



At-Taujih: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam

Volume 3 Nomor 2, Juni 2025. Halaman 150-160

ISSN. 2986-0350 (*Online*)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37216/taujih.v2i2.1251>

<https://jurnal.iaihnwpancor.ac.id/index.php/taujih>

Analysis of Social Anxiety in Juvenile Prisoners: The Urgency of Counseling Services

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the level of social anxiety among juvenile inmates housed in the Tanjung Pati Class II Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Institution. A total of 19 participants were included in the study, utilizing a total sampling technique. Social anxiety was assessed via a self-report questionnaire employing the Likert scale method. Data analysis was conducted utilizing descriptive quantitative methods. Findings revealed that 63% of participants exhibited a high level of social anxiety, indicating a considerable prevalence of this psychological phenomenon within the juvenile inmate population. The type of offense committed and the duration of incarceration emerged as potential contributing factors to social anxiety among this specific population.

Keywords: *Social Anxiety, Prisoner, Teenager, Counseling*

Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology and information in the era of globalization has brought diverse impacts, both positive and negative. One of the negative impacts is the increase in criminality, including among adolescents. The development of information technology has facilitated criminal actors in carrying out their actions. The ease of access to information and communication through the internet and social media, on one hand, provides significant benefits, but on the

other hand, it can also be misused by adolescents to commit criminal acts or become victims of criminal acts. This is reinforced by research indicating that the unwise use of social media can increase the risk of adolescents becoming involved in criminal behavior, such as cyberbullying, online fraud, and the distribution of illegal content¹. Furthermore, the lack of parental supervision and an uncondusive environment also contribute to the increase in adolescent crime rates in this digital era.

Adolescence is a complex and multidimensional age group, making it difficult to define in a singular manner. This period typically begins around the ages of 11 or 12 and extends to the late teens or early twenties^{2;3;4;5;6;7;8}. Adolescence represents the period between puberty and adulthood, serving as a transitional phase between childhood and maturity^{9;10}. During this time, adolescents are actively engaged in the search for self and personal identity, a process that can sometimes lead them to engage in undesirable behaviors, including criminal activities. Such criminal involvement can result in adolescents becoming entangled in the legal system and subsequently serving sentences in juvenile detention centers or specialized correctional facilities for minors.

¹O'Keeffe, G. S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children, adolescents, and families. *Pediatrics*, 127(4), 800-804.

²Bafadal, I. (2021). Islamic Parenting in Suppressing Online Game Addiction in Adolescents. *Journal Of Islamic Research*, 17(1), 21–38

³Husna, U., & Karneli, Y. (2021). Bk Teachers' Efforts to Overcome the Problem of Juvenile Delinquency Using Expressive Therapy Techniques.

⁴Makahinsade, S. (2023). The Role of Youth Mentors in the Development of Youth Behavior in the GMIM Golgota Congregation. *EUANGGELION: Journal of Theology and Christian Education*, 3(2), 165–179.

⁵Pertiwi, H., & Sutandi, A. (2020). Status of Development and Self-Identity of Adolescents at State Junior High School 49 Kramat Jati, East Jakarta.

⁶Putrawan, B. K., & Peter, R. (2020). Mission in the Midst of Multidimensional Crisis. *GRACIA DEO THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL*, 2(2), 70–79

⁷Rahmadani, M. (2021). The Role of Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Countering Islamic Radicalism Among Youth in Gumelar Village. 5(1)

⁸Papalia, D. E., Olds, S. W., & Feldman, R. D. (2009). Human development. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika.

⁹Chaplin, J. E. (2011). Complete dictionary of psychology: translation by Kartini Kartono. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.

¹⁰Komariah, N. S., Untari, D. T., & Bukhari, E. (2020). Communication Technology and Social Change of Adolescents in Indonesia; A Literature Review on the Use of Social Media

Adolescents are susceptible to committing criminal acts, encompassing gambling, drug abuse, theft, brawls, alcohol consumption, premarital sexual activity, sexual harassment, and other legal infractions. Criminal acts perpetrated by adolescents are legally addressed under Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System. This legislation stipulates that children who commit criminal offenses, specifically those aged between 12 and 18 years, are still categorized as minors and are entitled to special treatment, including a distinct juvenile justice system and other forms of specialized handling.

