programs will accelerate the social change and the achievement of strong community development; 3) volunteer programs are useful both for institutions and volunteers; And 4) Voluntary programs are based on equal and mutual respect.

From the results of studies that have been collected by Windsor, Anstey, and Rodgers (2008), it was identified that volunteer individuals also get some benefits, such as physical health as well as better mental health. In psychological well-being studies conducted on earthquake disaster volunteers in Pakistan, it was found that by volunteering, individuals feel there is a positive change from themselves, where they can be more respectful of themselves, others, life, feel close to God and feel the satisfaction in life (Najia, 2005). Hall, Hall, Cameron, Green (2004) also mentioned other positive impacts involved in joining volunteers such as gaining knowledge, improving social networks, and improving career prospects through voluntary activities.

Although volunteer activities have many benefits, it can be realized that participating as volunteers is not easy. There are many things to be sacrificed to volunteer. As experienced by Jenny in the initial interview of this research, Jenny said that many things should be sacrificed such as travel expenses and work leave. In addition, Jenny must also prepare and meet all the needs in the area of devotion by themselves. Jenny said as follows.

“For one trip, especially if we go out Java at least we need 3-4 million Rupiah for plane tickets. There, we also have to look for our own meals and residence. This activity should also take a quota of work leave, it could be up to four days of the leave.”

The finding that volunteers have to spend a lot of personal expenses and sacrifice their time for this activity is interesting. It is certainly interesting to uncover the motivation behind it. Previous research on volunteer motivation found six functions of a person as volunteers: protecting the ego from the difficulties of life; expressing ones altruistic and humanitarian values; improving career prospects; developing and strengthen social ties; gaining knowledge, skills, and abilities; and helping the ego grow and develop (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Research on work motivation for volunteers and non-volunteers has also been done by Gastañaduy, Paredes, & Lens (2014). From the results of this study it is found that volunteer groups have higher intrinsic

motivation scores than non-volunteer groups. This study also led to the conclusion that intrinsic motivation correlates positively significantly with well-being.

The emergence of Positive Psychology slightly changed the paradigm of Psychology became more focused on the things that contain optimism. Psychology previously associated with science that studies the weakness and disruption of individuals, has now shifted to focusing on one's own strengths (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Study of well-being is one of the most popular topic in the study of Positive Psychology.

There are two perspectives on well-being, namely hedonism and eudomonia. In a hedonic perspective, the popular term used is Subjective Well-Being (SWB), that explain that happiness is depends on individual's life satisfaction, the dominance of positive affect, and the low negative affect (Diener, 2000). Volunteering is one of the unique activities. On the one hand, by following this activity a lot of things should be sacrificed, but on the other hand many positive things gained. Therefore, the hedonic perspective of well-being will be difficult to explain this contradiction because this paradigm always focus on the pleasure as the basis of human well-being and always avoids unpleasant things.

Another type of well-being is Psychological well-being based on an eudamonic perspective. Psychological well-being is a concept issued by Ryff (1989). In contrast to a perspective that focuses solely on pleasure to achieve well-being, the concept of psychological well-being is described as an attempt to reach perfection representing one's own potential (Ryff, 1995). In general, this concept emphasizes human development and the existence of challenges in life (Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff, 2002). Ryff says that people who have good psychological well-being will have a positive psychological function. Psychological well-being has six dimensions, that is: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989).

From the explanation above, the concept of psychological well-being is more interesting to explain the psychological dynamics that occur in volunteers. Therefore, the focus of this research is to understand the psychological dynamics of RUBI Volunteers in achieving psychological well-being. This is because these activities are contradictory, which on the one hand must sacrifice many things, but on the other hand also makes the volunteers addicted to do again. Because the involvement of volunteers also can not be separated from the motivation that is also influenced by the circumstances, the question derived of this research is what are the challenges and benefits of volunteer activities that also affect the motivation of volunteers? This research is important in relation to the practical benefits that can be obtained from this study that is in terms to promote of voluntary activities that can be done by NGOs or government agencies.

