



CHRIST
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE | DELHI NCR | PUNE

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr A Sabu John, Registration Number: 1750072, PhD Scholar at the School of Psychological Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Saturday, 09 May 2026 at 02.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Designing and Evaluating a Personal Development Intervention to Enhance Professional Quality of Life in Trainee Counsellors**
- Discipline** : **Psychology**
- External Examiner - I** : **Dr Seena M Mathai**
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Union Christian College, Aluva
Karumalloor
Kerala - 683102
- External Examiner - II** : **Dr Watinaro Longkumer**
Associate Professor and Head
St. Joseph University, Chümoukedima
Ikishe Model Village, Dimapur
Nagaland - 797115
- Supervisor** : **Dr Viju P D**
Professor
School of Psychological Sciences
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru - 560029
Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 06 May 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Counsellor training is a developmentally demanding period in which trainees must negotiate academic expectations, supervised practice, emotional exposure to client distress, and the gradual consolidation of professional identity. Within this context, the present study examined whether personal development could be addressed in a structured manner to support trainee counsellors' professional quality of life. The study focused on self-compassion, meaning in life, and holistic self-care as training-salient personal development resources, considered counselling self-efficacy as a central professional capacity, and examined professional quality of life through compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. The overall aim was to design and evaluate a structured personal development intervention for trainee counsellors within the Indian training context. The study adopted a multiphase mixed-methods design. Phase I generated foundational evidence through a quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The quantitative strand examined structural relationships among the study variables in a final sample of 345 trainee counsellors drawn from postgraduate counselling psychology programmes in India. The qualitative strand explored personal development processes through interviews with trainee counsellors and counsellor educators. Phase II involved the development, expert review, pilot implementation, and refinement of a 20-session, 30-hour personal development intervention delivered over 10 weeks, with pilot participation from 14 trainee counsellors. Phase III evaluated the refined intervention using a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test design with a waitlist control group, involving a final sample of 131 trainee counsellors, including 60 in the intervention group and 71 in the waitlist control group. Findings across phases indicated a coherent pattern linking personal development resources to professional quality of life. In Phase I, self-compassion, presence of meaning in life, and holistic self-care were positively associated with counselling self-efficacy and were directly or indirectly linked to compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress, while search for meaning did not demonstrate the same structural salience. The qualitative findings further showed that personal development in training was experienced as a layered process involving emotional regulation, purpose and values, relational support, compassion-related strain, professional confidence, and embodied self-care. Pilot implementation indicated strong feasibility and acceptability. In Phase III, baseline-adjusted ANCOVA results showed significant intervention effects for seven of the eight outcomes. Relative to the waitlist control group, the intervention group demonstrated higher self-compassion, compassion satisfaction, presence and search for meaning in life, and holistic self-care, along with lower burnout and secondary traumatic stress. Counselling self-efficacy, however, did not show a statistically significant adjusted group difference. Overall, the study supports the view that personal development is a structured and professionally relevant domain within counsellor education. It demonstrates that targeted intervention can strengthen important personal development and professional quality of life outcomes during training, while counselling self-efficacy may require a longer developmental window shaped by supervision, practicum exposure, and repeated mastery experiences. The study contributes contextually grounded evidence from India and offers an applied framework for integrating personal development more intentionally within counsellor training.

Keywords: *counsellor training, personal development, professional quality of life, self-compassion, counselling self-efficacy, self-care*

Publications:

1. **John, A. S., & Viju, P. D.** Recentring personal development in counsellor education: Integrating self-compassion, meaning, and self-care in training. In A. Kumar & R. Chakraborty (Eds.), *Psychology teaching and learning: Innovations, trends and best practices*. John Wiley & Sons. DOI: 10.1002/9781394402397.ch16
2. **John, A. S., Viju, P. D., Chukkali, S., & Padmakumari, P.** (in press). Counseling self-efficacy linking personal development resources and professional quality of life. *The Counseling Psychologist*.