CHALLENGES IN BUILDING POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT IN FEMALE ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS IN JUVENILE DETENTION CENTERS IN TANGERANG, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The investigation of one's self-concept is an important component in delinquency prevention in light of the growing incidence of both juvenile delinquency and recidivism. However, it has been found that female juvenile offenders have a higher rate of developing a negative self-concept about themselves. This leads them to believe that they are unable to make a positive change in their lives; consequently, it has been demonstrated that having a positive self-concept is the most effective means of preventing this issue. Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges in building positive self-concept in female adolescent offenders incarcerated in two juvenile detention centers in Tangerang, Indonesia. The study was conducted in a qualitative method using phenomenology design, whereas the data collection process has been conducted by structured interviews with seven informants. The study found that the influence of parents, peers, society's perception regarding juvenile delinquents as well as the feeling of hopelessness, towards the development of self-concept in female adolescent offenders. These results suggest that negative perception has created a sense of helplessness that is contributing to the negative self-concept in female juvenile offenders. On this basis, reducing the stigma regarding juvenile delinquent by providing jobs opportunities for female juvenile offenders, as well as providing family support should be considered in developing positive self-concept and reducing recidivism.

Keywords: Self-concept; female juvenile offenders; juvenile detention center; Indonesia

1. INTRODUCTION

Juvenile offending and especially repeat juvenile offending is one of the serious public health concerns. The rate of juvenile deviant behavior in Indonesia tends to increase over time, with some of the most common delinquent act includes illegal gambling, involving in prostitutions and drug abuse (Efendi and Nurjanah, 2019; Utari et al., 2019). It is believed that juvenile offenders need psychological guidance, proper education, physical and emotional protection, as well as fulfillment of their rights while residing in the juvenile detention centers,

so it would be able to be the place to bring positive changes (Beaudry et al., 2021; Benu et al., 2019; Efendi and Nurjanah, 2019). However, the conditions of the offenders in Indonesia's juvenile correction have been devastating, with some of the inmates experiencing social anxiety, cognitive distortions, low psychological well-being, low empathy, stress as well as depression (Benu et al., 2019; Fikri, 2019). Whereas in female juvenile offenders, this condition has become more distinct since they are more prone to major depressive episodes (Holzer et al., 2018). It shown that detention centers has been regarded as unhealthy places rather than health promoting, whereas there is a strong need for the adolescent to develop into a emotionally and physically healthy adult which in the end would reduce recidivism (Mehay et al., 2019).

As process of reentry continues to be a significant issue facing the correctional system (LaCourse et al., 2019), therefore there is a strong need of constructive and specific psychological intervention. This will allow them to develop a healthier sense of self and self-worth, which will allow them to make positive changes while they are incarcerated (Beaudry et al., 2021; Hay et al., 2018; Love et al., 2020). Self-concept has played an important part in it. As indicated by Carl Rogers (as referred to in King, 2010) self-concept fills in as a significant piece in individuals' life. He stated that self-concept was the essential piece of human conduct. The self-concept was built by two important aspects, which was the genuine self and the ideal self. The genuine self is the way an individual perceived themself. Whereas the ideal self is the aspirations of what they wanted to be, the ideal-self should felt most significant to the person who perceive it. According to Calhoun and Acocella (1990) an individual with a positive self-concept reflects positive conduct. Subsequently, they arranged their life dependent on the real world, courageous and unconstrained. Harter (1988) referenced that self-concept is impacted by others' input, particularly caregivers and friends. Investigating the self through the comprehension of others, specifically by methods for self-comprehension of others' perspectives on themselves.

However, most research regarding juvenile offenders in Indonesia has been focusing on the male juvenile offenders and law aspect (Nuqul and Ningrum, 2019; Nur and Bakhtiar, 2017; Sunnah and Widyaningrum, 2020; Utari et al., 2019). Therefore, exploring about how female juvenile offenders construct their perception about themselves and their challenges in building a positive self-concept will have a definite research value and needed to decreased the reentry and increase their well-being.