2 METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research was qualitative method. This method was used because it was able to provide an overview and understanding of the focus of research on the psychological well-being of RUBI volunteers. The approach used in this research is phenomenology approach. Crewell (1998) stated that the phenomenological study aims to gain an overview and explanation of the meaning of the individual's experience of a concept or phenomenon. This was the reason why I used qualitative research methods with a phenomenology study approach. I wanted to understand the meanings understood by the respondent related to their experience to be a volunteers teacher trainer in the remote area.

2.1 Respondent

Respondents in this study were determined in accordance with the general criteria phenomenological study, that is:

- a. Respondents have experienced the phenomenon that was the focus of research. Respondents in this study were RUBI volunteers that had already departed to be a teacher trainer in the remote areas.
- b. Respondents had an interest in the meaning of the phenomenon
- c. Respondents were able and willing to share their experiences
- d. Respondents allowed researchers to make a recording and present the data obtained

Selection of respondents in this study used purposive sampling technique by determining the criteria of respondents, so that only people meeting the criteria could be a respondent. To increase the number of respondents, in this study also conducted snow ball sampling procedure by asking the first respondent to recommend the next respondent.

2.2 Instrument

This was a qualitative research, so the data collection tool was I myself as a researcher. The main instrument for collecting the data was by interviews conducted by me. Other tools used in data collection were mobile phones to record interview results and interview guidelines containing the questions to be asked. Here were some questions used to explore the experience of respondents:

1. How can you get involved in RUBI?
2. What is your role as a RUBI volunteer?
3. What are the benefits of this activity for you?
4. How is the decision making process until finally leaving to volunteer in remote areas?
5. How does happiness form as a volunteer?
6. What are the positive things that increase in you?

2.3 Data analysis method

Data analysis was done by reading transcripts and field notes repeatedly until the researcher could understand the data well. According to Colaizzi (1978) (in Burns and Groove, 2009), the process of data analysis on phenomenological methods is:

1. Read about the phenomenon to be studied
2. Read all transcripts repeatedly to get the theme
3. Categorize the meaning that has been obtained based on the themes.
4. Combining the results, so that a complete description of the phenomenon is formed.
5. Formulating a complete description of the phenomenon becomes a clear statement.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The way of research

The research began with the selection of respondents in accordance with predetermined categories, that is RUBI volunteers who have already departed to be a teacher trainer in remote area. The informant used for the initial interview was one of the Universitas Gadjah Mada lecturers with the initials of Sunu (not a real name). This informant became the person who gave the next respondent's recommendation, who would be explored more, that is Jenny and Beno (not a real name). The first respondent was Jenny. Interview with Jenny was conducted on May 26, 2017 at the workplace of respondents during working hours. Conditions in the office quite quiet and the workloads of respondents were not much, so that the time of the respondents was quite loose and could be interviewed deeper. The second respondent was Beno. Interview with Beno was conducted on May 26, 2017. Interview was conducted at cafe terrace. The atmosphere during the interview was less conducive because the location was on the roadside and many people passed by, so it was noisy.

3.2 Individual Descriptions

An individual description in this study is a resume and reflection of the interview and observation data with two respondents, Jenny and Beno

3.2.1 Respondent I (Jenny)

Jenny is an employee of a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) currently domiciled in Yogyakarta. Jenny is 27 years old and comes from Bali. As one of the employees of SOEs, Jenny's income is quite a lot, especially when Jenny is not married yet. Jenny has an interest in the field of teaching. That is why Jenny often involved in voluntary activities in education. Jenny have travelled to South Sumatera, to be a volunteer teacher trainer. That location is far from Java (centar island in Indonesia) and it took about 3-4 hours to go ther by aeroplane. Jenny has a strong interest in teaching and enjoys the childrens's world. Jenny has a dream to set up a school in his hometown, so that everyone has the opportunity to get a decent education. Being a RUBI volunteer is Jenny's way of expanding the network to realize its long-term goals for setting up a school. In addition, Jenny is also interested in volunteering because it can contribute more to others, so Jenny feel her life more meaningful.

