



Anxiety Among Juvenile Residents Prior to Release from the Class I A Special Child Development Institution in Kupang

Marciany Cahyaratry Airlangga Putri Tokan^{1*}, Marni², Rizky Pradita Manafe¹

¹ Program Study of Psychology, Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University, Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

² Program Study of Public Health Science, Faculty of Public Health, Nusa Cendana University, Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article Type:
Research

Article History:
Received: 8 April 2025
Accepted: 29 June 2025
Published: 30 June 2025

***Corresponding author**
Email:
ratrytokan.9319@gmail.com

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Children in conflict with the law who undergo rehabilitation in the Special Child Development Institution (LPKA) face not only physical confinement but also serious psychological pressure. One of the most common psychological conditions that emerges prior to their release is anxiety, which is triggered by various factors such as loss of self-control, fear of social rejection, and uncertainty about the future. Without appropriate intervention, this anxiety may hinder the process of adaptation and social reintegration after release. Therefore, understanding the psychological condition of juvenile inmates—particularly during the transition period toward freedom—is essential. This study aims to describe the causes, forms, responses, and impacts of anxiety experienced by juvenile inmates prior to release at LPKA Class I A Kupang. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. The study population consisted of 38 juvenile inmates, from which five were selected as primary informants using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria, such as age and readiness for release. In addition, two rehabilitation officers were interviewed as triangulation informants to strengthen data validity and provide additional perspectives. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the anxiety experienced by juvenile inmates before release is influenced by young age, low educational background, past traumatic experiences, weak self-concept, and introverted personality types. The most dominant form of anxiety found was neurotic anxiety. The most common response was moderate anxiety, characterized by behavioral and emotional symptoms such as restlessness, sleep disturbances, and excessive worry about the future. The most visible impact was mood-related symptoms, including irritability and social withdrawal. In conclusion, the most dominant cause of anxiety was the lack of knowledge and experience in preparing for the future, worsened by gender-related tendencies in boys to suppress emotions and their generally lower level of formal education. Therefore, further research and rehabilitation programs should focus on enhancing children's capacity through life skills training, sustained emotional support, and the provision of concrete information on post-release educational and employment opportunities to better equip juvenile inmates for reintegration into society.

Keywords: Anxiety, Foster Child, LPKA Kupang.

ABSTRAK

Anak yang berkonflik dengan hukum dan menjalani pembinaan di Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) tidak hanya menghadapi pembatasan fisik, tetapi juga tekanan psikologis yang serius. Salah satu kondisi yang kerap muncul menjelang masa pembebasan adalah kecemasan, yang dipicu oleh berbagai faktor, seperti kehilangan kontrol atas diri, kekhawatiran terhadap penerimaan masyarakat, dan ketidakpastian masa depan. Tanpa intervensi yang tepat, kecemasan ini dapat menghambat proses adaptasi dan reintegrasi sosial pasca-pembebasan. Oleh karena itu, penting untuk memahami kondisi psikologis anak binaan, khususnya menjelang masa transisi menuju kebebasan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan penyebab, bentuk, respon, dan dampak kecemasan yang dialami anak binaan menjelang kebebasan di LPKA Kelas I A Kupang. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 38 anak binaan, dan lima orang dipilih sebagai informan utama melalui teknik purposive sampling berdasarkan kriteria inklusi tertentu, seperti usia, dan kesiapan menjelang pembebasan. Selain itu, dua orang petugas pembina diwawancarai sebagai informan triangulasi untuk memperkuat validitas data dan memberikan perspektif tambahan. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dan dianalisis