The characteristics that enhance the chance of recidivism in juvenile offenders include a less favourable view of themselves, more difficulty in managing their emotions, and increased difficulty in forming friends who are prosocial (Juliana and Zhooriyati, 2020; Protic et al., 2020; Spruit et al., 2016). In addition, the pressure that younger individuals feel from their families and their peers is a crucial component that contributes to an increase in the likelihood of criminal behaviour among younger people (Zakaria et al., 2022). However, positive self-concept will enhance propensity to perform prosocial behavior, which in the end will give a positive outcome for reducing recidivism (Usán and Salavera, 2017; Turner et al., 2017; Barkwell, 1976). The condition, challenges and treatment that offenders' often experience from detainment as well as the coercive structure of the institution, often make a huge negative impact on the offenders' self-concept (Sykes, 1958). The positive influence on a healthy self-concept and prosocial behaviour has been found across a wide range of racial, ethnic and age groups, and community settings, as well as in a number of different ways of assessing delinquent behaviour (Vandala, 2019; Donnellan et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2005).

Compared to male, female juvenile offenders have a much lower rate of self-control, a significantly lower feeling of social support, and significantly different techniques to manage their emotions (Assouline and Attar-Schwartz, 2020; Flores et al., 2020; Hay et al., 2018; Nagamuthu et al., 2019). Hence, a specific research focused on female participant is needed in order to fully understand their needs and creating intervention that able to increase their well-being (Beaudry et al., 2021). However, there are less research focusing on the exploration of challenge in building positive self-concept in female juvenile offenders as a preventive factor to reduce recidivism. Research on female juvenile offenders has been difficult to be conducted due to the smaller populations compares to male juvenile offenders, strict prison regulations, or their tendency to be aggressive with outsiders (Ahmed et al., 2019; Cavanagh and Cauffman, 2017; Rafedzi et al., 2017).

The scientific community should focus on the well-being of juvenile offenders in third world countries as they are vulnerable, so that we are able to prevent recidivism in the future (Rafedzi et al., 2017; Spruit et al., 2016). In light of this, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by female juvenile offenders in the process of developing a healthy self-concept. As one of the earliest studies to focus on the self-concept of female juvenile offenders in Indonesia, this study made significant contributions to the fields of social psychology, counselling, and mental health, particularly in the context of penal facilities.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

A qualitative research method was used to meet the objectives of this research. Qualitative method can be described as a data collection method that focuses on the deep comprehension of the issues that arise.

This method emphasizes deep analysis techniques, it examines cases precisely due to the discreteness of the conditions (Creswell, 2009). With in-depth discussions and critical observations in a qualitative research, researchers will be able to sympathetically aware of individuals' emotions (Mohajan, 2018).

In addition, phenomenology design was performed in this research. According to Creswell (2009) phenomenology is an investigation of occurrence that emerges and aims to clarify the insight of an experience based on informants' point of view. The purpose for adopting phenomenology design is because it is capable of exploring the collective experience of a community. Phenomenology design is suitable to understand the lived experience and subjective meaning in the eyes of the informants (Vignansky et al., 2018).

In this research, the execution of phenomenology design will make researchers able to understand how female juvenile offenders interpret their experiences and their challenges in building a positive self-concept. Female juvenile offenders that were interviewed were engaged by questions such as "what" and "how" during the interview and followed by probing questions on significant challenges in building positive self-concept. This process was done to make sure a comprehensive consideration of the informants' personal challenges was attained.

2.1 Site

The study was conducted in two juvenile detention centers in the city of Tangerang, Indonesia, which is one of the megacities that surround Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta, Indonesia, as it is one of the countries with the largest population in Southeast Asia (Ministry of National Development and Planning, 2019). The data collection process was conducted in X and Y juvenile detention center. Offenders in X juvenile detention center consists of female and male adolescents' offenders. Whereas Y juvenile detention center consists of female adolescent offenders and female adult offenders. The X and Y juvenile detention centers have been a place of incarceration for offenders from various crime and according to Yulianto and Ernis (2016), there are children that are having conflict with the law and do not get the proper coaching in both centers.