Jenny felt it was not easy to become volunteer and to continue volunteering. This was because objectively many things had to be sacrificed and a lot of inconvenience to be felt. By volunteering, she had to spend a

lot of her money to go to the remote area and also had to take a work leave. To become a volunteer also requires a strong physical and mental. This strong mental is necessary especially in facing new challenges from the people in areas that have different culture and custom. Although being a volunteer requires a lot of sacrifices and challenges, many positive things obtained by Jenny. Jenny could develop herself and could enrich knowledge that she has not known before. Jenny could learn many things from anyone she met. During volunteering, Jenny was required to be able to teach well, therefore Jenny always improved her ability. Being a volunteer also made her social networking grow larger.

Happiness to be a volunteer according to Jenny is when getting appreciation from the people in the remote area, especially from children. Jenny is always asked when to go back to that place again, and that makes Jenny touched. Jenny felt her presence could be useful and missed by many people and this led to her inner satisfaction. Related to the happiness of being volunteer, Jenny stated:

"I am happy that they are satisfied with what we give and they delivered it from the heart. Therefore, I think our presence is highly appreciated and useful. It was an experience that made the fatigue of being volunteer is paid off."

3.2.2 Respondent II (Beno)

Beno is a 24 years old entrepreneur who is currently domiciled in Yogyakarta. As an entrepreneur who is starting to pioneer his business, Beno revenues are still fluctuating. But, this uncertain income does not prevent the intention of Beno to go to the farthest areas in Indonesia to become a RUBI volunteer. It makes Beno motivated to become a RUBI volunteer by visiting the furthest area in Indonesia. Beno also loves to travel because he will meet new people who can open his insights. Beno has an interest in traveling. Beno have travelled to Fak-fak (small island near Papua, one of the most remote area in Indonesia) to be a volunteer teacher trainer. It takes about 7 hours to go ther by aeroplane. The happiness to be a volunteer according to Beno is when you can explore new places and meet new people. Related to happiness as a volunteer, Beno stated:

"I am happy to explore Papua. I took a walk guided by the locals and they are very friendly. We spent the night in one of the districts in Papua and we were really entertained by the father of the traditional chairman there, it was amazing. So happy to be there."

Beno felt it was not easy to become volunteer and to continue volunteering. This was because of by volunteering, he had to spend a lot of his money to go to the remote area. The principle of life of Beno is to spread as much goodness as possible. Being a RUBI volunteer was one way for Beno to apply his principles of life he believed.

Many positive things obtained Beno by becoming a volunteer. The most positive thing was that Beno made the experience of becoming a RUBI volunteer to transform himself into a better way. This was evidenced by the change of mindset that initially has stereotypes to the Papuans. In addition, the experience of being a volunteer RUBI also made Beno learn new things and grateful for what has been owned at this time. Being a volunteer also made his social networking grow larger. Related to positive thing Beno get from volunteering, he stated:

"Positive things, I obviously got new friends, new experiences, new knowledge and the most important thing is that I could learn from them. Before I lefted for Fak-fak, I tended to see the Papuans as inland people, people who are not friendly at all. But when I came there, on the contrary, the people there were very friendly. I am more grateful for what I have right now"

3.3 General finding

Based on the description of the two respondents that have been described previously, it can be formulated research findings in general as follows:

a. In terms of motivation to be volunteer, both respondents stated two different things. Jenny decided to be volunteer because of her passion and long-term goal, while Beno decided to be volunteer to explore and broaden his horizons. Nevertheless, both respondents wanted to contribute to others.and they claimed to be independent in deciding to become volunteers.

b. Both Jenny and Beno admitted that to be volunteers required a lot of sacrifices, such as material and time. In addition, being a volunteer also had big challenges because they had to adapt to a new environment that was different from their origin environment.