Psychologically, the aforementioned age range can be categorized as adolescence. Adolescents who are convicted of criminal offenses are termed juvenile offenders. Indonesian Law Number 3 of 1997 concerning Juvenile Courts mandates specific treatment for juvenile offenders to mitigate the negative impacts of the criminal justice process, such as stigmatization and psychological distress. These measures are implemented by the government to protect the rights of juvenile offenders, ensuring that they do not forfeit their fundamental human rights, even during their period of incarceration. Although juvenile offenders reside in correctional facilities, their rights as children must not be neglected, as the penalty of imprisonment solely restricts their right to freedom, while other rights must continue to be upheld¹¹.

Table 1. Data on Juvenile Offenders Detained at Tanjung Pati Class II Juvenile Detention Center by Offense Category

No.	Types of Punishment	Total
1	Article 81 of the Criminal Code (Child Protection)	9
2	Article 340 of the Criminal Code (Murder)	2
3	Law No. 35 of 2009 (Narcotics)	4
4	Article 363 of the Criminal Code (Theft)	3
5	Article 296 of the Criminal Code (Pimping)	1
Total		19

Table 1 illustrates that the most prevalent cases are within the category of child protection, totaling 9 cases. Ideally, adolescents should be engaged in educational pursuits to develop their potential and achieve optimal development, aligning with their developmental stage. However, these aspirations may be thwarted by incarceration.

¹¹Alizamar, A., Fikri, M., & Afdal, A. (2017). Social Anxiety of Youth Prisoners and Guidance and Counseling Services for Prevention. *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan Dan Konseling: Jurnal Kajian Psikologi Pendidikan Dan BimbinganKonseling*, 30.

Social anxiety is defined as a heightened state of physiological arousal in social situations involving potential evaluation by others, accompanied by apprehension or fear of psychological harm and a desire to escape or avoid the social situation¹². Anxiety is associated with differences in how individuals generate mental representations of movement¹³. Social anxiety is characterized by fear and the most distressing states in social situations¹⁴. An individual with social anxiety, when interacting with colleagues, may believe they will be perceived as incompetent if they give a presentation¹⁵. Social anxiety also describes individuals who experience persistent fear of performing in one or more social or performance situations¹⁶. Furthermore, anxiety is defined as a state of apprehension or worry that something bad will happen¹⁷. In conclusion, social anxiety is an excessive and irrational fear experienced by individuals in social situations. These feelings can cause the individual to avoid social interactions and their environment.

Anxiety as a painful pain or restlessness in the mind that usually exceeds the pain that will come or the pain that has been anticipated, fearful worries or interests, abnormal fears that are often marked by physiological signs such as sweating, tension and increased pulse by doubts about the reality and nature of the threat and doubts about oneself to overcome it. This feeling of anxiety when in a social environment is often referred to as social anxiety¹⁸. Social anxiety disorder is often referred to as social phobia. Social anxiety is an excessive fear of negative evaluation from others. People with social anxiety are afraid to say or do something embarrassing or make

¹²Kearney, A. C. (2005). *Social anxiety and social phobia in youth*. Springer Science Business media, Inc.

¹³Brown, M. A., & Stopa, L. (2008). The looming maladaptive style in social anxiety. *Elsevier*, 39, 57–64.

¹⁴Bandelow, B., & Stein, J. D. (2004). *Social anxiety disorder*. Marcel Dekker, Inc.

¹⁵Clark, D. A., & Beck, A. T. (2010). *Cognitive therapy of anxiety disorders*. The Guilford Press.

¹⁶Bakalim, O. (2016). Self-confident approach in coping with stress and social appearance anxiety ofturkish university students : the mediating role of body appreciation. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 5(4), 134–143.

¹⁷Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A., & Greene, B. (2005). *Abnormal psychology: fifth edition*. Volume 1. Jakarta: Erlangga

¹⁸ Pratiwi, D., Mirza, R., & El Akmal, M. (2019). Social anxiety reviewed from self-esteem in low socioeconomic status adolescents. *Al-Iryad: Journal of Education and Counseling*, 9(1).

themselves feel humiliated. According to Davison, et al., social anxiety is a persistent and irrational fear that is generally related to the presence of other people¹⁹.

One of the problems experienced by juvenile inmates is an excessive fear and anxiety of not being accepted in social environments after release from prison, also known as social anxiety²⁰. Inmates who do not receive support from their families and communities after release may experience excessive fear of uncertain future conditions. This needs to be addressed immediately to prevent further negative impacts. Research conducted by Faried & Nashori found that anxiety about facing release from prison occurs due to socio-environmental and cognitive-emotional factors²¹. Adolescents in this condition have a fear that they will embarrass themselves when interacting with others²². People with social anxiety disorder generally recognize the excessive nature of their fear, but their lives are significantly disrupted²³. Symptoms of social anxiety can include avoiding feared social situations, feelings of shame, physiological changes, and fear of being the center of attention²⁴. People experiencing social anxiety will experience these things.