menggunakan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldafia melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecemasan anak binaan menjelang kebebasan dipengaruhi oleh usia muda, tingkat pendidikan yang rendah, pengalaman traumatis di masa lalu, lemahnya konsep diri, serta tipe kepribadian tertutup. Bentuk kecemasan yang paling dominan adalah kecemasan neurotik. Respon kecemasan yang paling banyak ditemukan adalah tingkat sedang, ditandai oleh perilaku dan emosional seperti gelisah, gangguan tidur, serta kekhawatiran berlebihan terhadap masa depan. Dampak kecemasan paling nyata terlihat pada perubahan suasana hati (mood symptoms), seperti mudah tersinggung dan menarik diri dari interaksi sosial. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penyebab kecemasan paling dominan adalah kurangnya pengetahuan dan pengalaman dalam mempersiapkan masa depan (future uncertainty), diperparah oleh karakteristik laki-laki yang cenderung menekan emosi serta rendahnya tingkat pendidikan formal. Untuk itu, riset lanjutan dan program pembinaan perlu diarahkan pada penguatan kapasitas anak melalui pelatihan keterampilan hidup, dukungan emosional yang berkelanjutan, serta penyediaan informasi konkret mengenai peluang pendidikan dan pekerjaan pasca pembebasan agar anak binaan lebih siap menghadapi kehidupan di masyarakat.

Kata Kunci: Kecemasan, Anak Binaan, LPKA Kupang.

INTRODUCTION

Children in conflict with the law often experience psychological stress, both during their time in juvenile correctional facilities (LPKA) and after their release. They lose physical freedom and face stigmatization as "bad kids" or "young criminals." These perceptions worsen their mental condition and hinder recovery. Unfortunately, the rehabilitation system in LPKA still tends to emphasize punishment and lacks sufficient attention to the psychosocial aspects of the child (Putra et al., 2016; Atikasuri et al., 2018).

Their psychological problems are further exacerbated by broken family backgrounds, traumatic experiences, and unsupportive environments. As a result, these children often feel alienated, even after release. Upon returning to society, they frequently face rejection, which can push them back into deviant behaviors (Corrua, Kadja, & Tallo, 2024).

National data show a rising trend in the number of children dealing with legal issues. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 12,492 cases from 2011 to 2020 (Khotimah & Kusdarini, 2024). In 2023 alone, nearly 2,000 children were involved in legal cases, most of whom did not receive adequate preventive intervention. At LPKA Class I A Kupang in 2023, there were 37 juvenile inmates, including recidivists, with the most common cases involving child abuse, sexual offenses, and theft (Corrua, Kadja, & Tallo, 2024). This highlights the importance of rehabilitation that not only focuses on punishment but also addresses the root psychosocial issues.

A preliminary study conducted in February 2025 revealed that out of 39 children in 2024, 24 had already been released. As of now, 35 remain, with five scheduled for release this year. This turnover indicates the importance of post-release support. Without proper assistance, these children are at risk of social rejection and recidivism.

The high number of juvenile inmates at LPKA directly affects their psychological condition, particularly as they near release. Compared to other adolescents, they are more vulnerable to psychological pressure due to two burdens: the loss of freedom during detention and anxiety about social rejection after release (Putra et al., 2016; Atikasuri et al., 2018). This shows that the rehabilitation process has not fully prepared them mentally to face the outside world. Such unpreparedness often leads to anxiety and a return to the same environment without sufficient psychosocial support. In other words, the high number of juvenile inmates not only reflects legal issues but also the inadequacy of existing rehabilitation and social reintegration systems.

Anxiety is a common psychological issue experienced by juvenile inmates, especially prior to their release. Symptoms include restlessness, excessive fear or worry, sleep disturbances, and nightmares (Ulfah et al., 2023). One of the main causes is the uncertainty about how they will be accepted back into society. The stigma of being an "ex-convict" often makes these children feel unworthy and lose self-confidence (Atikasuri et al., 2018). This illustrates that the problem of anxiety stems not only from past experiences but also from the lack of readiness of the social system to support reintegration. Thus, the psychological recovery of juvenile inmates cannot be separated from the community's readiness to receive them post-release.

Previous studies show that anxiety levels among juvenile inmates prior to release vary widely. In LPKA Class II Bandung, most children did not experience anxiety, while others showed mild to severe levels (Atikasuri et al., 2018). Conversely, at LPKA Tanjung Pati, the majority experienced moderate to high anxiety (Wahyuni, 2021). These differences indicate that the social context, rehabilitation systems, and psychosocial approaches at each LPKA significantly influence the mental state of inmates. Therefore, anxiety is not only influenced by individual factors but also closely related to institutional environments and available psychological support.

