

Analysis Of Children's Legal Protection Efforts From Parents Inmates For Children's Emotional Health

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Abstract

Keywords:

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This study analyzes legal protection efforts for the emotional health of children whose parents are inmates. Using a qualitative approach with the case study method, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and principals, and analysis of related documents. This study uses a single subject, namely the subject in this study is only 1 child from the parents of the inmate. The results of the study showed that children with inmate parents were prone to experiencing emotional health problems, such as stress and depression. Despite child protection policies, their implementation at the local level still faces various obstacles, including a lack of resources and understanding of the specific needs of children in these situations. This study recommends increased awareness and training for educators and related parties to increase the effectiveness of legal protection and support the emotional health of children affected by their parental status as inmates.

Abstrak

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1. Introduction

Children are one of the resources as a generation of the nation's successors who deserve special attention from the government in the context of fostering children to realize responsible and quality human resources (Munro & Faust, 2020; Rizkalla et al., 2020). Habituation for children of inmate parents in an environment requires legal facilities and infrastructure that can anticipate all problems that may arise in accompanying their development and growth. Children who have inmate parents often experience significant psychological and emotional impacts (Allard, 2012; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Thorne et al., 2023). Child development theory emphasizes the importance of a stable family environment to support emotional and social growth (Berk, 2015; Thompson, 2012). In Indonesia, the legal framework, such as the Child Protection Law (UU No. 23 of 2002), has stipulated the state's obligation to ensure the welfare and rights of children, including children whose parents are in prison (Grafika, 2003). Even though there are legal protection efforts, their implementation is not optimal and lack of attention to the psychological impact of children is a big challenge in overcoming this problem. Every child has the right to live, develop and be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation, including in situations where their parents are involved in criminal acts (O'Neill, 1988). However, in reality, children with parents who are serving prison sentences often experience social stigma, emotional distress, and the loss of important caregivers. This raises questions about the extent of legal protection provided to these children, particularly in the context of their emotional health (Boudin, 2011; Brooks-Gordon & Bainham, 2004; Shaw, 1992). The gap between child protection theory and facts on the ground shows that concrete efforts to support the children of inmate parents are still minimal. This situation is even more crucial when this child is at an early age, such as at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek, namely emotional development greatly determines their future.

Previous research has examined the impact of inmate parents on child development from various perspectives (Harris et al., 2010; Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). Research shows that children with inmate parents are at risk of psychological disorders, low self-confidence, and difficulties in socializing (Kjellstrand et al., 2020; Kremer et al., 2020; Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). Other

research highlights the importance of the role of educational institutions in helping these children (Arteaga, 2023; Charles et al., 2021). However, most research still focuses on long-term impacts and lacks the legal protections that can support early childhood emotional health (Fegert et al., 2020; Galea et al., 2020). The position of this study is to complement the study by focusing on existing legal protection and how its implementation can effectively support children's emotional development at an early age. Meanwhile, other research explains that children who grow up in complete families tend to have more stable emotional support, with both parents who can provide the attention, affection and guidance needed for their mental development (Brookes, 2018; Clancy & Maguire, 2017). In contrast, children with parents who are decisive often face greater emotional challenges, such as social stigma, anxiety, and feelings of being protected. The loss of a parental figure or the physical and emotional absence of a parent can affect a child's sense of security and self-esteem, increasing the risk of emotional and psychological disorders (Luk et al., 2023; Miralles et al., 2023; Schorr & Goldner, 2023).