2.2 Sample

In total, seven participants who were recruited through purposive sampling technique were participated in this study. For conducting a research with the purpose of providing a rich descriptive expression of the participants' emotions, purposeful sampling is the suitable approach (Frankel and Devers, 2000). The participants were selected based on inclusion criteria such as they had to be a registered female adolescent offender, who are aged between 12 and 18 years old as this age category is considered as adolescent in the law system. In addition, they need to have a good health condition, able to communicate clearly and have sufficient cognitive abilities. The participants demographics are contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Informant's Demographic Background

Informant	Duration of Incarceration	Religion	Education Background	Type of Crime
Informant 1	9 months	Muslim	High School	Shoplifting
Informant 2	10 Months	Muslim	High School	Involving in Drugs
Informant 3	12 Months	Muslim	High School	Involving in Prostituition
Informant 4	7 Months	Muslim	High School	Shoplifting
Informant 5	8 Months	Muslim	Middle School	Murder
Informant 6	12 Months	Muslim	Middle School	Murder
Informant 7	11 Months	Muslim	Middle School	Murder

2. 3 Procedure

There are several procedures that were carried out in this study. The first step is to curate the interview questions. The interview questions were constructed based on existing theories regarding self-concept by Harter (1988) and Rogers (1965). The researchers found several dimensions that influenced the self-concept in adolescent and implement it in the form of research questions. The research questions were then validated by two field experts in psychology.

Second, the researchers conducted the pilot study with one female juvenile offender as an informant. Pilot study can be defined as the trial run of a data collection process, which was carried out as a preparation for a larger research. This process is important to keep the researchers prepared to deal with the obstacles that

are likely to be encountered in the actual study and more secure in the research questions that will be implemented (Malmqvist et al., 2019).

Next, the data collection process was performed with interview questions that have been made earlier. For this process, the researchers gained the research permission letter from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of Indonesia as well as two juvenile detention centers.

To increase the trustworthiness of the study, the researchers conducted an audit trail. Audit trail can be described as detailed explanation of how data were collected, how categories were emerged, and how decisions were made throughout the analysis (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). In this study, the researchers coded and clustered the essence of transcriptions subsequently then compared it to the acknowledged emerging themes, and restructure how the study was conducted.

2.4 Data collection

There were three sources of data collection method involved in this research, (i) semi-structured interview, (ii) observation and (iii) documented artifacts. The semi-structured interview was conducted by the researchers in a private office at the two juvenile detention centers in Indonesian language. Then, the researchers perform in-depth and comprehensive interviews with participants which occurred for around 45 minutes for each informant. As phenomenological interviews required the researchers to ask question that relates in a directed but non-leading manner to the phenomenon that being studied (O'Halloran et al., 2018), the interview questions focused on female juvenile offenders' perception of themselves, the difficulties that they encountered, and how it impacted their perception. The interviews recorded were then transcribed into verbatim and translated into English, with back-translation checks by three independent bilingual Indonesian-English speakers.

The observation conducted by making a "running record" of the in-depth interview session. The researchers noted the body language, facial expression, movement, as well as other information that could not be recorded in the audiotape. In addition, the documented artifacts are in the form of criminal record prepared by the prison officers which include the reasons for incarceration as well as the duration of the imprisonment.

2.5 Ethical consideration

Juvenile offenders are potentially more vulnerable compared to general prison population. Hence, potential risks and benefits of the study were evaluated and approved by the Ministry of Law and Humanity of Indonesia as well as UCSI University Malaysia. There were no force of obligation for the informants to participate in the study. Before the data collection started, participants were asked if they are willing to conduct the interview. Then, the inform consents were signed by both prison officers as the representation of the caregiver and the participant themselves. Moreover, all interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and prison officers.