c. Although the challenges and sacrifices of volunteering are considerable, volunteering also brings happiness. Jenny and Beno claimed the ultimate happiness when being volunteer is when greeted by the people and appreciated for the effort they made.

d. Volunteering also provided many positive things for Jenny and Beno. Volunteering could increase knowledge. Being a volunteer was also able to increase the competence, because as a volunteer Jenny and Beno were required to be able to teach well. Being a volunteer also made Jenny's and Beno's social relations more widespread because of meeting people from various regions

e. Especially for Beno, being a RUBI volunteer was also a means for self-transformation. Many positive changes after following RUBI eliminated stereotypes and became more grateful. For Beno, being a RUBI volunteer was just running the principle of his life to spread the goodness as much as possible in order to later reap the goodness.

4 DISCUSSION

The main question of this research is about how is the psychological dynamics of RUBI volunteers in achieving psychological well-being. In this discussion will be described how the process of respondents to interpret the experience as a RUBI volunteer to achieve psychological well-being that includes six dimensions, that is self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth.

The decision to become a volunteer is based on one's motivation. Motivation in this case can be intrinsic or extrinsic. From the findings of both respondents, they made the decision to volunteer for intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as doing activities for inherent satisfaction and not for some external rewards. Motivation drives a person to keep volunteer despite the emergence of many contradictions.

The contradictions in voluntary activities are unavoidable. It is found in both respondents. On the one hand, there are many sacrifices to be made for volunteering such as material and time sacrifices. In addition, being a volunteer also has a big challenge because they have to adapt to a new environment that is different from their original environment. Such an uncomfortable experience if associated with a hedonic perspective would be avoided. Hedonic perspectives that is popular with the term of subjective well-being (Diener, 2000) are always emphasize to maximize pleasure and minimize discomfort. Consequently everything that causes discomfort will be avoided.

This findings are in line with previous findings on volunteers (Najia, 2005; Windsor, Anstey, and Rodgers, 2008). A volunteer, though always having an uncomfortable experience, will always be motivated to repeat his activities. Behind the inconvenience experienced, there is happiness arising from this activity. The ultimate happiness when volunteering is when greeted by the people and appreciated for the effort they made. Happiness in this case is not merely as a pleasure, but the happiness felt by respondents is interpreted as relational happiness. That means people can feel happy when they can be useful to others. It is like the findings of several studies in the context of eastern culture (Hitokoto & Uchida, 2015; Kitayama, Markus & Kurokawa, 2000; Uchida, Norasakkunkit & Kitayama, 2013; Uchida & Ogihara, 2012)

Objectively, it is also acknowledged by respondents if the experience of being a RUBI volunteer brings many benefits to them. Some of the perceived benefits include 1) increasing knowledge from any source and any region, 2) increasing competence, 3) gaining inner satisfaction and meaning of life, 4) social relations becoming more widespread, and 5) becoming more positive and more grateful.

The process of respondents to find the meaning of their happiness has an impact on their well-being, including the psychological well-being. The following is a complete review of the six dimensions of psychological well-being experienced by respondents.

1. self-acceptance

The individual who is able to accept himself has a positive attitude towards himself; acknowledging the

various aspects that exist within him, including all good and bad things; and feel positive about his past (Ryff, 1995). It is shown by the respondent in interpreting their experience as a RUBI volunteer. Being a RUBI volunteer means to do a kindness and contribute to others. RUBI volunteers looked at himself positively for doing kindness. This is something positive for oneself because it is believed that if we do a kindness, we will pick up the result of the kindness.

2. Positive relation with others

This dimension emphasizes the importance of building warmth and trust in an interpersonal relationship. In this dimension, the ability to love is seen as a central component of individual mental health (Ryff, 1989). In this study, two respondents participated as RUBI volunteers, also built positive relationships with others. RUBI volunteer activities add friendship and social relations. Respondents felt welcomed and also felt more intimate relationships with residents in remote areas.