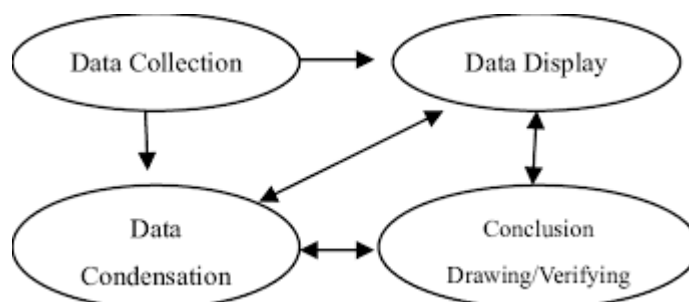
The novelty of this research lies in the approach of analyzing legal protection in the context of early childhood education whose parents are inmates. This study not only highlights the emotional state of children but also assesses the effectiveness of existing legal protections as well as practical efforts that can be made in educational institutions. The integration between legal and educational aspects at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek is a unique research scope. Thus, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of policy interventions that can be applied in protecting children from the negative impact of their family situation. This study aims to describe the efforts to protect children from inmates' parents implemented in supporting early childhood emotional health at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek. In addition, this research will identify the obstacles faced in the implementation of legal protection and develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of such protection. Focus on early childhood is very important because it is during this period that children's emotional development is vulnerable to being affected by the environment and family situation.

This research highlights the importance of a more holistic approach to legal protection, which focuses not only on children's formal legal rights, but also on meeting their emotional needs. Through analysis of the emotional health impacts experienced by children with convict parents, this research enriches child protection theory by emphasizing the importance of providing more intensive psychosocial support as part of legal protection. Practically, this research provides an overview of the implementation of legal protection policies that are more integrated between legal and psychosocial aspects, which are currently still lacking in implementation. The finding that despite counseling and psychosocial support efforts at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek, children still face social stigma and feelings of isolation, shows that existing legal protections are still not enough to protect them from deeper psychological impacts. This

research also emphasizes the need to increase understanding and training for teaching staff and related parties in dealing with children with convict family backgrounds. Many previous studies have examined the protection of prisoners' children at the macro or broader level, such as at the state level or correctional institutions, while the research focus on groups of young children in formal educational institutions such as kindergartens is still limited. This research uses single subjects as respondents to explore more in-depth and private information by combining psychological and social perspectives, which have not been explored much in previous research which tends to focus more on legal or physical aspects alone.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to analyze legal protection efforts for the emotional health of children whose parents are inmates at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek. This study uses a single subject, namely the subject in this study is only 1 child from the parents of the inmate. The selection of one subject in this research can explore the experiences, dynamics and factors that influence children's emotional health in more detail. In addition, single case studies make it possible to identify policies or legal safeguards that can be applied to specific contexts, as well as provide deeper insights into the direct effects of convict parental status on children's emotional development, which may be difficult to find in studies with larger samples (Creswell et al., 2007). This approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena in real contexts, in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research. Data were collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews with teachers and principals and analysis of documents related to child protection policies. The data analysis process follows the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The analysis methods used include content analysis and interpretive to understand the meaning behind the data collected. The location of the study was chosen because of the case of a child with parents of inmates registered in the school, so it is relevant to examine legal protection efforts and their impact on children's emotional health. The main sources of information include teachers, principals, kindergarten staff, as well as school documents and policies related to child protection. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of legal protection efforts for children's emotional health with inmate parents at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek. The data analysis techniques used are in the form of data collection/collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion or verification (Huberman, 2014).



Fg. 1

Miles, Huberman, and Saldanah Quality Data Analysis
Source: (Huberman, 2014).

3. Result and Discussion

Efforts to Protect Children's Laws from Prisoners' Parents on Children's Emotional Health

Efforts to protect children from inmates' parents to children's emotional health at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek refer to various steps taken to ensure that children from inmate families get their rights, especially in terms of psychological and emotional protection. This protection involves government policies, assistance at school, and social interaction that supports children's welfare. The main focus is to minimize the negative impact of social stigma and parental absenteeism on children's emotional state, so that they can continue to grow up in a healthy and emotionally stable environment.