2.6 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was implemented to analyze the transcript made from the interview with seven informants. Some of the processes of thematic analysis are (1) developing familiarity by reading transcript, then looks for emerging themes by noting significant keywords; (2) dividing related themes to develop master themes; (3) using surfacing themes from the first transcript to guide the analysis of the next transcripts. Once each transcript has been examined, a final theme is made; (4) the outcome of the analytical process is a narrative account, where the researchers' interpretation is presented in detail (Gill, 2020). After the thematic analysis was done, the researchers were able to observe the correlations between the data collected and theory regarding self-concept. The coding results were then reviewed by an expert to ensure the validity of the thematic analysis. A validity panel consisting of a doctoral university lecturer reviewed the researchers' data analysis and theme and category generation to assess whether analyses were consistent with the data.

3. RESULTS

This research aimed to explore the challenges encountered by female juvenile offenders in building a positive self-concept. There are several themes that emerged from the data collected, such as (1) feedback responses from the families; (2) perception of the peers; (3) stigma from the society; and (4) feeling helpless. Relationships with their families, classmates, and other individuals posed substantial obstacles to the development of a good self-concept among female juvenile offenders.

3.1 Responses from the families

Informants felt that they are often pitied by their families. Based on their own observation, their parents showed by the different treatment by giving them more affection after the imprisonment.

My parents ask about my conditions a lot because they pitied me. They are not angry, they are just sad for my conditions. They also gave me money and clothes. (Informant 3)

I know my parents still love me regardless of what I did, that makes me extremely guilty. Somehow I prefer my parents to express their anger rather than being so nice to me. (Informant 5)

The informants admitted that parents' special treatment making them feel more guilty. In addition, they frequently seen or heard their parents sobbing through economic hardships, since the majority of female juvenile offenders are the primary breadwinners, which made them feel like a burden on the family. This condition makes them feel failed in becoming the desirable daughter.

3.2 Perception of the peers

In the realm of friendship, informants frequently felt alone and neglected by their previous pals. Informants said that they seldom contacted their friends due to the absence of tokens and the fact that their acquaintances did not wish to participate in the crime. Informants are frequently viewed as unsatisfactory persons, hence they are frequently bullied by their peers outside of prison.

My friends outside of the prison can't accept me like this. Somehow, I know that they talk about some bad things to me, they are lazy to befriended with prisoners. (Informant 2)

The boys in this place often mock us for being a female prisoner, they said how can a female become a prisoner. (Informant 7)

In prison, informants also often experience verbal abuse from fellow prisoners, especially from different gender offenders. Therefore, in addition to experiencing non-wearing treatment from friends outside prison, they also experience non-wearing treatment from fellow offenders.

3.3 Stigma from the society

Each informant acknowledged that they had been labelled as malicious, villainous, and rebellious. The informants acknowledged that they had not been exposed to this moniker, but they said that they previously had an unfavourable perception of criminals before to their incarceration. In addition, informants reported that many parents forbid their children from interacting with convicts, making it difficult for them to develop friends outside of the prison.

I don't want to befriended with people outside of the prison. They will say I am a bad person; Prisoners are ugly in peoples' eyes. (Informant 6)

Therefore, they communicate with no one outside of their own family. The informants reported that they were frequently undervalued and deemed incapable of carrying out community-beneficial actions as well.

3.4 Feeling helpless

Lastly, while serving their term in the juvenile detention center, they feel powerless. Female juvenile offenders fear they are becoming a burden to their family while inside and have little control over the prison's severe standards and length of stay. The informants' assertion that there was nothing they could do to modify the circumstance verified this. They experience anxiety but have no idea how to deal with it. Consequently, they frequently cry and pray for better situations. Regarding any future adversity, the informants asserted that they had given themselves over to God.

I don't know what to do, so I just surrender and just carrying it. Sometimes I cried a lot at night, but I know crying won't make me go out. (Informant 7)

In conclusion, the respondent was subjected to unfavourable treatment from family, peers, or society. According to their parents, they have failed to become family members. As for friends, they are frequently victimised and shunned. Then, the society views informants as a burden who do not merit favourable treatment. In addition, they are uncertain about their future.

4. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the challenges that female juvenile offenders face in constructing a positive self-concept. The study indicates that female juvenile offenders view the happiness of their parents as the main measurement of their success as a child. However, when observing their parents crying and struggling economically, female juvenile offenders understand that their parents are sad; hence, they lack satisfaction in their successes. Therefore, they experience feelings of shame and disappointment in themselves. The findings of this study supported the idea of Sykes (1958), which claims that the limitation of family contact creates the pains of incarceration, which have a negative effect on offenders. Harter (1988) also believes that family is one of the important factors that greatly influences the development of self-concept in

adolescents, and they need a healthy living environment to learn and grow up (Zakaria et al., 2022). Parental feedback may furnish a child with insight into their self-image (Berk, 2013). Besides, the positive experiences at home would positively affect the mood of an individual and allowing them to handle the everyday demands better (Mohamad and Despois, 2022). Therefore, female juvenile offenders have a bad self-perception since their parents also provide negative feedback on their behavior. This directly makes it difficult for female adolescent offenders to have a positive self-concept. It happens because adolescents, especially in Asian culture find it's important to make their parents proud, as the expression of love and honour (Adiyanti, 2018; Wu and Chao, 2017; Durbin et al., 1993). This explains that family is the foundation that helps develop this healthy living environment (Zakaria et al., 2022) and create a positive self. Besides, relationship between parents and adolescents will influence them to look for a meaning in life as parents might stop the adolescents to find their own meaning in life. Therefore, a good family relationship is an important factor to the adolescents' meaning in life and happiness (Shin and Zhooriyati, 2021). It is believed that individuals will find their life purpose if they live a life that enhances their feeling of value and worthiness (Syasyila et al., 2022).

Another obstacle that female juvenile offenders encounter in building positive self-concepts lies in their relationship with peers. The findings indicate that female juvenile offenders are rejected by their peers. For a typical adolescent, having a prisoner friend is a source of embarrassment, hence female juvenile offenders frequently avoid interacting with their peers outside of the prison. Besides, female juvenile offenders also often experience bullying from fellow offenders. The desire that adolescents have to have the sense that they are a part of a community of friends or peers has a significant impact on the attitudes and personalities that adolescents develop. Positive peer feedback is associated with positive involvement in prosocial conduct; hence, adolescents who get pleasant peer feedback are more likely to feel positive emotions such as happiness (Dawes, 2017). In the case of female juvenile offenders, judgments from their friends make them feel inferior to other teenagers. As perceived social support from friends have a positive effect on subjective well-being (Tomás et al., 2020), the lack of positive social support in female juvenile offenders made them perceived themselves as less worthy compared to other teenagers. This is supported by research from Moore et al. (2016) which states that peer assessments can form self-stigma which has a negative impact on self-concept development.

Besides family and peers, the study shows that female juvenile offenders also experience bullying from fellow offenders. This is a contradiction to the research by Clone and DeHart (2014) which states that female offenders receive support from fellow offenders. Inmates who enter prisons have been exposed to the depersonalizing and stigmatizing effects of the legal system. Bullying to female juvenile offenders is experienced by those who live in institutions that are inhabited by both male and female offenders. Female juvenile offenders admitted that they often experience bullying from male offenders especially. Based on the findings of similar studies, a more plausible explanation is because female juvenile offenders were the minority in the institution. The bullying towards gender minority has also been supported by a few research (Ash-Houchen and Lo, 2018; O'Malley Olsen et al., 2014). The bullying has created a sense of helplessness and unworthiness towards female juvenile offenders and caused them lack of self-confidence in themselves.