3. Autonomy

In this dimension, individuals who have achieved self-actualization are described to be capable of demonstrating autonomous functions and having resistance to enculturation. In addition, a fully functioning human has an internal locus of evaluation. The person does not seek approval from others, but evaluates himself with the personal standards he has (Ryff, 1989). RUBI volunteers have reached this level of independence. The respondent decides his involvement in the RUBI volunteer activities of his own choice without any intervention from the other party. These volunteers also undergo their activities even without the acknowledgment of others. The independence of RUBI volunteers is also seen in the way they adapt to the new environment. When cultures encountered are different from their origin culture, these volunteers act to be themselves although at some moments they must respect the local culture.

4. Environmental mastery

In this dimension the individual's ability to choose or create an environment that suits his physical condition is a characteristic of mental health. The maturity of the individual in this dimension is seen in the individual's participation toward the environment outside himself (Ryff, 1989). Deciding to go to a remote area is an indication that this RUBI volunteer has reached the level of environmental mastery. Respondents are not only silent in their home environment, but choose to be agents of change in new environments with their capabilities.

5. Purpose in life

In this dimension, the mental health of the individual is seen in their beliefs and feelings that there is a goal and meaning in life. Maturity is emphasized by having a clear goal and having a direction to reach the goal in their life (Ryff, 1989). Both respondents in living their lives hold their respective principles. This principle is the basis for acting. Beno based his actions on the principle of must give goodness, therefore he does good anywhere. While Jenny has a dream to build up a school, so everyone has the opportunity to get a decent education. It is the principle and purpose of life that encourages these volunteers to be active in RUBI volunteer activities.

6. Personal growth

In this dimension optimal psychological function requires not only attainment in certain characteristics, but also when individuals can develop their potential sustainably (Ryff, 1989). For the respondents, being a volunteer also gives a lot of positive things. They can increase their knowledge. Being volunteers is also a means to develop competence, because as a volunteer respondents are required to be able to teach well. Especially for Beno, being a RUBI volunteer is also a means for his self-transformation. Many of the positive changes gained after following RUBI like eliminating stereotypes and means of gratitude.

From the above explanation, we can summarize a conceptual concept of well-being of RUBI volunteers. The conceptual framework can be seen on the next page.