The results of the interview with the principal revealed that one of the forms of legal protection applied is to provide education to teachers on how to handle children with inmate family backgrounds. The principal stated:

"... We give special attention to these children so that they feel welcome. Teachers must understand their emotional state in order to support them optimally." (KS_01)

Meanwhile, a classroom teacher said that they often take a personal approach to children to create a sense of security in the school environment. The teacher said:

"... Children with inmate parents require a special approach. We always try to create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom and help them interact with their friends." (GK_01)

The results of observations at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek show that teachers are active in paying attention to children with difficult family conditions. When doing some classroom activities, teachers are often seen giving praise and motivation to children to build their confidence. In addition, the school also routinely holds joint play activities aimed at strengthening social relationships between children, so that no child feels isolated. However, in some situations, it can be seen that certain children still have difficulty expressing their feelings, such as withdrawing from friends. In this case, children born to convict parents often experience psychological stress due to social stigma, separation from parents, and instability in family life which can disrupt the child's emotional well-being and

increase the risk of psychological disorders, such as anxiety and depression (McEwen & McEwen, 2017). Legal protections, such as policies that guarantee children's access to social support, education, and psychological care, can help reduce the impact of social stress and improve children's emotional well-being.

Data from interviews and observations show that the legal protection efforts implemented at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek are mostly based on psychological and social approaches. Teachers play the role of the main companion in supporting the emotional health of this child. Although there are no specific regulations regarding the protection of children from inmate families at the school level, the measures taken by teachers, such as a personal approach and social reinforcement, show that legal protection can be realized through practical implementation in the educational environment. In line with this, there are theories that emphasize the importance of protecting children from all forms of abuse, neglect or abandonment that can affect the child's physical, emotional, social and mental development. The theory put forward by Eglantyne Jebb in 1923 highlights the importance of legal protection for children so that they do not experience negative impacts from their parents' conditions, such as emotional stress and feelings of isolation which include preventive and rehabilitative efforts, such as providing access to counseling and mental strengthening programs for children whose parents are in prison (Jebb, 1928).

Based on the results of the study, there is a pattern that children's emotional protection is highly dependent on the active role of teachers and the school environment. Children from inmate families tend to show a positive response when they feel accepted and supported at school. through a sensitive and inclusive approach, schools can provide education that educates students about the importance of mental health, creates a supportive environment and reduces discrimination (Ballin, 2023). However, the lack of integrated legal regulations is still a challenge, especially in ensuring the sustainability of such support. Therefore, collaboration between schools, parents, guardians, and the government needs to be improved to create a more comprehensive environment in supporting the emotional health of children from inmate families.

Obstacles Faced in the Implementation of Legal Protection

The obstacles faced in the implementation of legal protection at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek refer to various obstacles that arise when implementing measures to protect children from the social and emotional impact of their parents who are inmates. These obstacles can be in the form of a lack of teachers' understanding of legal protection, limited school resources, social stigma from the community, and a lack of specific regulations that support the implementation of protection at the school level. This obstacle has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of efforts made to protect children's rights to the maximum.

Interviews with principals revealed that one of the main obstacles was the lack of clear legal guidelines for schools. The principal stated:

"... there are no specific rules governing the protection of children from inmate families in schools. We are just trying to provide support as much as we can based on internal policy." (KS_02)

In addition, a teacher highlighted the social stigma from the surrounding community that also affects children. The teacher explained:

"... sometimes people judge these children based on their parental status, so they experience discrimination. It's a challenge for us to maintain the emotional health of children in school." (GK_02)

The results of observations at Dharma Wanita 2 Kindergarten show that although teachers try to provide attention and support, some obstacles are still visible. For example, teachers find it difficult to handle children who withdraw from group activities, because they do not have special training in handling emotional cases of children with inmate family backgrounds. The importance of respecting human dignity and providing protection for vulnerable groups, including children whose parents are prisoners, should be relevant to equality by emphasizing a fair legal system with fair treatment, which is also carried out by schools through the concept of social justice and human rights (Basok et al., 2006). In addition, limited school facilities, such as counseling rooms, are an obstacle in providing more intensive attention to children who need additional emotional support.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the main obstacles in the implementation of legal protection at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek are the lack of specific regulations, limited teacher training, and social stigma that persists. In contrast to what happens in the field, Albert Bandura in Social Learning Theory suggests that children's behavior is influenced by the social environment and models around them, including parents and schools (Bandura, 1989). Limited regulations and lack of teacher training in dealing with children who need intensive legal protection can reduce children's psychological development in facing social stigma. This obstacle hinders the optimization of the emotional support needed by children from inmate families. However, the efforts of the school still show a strong commitment, even though it is carried out in limited resources.