In addition to negative perception of peers and family, another challenge in building positive self-concept in female juvenile offenders comes from the stigma from the society. The female juvenile offenders believe that common people are afraid and avoid interacting with prisoners because the society believes that inmates will continue to repeat their crimes so that it will be difficult for them to get decent jobs. Therefore, the female juvenile offenders lower their expectations of the ideal job as well. This finding is in accordance with the theory from Harter (1998) which states that the perception of the ideal self and real self which is formed from community's feedback also plays a role in shaping the self-concept. Offenders often chosen to cut themselves off from their former surroundings and friends due to the stigma (Vignansky et al., 2018). Female juvenile offenders look down on themselves because the society has a negative stigma against prisoners. This makes female offenders feel hopeless about their future and predicts recidivism. This is supported by some research that shows stigma and negative feedback from the society build the self-stigma and sense of hopelessness (Tewksbury, 2011; Moore et al., 2016). Moreover, according to Shiley (2012), negative feedback from the society in the form of negative labelling will contribute to how a person perceives themselves, which in the end will influence their self-concept negatively.

Regardless of whether female adolescent prisoners truly experience the derides from the general public, they accept that individuals will dismiss them. Moreover, they likewise stress in the event that they won't have the option to accomplish their own objectives, for example, finding a conventional line of work or being hitched to somebody because of their criminal record. Therefore, female juvenile offenders choose to surrender and some of them choose not to plan for the future. The reality of incarceration often compromises a prisoner's ability to do set and attained their goals (Read and Noonan, 2018). Juvenile offenders feel discouraged and hopeless because they feel sorry and lonely (Lubben, 2019). This condition created

anticipated stigma. Anticipated stigma can be characterized as a condition wherein an individual accepts that others will peer down and stays away from them (Quinn et al., 2014). The presence of anticipated stigma in teenage offenders has been demonstrated by past studies (Moore et al., 2016; Lambie and Randell, 2013). The sentiment of cynicism, vulnerability just as foreseen disgrace are adding to the improvement of negative self-concept (Markowitz, 1998; Moore et al., 2013). Anticipated stigma cause them to feel powerless of what they will do once they get out from the adolescent detainment community. This factor adds to the loss of their opportunity and being worried about what's to come.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the qualitative analysis of self-concept of female adolescent offenders, it can be concluded that the perception of significant others such as parents and peers are important factors to the development of self-concept. The stigma regarding prisoners and the sense of hopelessness also contributed to the negative self-concept. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the reduction in stigma, forgiveness from parents as well as acceptance from peers are crucial in building positive self-concept and the self-competence which will reduce the act of recidivism.

According to what was said before, the input of one's parents, peers, and society is critical to the formation of an individual's self-concept. Self-reflection among female juvenile offenders has been shown to be affected by the responses of important individuals as well as society. However, when female adolescent offenders received negative feedback, offenders believed in the negative view of themselves and felt despairing about contributing productively. This is one of the crucial factors that created the perception of low self-worth and recidivism. So that to stop this recidivism cycle, it takes the role of the family and the wider community. Parents can take time to accept and forgive the behavior of their children who commit crimes and provide emotional support while their child is incarcerated. In addition, the researchers advise the community to provide jobs for female juvenile offenders, so that female juvenile offenders can build self-confidence and gain a positive self-concept to become a productive individual once they are back to the community. This productivity and support can ultimately reduce recidivism.

Moreover, having a counsellor in the juvenile detention center will be helpful in introducing adaptive ways for the development of positive self-concept. Female juvenile offenders need to be realistic about what they will encounter once they are discharged. In addition, mental health experts will be able to give several pieces of advice about how to deal with hopelessness and stress. In this research, the researchers found that there are differences in the treatment between juvenile detention centers which facilitated various-gender juvenile offenders and prisons that contain same-sex offenders. Hence, the researchers suggest the future study to explore deeply about the issue of gender differences in the juvenile detention centers. In addition, this research believes that the self-concept of female adolescent offenders is strongly related with the challenges that they encountered in the correctional institutions. However, to understand more about the self-concept of juvenile offenders, future research should collect more data such as their schooling experience, family history, or history of crime and incarceration, which may relate to their self-concept. The reliability of this research is impacted by the informants' honesty during the interview. In this study, the researchers were unable to make sure that informants were displaying accurate facts. Therefore, a future qualitative study should include a method to prevent this issue from arising, such as planning for consistency checking.

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