The phenomenon of pre-release anxiety among juvenile inmates is important to study due to its impact on their reintegration into society. This research aims to identify the causes, forms, response, and effects of anxiety experienced by inmates before their release at LPKA Class I A Kupang. The findings are expected to serve as a foundation for strengthening psychosocial support programs for juveniles approaching release.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with juvenile inmates and staff members at LPKA Class I A Kupang. The interviews aimed to explore the emotional experiences of the inmates as they approached their release, particularly focusing on the forms, causes, and impacts of the anxiety they experienced.

The research population consisted of 34 juvenile inmates at LPKA Class I A Kupang, from which a sample of 5 participants was selected. Subjects were chosen purposively based on inclusion criteria: aged 14–18 years, scheduled for release in 2025, willing to participate, and able to communicate effectively. These criteria were identified through initial observation and recommendations from LPKA staff. Exclusion criteria included inmates with severe psychological disorders that could hinder effective communication, unwillingness to consent as respondents, uncooperative behavior during the interview process, serious physical health conditions, or a scheduled release prior to the data collection period.

Data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, the researcher sorted the interview results and grouped the information by themes such as anxiety due to uncertainty about the future, fear of social rejection, or economic insecurity. For instance, some inmates expressed fear of being rejected by their families or confusion about finding work after release. These data were then presented in descriptive narratives to illustrate patterns showing that such anxiety negatively affected their motivation to participate in rehabilitation activities. In the conclusion drawing phase, the analysis was conducted iteratively by comparing interview results and observations—for example, noting that inmates who expressed fear of rejection tended to withdraw during social training sessions, indicating the real impact of anxiety on their adaptive behavior.

RESULT

Causes of Anxiety

1. Demographic Factors

a. Age

Most participants in this study were adolescents with an average age of 16. At this age, they are experiencing many emotional and social changes, while also searching for their identity. This makes them more vulnerable to anxiety, especially as they approach release from the institution and begin to think about their future.

b. Gender

All participants in this study were male. They tended not to express their anxiety directly. Although they appeared calm and rational in conversation, the anxiety remained, particularly related to self-identity and concerns about life after release.

c. Education Level

Most participants were currently attending junior or senior high school, although some had not continued their education. Differences in education level influenced how they processed information and faced uncertainty before release. Those with higher

educational backgrounds tended to reflect more and respond to anxiety in more adaptive ways.

2. Knowledge and Experience
 - a. Knowledge
Most participants associated anxiety with feelings of restlessness and fear, particularly regarding future uncertainty, social acceptance, and job opportunities after release. This indicates that their understanding of anxiety was mostly emotional and based on direct experiences. One participant even stated he did not know what anxiety was, reflecting a lack of conceptual understanding.
 - b. Experience
Most participants had personal experiences related to anxiety, both before and during their time at LPKA. Their anxiety varied—from fear of exams, embarrassment or fear of public speaking, to anxiety related to legal processes and adaptation within the institution.
3. Self-Concept and Personality Type
 - a. Self-Concept
Most of the juvenile inmates were aware of some aspects of themselves, such as their strengths and weaknesses. Some mentioned strengths like being quick to learn, sociable, or helpful, while weaknesses included being easily anxious, quick-tempered, or overly sensitive. However, some were still unable to clearly identify these aspects, indicating limited self-awareness.
4. Personality Type
Despite initial anxiety, most juvenile inmates showed internal coping mechanisms, such as observing the situation first, remaining calm, and gradually adapting to their surroundings. These strategies reflect efforts to adapt to anxiety, even if not all were able to express or fully understand this process.