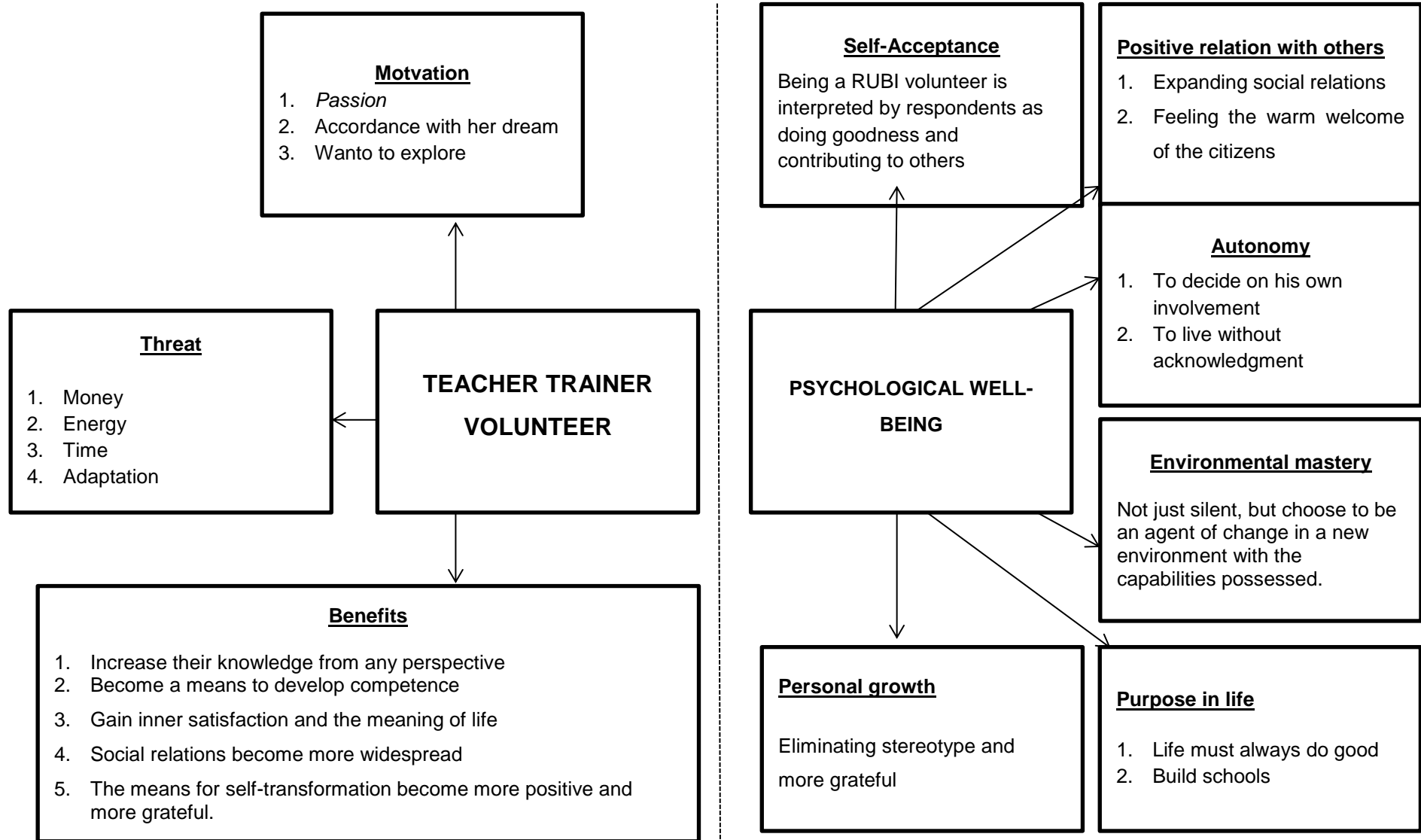


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Summary of Well-Being of RUBI Volunteers

5 CONCLUSION

To be a volunteer requires a lot of sacrifices, such as material, energy and time. In addition, being a volunteer also has big challenges because it has to adapt to the new environment. However, some of the benefits perceived as RUBI volunteers includes: 1) increasing knowledge from any source from any region, 2) being a means to develop competence, 3) gaining inner satisfaction and meaning of life, 4) social relations becoming more widespread, and 5) the means for self-transformation become more positive and more grateful.

Being a RUBI volunteer has a positive impact on the psychological well-being of respondents. The dynamics of psychological wellbeing of RUBI volunteers are described as follows:

- a) Being a RUBI volunteer is interpreted by respondents as doing good things and contributing to others. This shows the positive self-acceptance of the respondents.
- b) By being a RUBI volunteer, respondents also build positive relationships with others. RUBI volunteer activities add social relations and relationships become more intimate. RUBI volunteers can feel warm welcome from the residents in the area they visited.
- c) RUBI volunteers have reached the level of independence. The respondent decides his involvement in the RUBI volunteer activities of his own choice without the intervention of the other party. These volunteers also undergo their activities even without the acknowledgment of others.
- d) Deciding to go to remote areas far from their hometown, is an indication that these RUBI volunteers have reached the level of environmental mastery. Respondents are not only silent in their home environment, but choose to be agents of change in new environments with their capabilities.
- e) Both respondents in undergoing their lives hold the principle and goal of life respectively. These principles and goals form the basis for acting. This is reflected in the principle of Beno that life should always do something good or Jenny who has a dream to build schools in her hometown.
- f) For respondents, being a volunteer also provides many positive things, such as increasing knowledge, developing competence, and the means to transform themselves into a positive direction.

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