The symptoms of social anxiety manifested can be categorized into three components: physiological, cognitive, and behavioral²⁵. Social anxiety in adolescent inmates nearing release is a crucial issue requiring serious attention from counselors and supervisors at the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA).

Physiologically, the physical characteristics of an individual experiencing social anxiety include restlessness, nervousness, trembling or shaking of the hands or limbs, constriction of skin pores in the abdomen or chest, excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis), clammy palms, fainting (syncope), dry mouth or throat (xerostomia),

¹⁹ Davison, J. M Neale, and A. N. Kring. (2014). *Abnormal Psychology* 9th Edition. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers

²⁰Alizamar, A., Fikri, M., & Afdal, A. (2017). Social Anxiety of Youth Prisoners and Guidance and Counseling Services for Prevention. *Jurnal Psikologi Pendidikan Dan Konseling: Jurnal Kajian Psikologi Pendidikan Dan BimbinganKonseling*, 30.

²¹Faried, L., & Nashori, F. (2012). The relationship between self-control and anxiety in facing release period in prisoners at Wirogunan Penitentiary, Yogyakarta. *Khazanah: Student Journal*, 5(2), 63–74.

²²Root, B. (2000). *Understanding panic and other anxiety disorders*. University Press of Mississippi.

²³Damer, D. E., Latimer, K. M., & Porter, S. H. (2010). The journal for specialists in group work “build your social confidence”: a social anxiety group for college students. *The Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, 35(1), 37–41.

²⁴Carney, C. E., & Edinger, J. D. (2010). *Insomnia and anxiety*. Springer.

²⁵Kearney, A. C. (2005). *Social anxiety and social phobia in youth*. Springer Science Business media, Inc.

difficulty speaking (dysarthria), shortness of breath (dyspnea), rapid or forceful heartbeat (palpitations or tachycardia), voice trembling (vocal tremor), cold extremities (acrocyanosis), dizziness (vertigo), feelings of weakness or numbness (paresthesia), difficulty swallowing (dysphagia), neck or back stiffness, a sensation of choking or constriction in the throat (globus pharyngis), cold and clammy hands, gastrointestinal disturbances such as stomach aches or nausea, frequent urination (pollakiuria), facial flushing, diarrhea, and heightened sensitivity or irritability²⁶.

Furthermore, the characteristics of social anxiety seen in the cognitive aspect are worrying about something, feeling disturbed by fear of something that happens in the future, believing that something terrible will happen soon, without any clear explanation, fixating on the sensation of need, feeling threatened by people or events that normally get little or no attention, fear of losing control, fear of being unable to cope with problems, thinking that the world is collapsing, thinking that everything is no longer controllable, thinking that everything feels very confusing and cannot be overcome, worrying about trivial things, thinking about the same disturbing thing over and over again, thinking that you have to be able to escape from the crowd, otherwise you will definitely faint, thoughts feel mixed up or confused, unable to eliminate disturbing thoughts²⁷. Behavioral symptoms of social anxiety show efforts to hide reactions, difficulty speaking, avoiding eye contact, restlessness, running away, seeking reassurance, lack of eye contact, crying, trembling voice, silence, covering up from adults and withdrawing from society²⁸.

Youth, as the nation's future generation, must be well-prepared, including through the provision of dedicated attention. Social anxiety has an impact on the decline of subjective well-being and quality of life, as well as social role functioning and career development²⁹. Adolescents with high levels of social anxiety report having fewer friends³⁰. The phenomenon of social anxiety experienced by juvenile inmates at the Tanjung Pati Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) requires further investigation to ascertain its characteristics.

²⁶Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A., & Greene, B. (2005). *Abnormal psychology: fifth edition*. Volume 1. Jakarta: Erlangga

²⁷Bandelow, B., & Stein, J. D. (2004). *Social anxiety disorder*. Marcel Dekker, Inc.

²⁸Nevid, J. S., Rathus, S. A., & Greene, B. (2005). *Psikologi abnormal: edisi ke lima, jilid 1*. Jakarta: Erlangga.

²⁹Wittchen, H. U., & Fehm, L. (2003). Epidemiology and natural course of social fears and social phobia. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 108(417), 4-18.