The pattern seen from the data is that barriers to child legal protection are often caused by structural factors, such as regulations and resources, as well as social factors, such as stigma and lack of public awareness. The tendency of society to view children as "bad children" or as successors to crimes committed by their parents, which in turn affects children's opportunities to obtain education, employment, and access to other basic rights (Frost, 2011). Although teachers and school principals have tried their best, the success of children's legal protection still requires wider support from the government and the community. Therefore, the need for cross-sector

collaboration to overcome these obstacles is becoming increasingly important, so that legal protection efforts can be implemented more effectively in the future.

Children's Emotional Health of Prisoner's Parents

The emotional health of children of parents of inmates at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek refers to the psychological condition of children that reflects their ability to understand, manage, and express emotions in a healthy way, despite experiencing stress due to family situations. These children often face emotional challenges, such as feelings of loss, low self-esteem, and social stigma. Their emotional health is affected by environmental support, both from family, school, and community. In this context, emotional health is an important aspect of their development, especially in the face of limited interaction with parents who are serving sentences.

Interviews with classroom teachers revealed that children from inmate families often show feelings of inferiority complex and tend to find it difficult to open up. One of the teachers said:

"... some children look more reserved than their peers. They often feel embarrassed when asked about their family." (GK_03)

The principal also added that emotional support is indispensable:

"... we try to create a safe and supportive environment so that they can feel comfortable at school, but it is not easy because their background affects their interactions with friends." (KS_03)

The results of observation showed that children of inmate parents often withdrew from group activities. For example, in play activities, they tend to choose to play alone or just talk to the teacher. In addition, some children are seen to be sensitive to comments related to family. However, teachers try to give extra attention, such as motivating children to actively participate and giving praise for every small achievement they make.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be understood that the emotional health of these children is greatly influenced by the support they receive at school. Their inability to express emotions openly becomes a major challenge, which is exacerbated by a lack of interaction with parents. However, efforts from the school, such as a personal approach and a friendly learning environment, are one of the important steps in supporting their emotional well-being. Schools are part of a microsystem that plays a major role in shaping early childhood experiences by ensuring that children receive an education that is safe and free from threats or violence (Arjona et al., 2003; Gabora et al., 2008; O'Neill, 1988).

Based on the data obtained, there is a pattern that children from inmate families tend to experience emotional isolation, which can have an impact on their social interaction and academic performance. This pattern also shows that the role of teachers as emotional supporters is very important, considering the suboptimal home environment. To improve the emotional health of these children, a multidimensional approach is needed, involving collaboration between schools, families, and communities. This emphasizes that the success of supporting

children's emotional health does not only depend on the school, but also on synergy with other parties.

Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of Child Legal Protection of Prisoners' Parents

Recommendations to improve the effectiveness of child legal protection from inmate parents at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek include strategic and practical advice to ensure children receive adequate emotional, social, and legal protection. This recommendation is based on field findings regarding children's needs, obstacles faced by schools, and the role of related parties, such as the government, legal institutions, and the community. The main focus is on creating inclusive policies, sustainable support programs, and strengthening teachers' capacity to support children emotionally and socially.

Interviews with school principals revealed the importance of clearer legal guidelines. The principal stated:

"... we need specific regulations for the protection of children from inmate families. Without clear rules, our efforts are often limited." (KS_04)

A teacher also highlighted the need for special training for educators. The teacher said:

"... if we are given training to handle children with special backgrounds like this, of course we will be more confident in providing support, both emotionally and socially." (GK_04)

Observations show that legal protection efforts in this school are still carried out independently and have not been integrated with other institutions. For example, although teachers try to give additional attention to children from inmate families, they do not have specific guides or modules to handle this kind of case. In addition, there is no counseling program or cooperation with social institutions that specifically supports this child.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be interpreted that the effectiveness of legal protection can be improved through three main steps: (1) providing specific regulations for children from inmate families, (2) involving social and legal institutions to support school programs, and (3) providing training to teachers to deal with children's emotional and social problems. This effort requires synergy between schools, governments, and communities to create a more conducive environment for these children.

The patterns shown show that the challenges in providing legal protection for children are related to the lack of cross-sectoral coordination and limited resources at the school level. The recommendation that emerged was the need for an integrated policy, where schools not only act on their own, but also receive support from social, legal, and government institutions. With the strengthening of this collaboration, the effectiveness of children's legal protection can be improved, so that the emotional and social health of children from inmate families can be well maintained.

Research on legal protection efforts for children whose parents are inmates at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek

shows that although schools try to provide emotional support, there are significant obstacles in its implementation. This is in line with findings in the literature that state that children with incarcerated parents are at high risk of developing mental health problems (Davis & Schlafer, 2017; Smyke et al., 2017; Tasca et al., 2014). Obstacles such as the lack of clear legal guidelines and social stigma from society exacerbate this situation. The implication is that without proper intervention, these children are prone to emotional disorders that can affect their overall development.

Obstacles in the implementation of legal protection, such as the lack of specific regulations and limited resources, result in less than optimal school efforts (Baker et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2022). The literature shows that legal protection for children must include all activities to guarantee and protect the rights of children so that they can live, grow, develop, and participate optimally in accordance with the dignity and dignity of humanity (Ferguson, 2021; Lundy et al., 2021; Payà Rico & Bantulà Janot, 2021). However, in practice, the lack of specific guidelines for children with inmate parents leads to a gap between theory and reality on the ground (Ferguson, 2021; Lundy et al., 2021; Payà Rico & Bantulà Janot, 2021). The implication is that these children may not get the protection they need, which can negatively impact their emotional and social well-being.

The emotional health of children of inmate parents is affected by a variety of factors, including support from the school environment and the community (Milavetz et al., 2021; Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2021). Observations showed that these children often withdrew from group activities and showed feelings of inferiority. The literature supports these findings by stating that children with incarcerated parents are considered to be at high risk of developing mental health problems. The implication is that without adequate support, these children can experience a decline in their social and academic development.

Based on research findings analyzing the legal protection of children of convicts on emotional health at Dharma Wanita Kindergarten 2 Sawahan Trenggalek, legal protection efforts through policies such as counseling in schools, implementation is still limited in providing effective emotional protection for children whose parents are convicts. This research corroborates the results of previous research which noted the psychological impacts, such as anxiety and sadness, experienced by these children, but places greater emphasis on the importance of more intensive psychosocial support. In addition, previous research focused more on legal or physical aspects, showing that social stigma in society and at school worsens children's emotional conditions. The limitations of integrated psychosocial support between legal policy and practice in the field are also a major highlight, showing that existing legal protection is not enough to overcome the emotional health challenges of these children. Thus, this research encourages the need for a more holistic and coordinated approach in the legal protection of children, which includes legal, psychological and social aspects simultaneously.

4. Conclusion

This research analyzes efforts to protect the emotional health of children who have compensatory parents at Kindergarten Dharma Wanita 2 Sawahan Trenggalek using single subject research which can be concluded that the legal protection provided to children who have subordinate parents still face various challenges, especially related to their mental health. One aspect raised by one respondent was the significant impact on the children's emotional health. Uncertainty about the future and the social stigma attached to their parents' status are factors that increase the mental health of these children. Feelings of being ignored and not understood by their surroundings often make these children more vulnerable to stress, anxiety and depression. On the other hand, legal protection efforts such as counseling and psychosocial support have been carried out by schools as a form of school facility to fulfill children's rights to receive a proper education, protect children from all forms of physical or psychological violence and support the protection of children's husbands. Therefore, this research suggests the need to increase more comprehensive legal protection efforts, both through government intervention, educational institutions and the community. A focus on more intensive psychosocial support and the creation of a more inclusive and stigma-free environment is necessary to help these children overcome their natural emotional impact.

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