³⁰Festa, C. C., & Ginsburg, G. S. (2011). Parental and peer predictors of social anxiety in youth. *Child Psychiatry Hum Dev*, 42(1), 291-306.

Research Methods

The research methodology employed in this study is a quantitative descriptive analysis. This type of research seeks to provide a detailed and accurate representation of the current situation³¹. With a population size of fewer than 100, it is generally recommended to conduct a census, including all members in the sample³². This study adopted a total sampling (or "census sampling") technique. The resulting sample consisted of 19 juvenile inmates.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a series of questions related to a specific topic, administered to a group of individuals to obtain data³³. The questionnaire employed was the Social Anxiety questionnaire, comprising 32 items presented using a Likert scale model with five response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Moderately Agree (MA), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Descriptive analysis using percentage techniques as follows³⁴:

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

Next, categorize the data intervals using the following formula³⁵:

$$Interval\ k = \frac{Data\ Terbesar - Data\ Terkecil}{Jumlah\ Kelompok}$$

The scoring criteria were as follows: ≥ 135 (very high), 109-134 (high), 83-108 (moderate), 57-82 (low), and ≤ 56 (very low).

Result and Discussion

The research data regarding the level of social anxiety among juvenile inmates at the Tanjung Pati Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) are presented and analyzed based on the research objective, which is to describe the level

³¹Yusuf, A. M. (2014). Quantitative, qualitative, and combined research methodology. Jakarta: Prenadamedia

³²Arikunto, S. (2002). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.

³³Yusuf, A. M. (2014). Quantitative, qualitative, and combined research methodology. Jakarta: Prenadamedia

³⁴Sugiyono. (2001). Educational research methods. Bandung: Alfabeta

³⁵Irianto, A. (2004). Statistics basic concepts and their applications. Jakarta: Kencana

of social anxiety among these inmates. The research data were obtained from 19 respondents, consisting of 17 males and 2 females.

Table 2. A Study of Social Anxiety Levels Among Adolescent Inmates at the Tanjung Pati Class II Special Child Development Institution

Interval	Category	Frequency	%
≥ 135	Very high	1	5
109-134	Tall	12	63
83-108	Currently	5	26
57-82	Low	1	5
≤ 56	Very low	0	0
Total		19	100

From the table above, it can be observed that the depiction of social anxiety levels among juvenile inmates at LPKA Class II Tanjung Pati falls into the following categories: very high (5%), high (63%), moderate (26%), low (5%), and very low (0%). It can be concluded that the average depiction of social anxiety levels among juvenile inmates at LPKA Class II Tanjung Pati is within the high category.

Based on the data analysis of the aforementioned research, it was found that the anxiety level of juvenile inmates at LPKA Class II Tanjung Pati was categorized as high. The type of criminal offense and the length of the sentence can influence the level of anxiety, as the more severe the criminal act committed, the longer the sentence that must be served³⁶. This potentially creates difficulties in the process of readjustment after release. Therefore, it can be concluded that the factors influencing the social anxiety of juvenile inmates include the type of criminal offense and the length of detention. At LPKA Class II Tanjung Pati, the most frequently committed criminal offense is a violation of Article 81 of the Criminal Code (KUHP), which concerns child protection, involving 9 inmates. After serving a considerable period of detention, the inmates experience anxiety and fear of rejection upon their return to society. They are worried about being ostracized due to the negative stigma attached to inmates, especially given their involvement in cases related to murder³⁷.

³⁶Kusumawardani, D. A., & Astuti, T. P. (2014). Differences in Anxiety Before Release in Prisoners Reviewed by Gender, Criminal Offense, Length of Sentence, and Remaining Sentence. *Empati*, 3(3), 52-60

³⁷Waluyan, V. A. (2020). Anxiety of Murder Convicts at Class I Semarang Penitentiary. *Indonesian Journal of Counseling & Development*, 2(01), 1-17.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study indicates that the level of social anxiety among juvenile inmates at the Tanjung Pati Class II Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) is high, at 63%. This is influenced by several factors, one of which is the type of offense. The most frequent offense is Article 81 of the Criminal Code concerning child protection, involving 9 individuals. Therefore, guidance and counseling services are needed at the Tanjung Pati Class II LPKA, in the form of both individual counseling and group guidance, as well as a social anxiety module, to reduce and even eliminate social anxiety among juvenile inmates. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the sample and research locations, as well as use more comprehensive research instruments.

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