Forms of Anxiety

1. Neurotic Anxiety
Most participants experienced anxiety before release, accompanied by negative emotions such as sadness, confusion, anger, and despair. This anxiety was not only general but also reflected deeper emotional distress, especially due to the uncertainty of life after release. Some reported increasing anxiety as their release date approached, marked by emotional and physical reactions. Their feelings were mixed—happy to be released but also fearful about whether they would be accepted by society, find employment, or be able to reintegrate.
2. Moral Anxiety
Most participants experienced anxiety due to uncertainty about life after release, especially concerning acceptance by the community. They feared being stigmatized, finding it hard to get a job, or being socially isolated because of their past. This reflects deep emotional pressure and fear of not being fully reintegrated. However, most expressed positive responses when discussing family. They felt longing and hoped to return home soon. Family ties during rehabilitation remained strong and served as emotional support.
3. Realistic Anxiety
Some juvenile inmates felt anxious due to an unclear future. They worried about continuing education, losing friends or their familiar environment in LPKA, and repeating past mistakes. This anxiety created mental stress. Some expressed confusion and indecision, while others said they felt no anxiety. This shows each child responds differently to the situation. Generally, the anxiety stemmed from uncertainty about education and reintegration into society.

Anxiety Responses

1. Physiological Responses
Most participants reported physical symptoms during anxiety, such as headaches, shortness of breath, and dizziness, especially at night. However, some experienced no physical symptoms, indicating that physical reactions to anxiety vary among individuals.

2. **Cognitive Responses**
Some participants expressed concerns about the future, such as not being able to continue school or struggling to find a job. However, not all shared this view. Some showed no cognitive signs of anxiety, and one even had a positive outlook, focusing on the future.
3. **Behavioral and Emotional Responses**
Most participants managed their anxiety positively, such as by reading, playing music, exercising, or participating in religious activities. However, one participant showed signs of withdrawal and was less responsive to his anxiety.

Across the three indicators, the overall level of anxiety among juvenile inmates at LPKA Class I A Kupang before release was categorized as moderate. The main concerns were education, employment opportunities, and social acceptance. Nevertheless, most participants managed their emotions using positive coping strategies, such as participating in religious activities and personal relaxation.

Impacts of Anxiety

1. **Mood Symptoms**
Interviews revealed that anxiety affected the moods of most participants. They became more sensitive, irritable, and restless, which impacted their interactions with others within the institution.
2. **Cognitive Symptoms**
Findings showed that anxiety not only affected emotional and physical conditions but also altered thinking patterns. Many worried excessively about the future.
3. **Motor Symptoms**
Most participants did not exhibit noticeable physical movements linked to anxiety. This may be because individuals cope differently—some express anxiety through thoughts or emotions rather than physical actions. Only one participant showed physical restlessness, while others appeared calm despite admitting they felt stressed. These findings indicate that motor reactions to anxiety vary among juvenile inmates.

DISCUSSION

Causes of Anxiety

The juveniles in Class I A Juvenile Detention Centre (LPKA) Kupang are mostly 16 years old, an age categorised as adolescence. Early adolescence typically begins at around thirteen and lasts until sixteen or seventeen, ending at eighteen, when individuals are legally considered adults (Hurlock, 1997). Adolescents frequently experience anxiety, particularly concerning their future after being released from the facility. As found by Suprpto et al. (2022), adolescence is a period marked by emotional change and identity searching, making adolescents highly vulnerable to anxiety. Moreover, the closed and highly disciplined environment at the LPKA exacerbates their anxiety, as it induces feelings of pressure and confinement.

A study by Putri et al. (2023) revealed that 52.3% of 14-year-old adolescents experience anxiety. Similar data from the National Institute of Mental Health (2023) shows that about 31.9% of adolescents in the US aged 13–18 experience anxiety disorders, with 8.3% suffering from severe anxiety. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health problem, with a prevalence of 16.1% (HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2020).

Negative experiences such as bullying also aggravate anxiety levels in adolescents. Research by Yulia et al. (2024) shows that bullied teenagers have nearly three times higher risk of developing mental disorders compared to those who have not been bullied.

From a theoretical standpoint, adolescence—a time of emotional upheaval and identity exploration—can result in psychological instability, including anxiety (Suprpto et al., 2022). Age also plays a role in how adolescents deal with anxiety. LPKA officers have observed that younger age often correlates with emotional instability. According to Atikasuri et al. (2018), adolescence is a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, during which emotional and psychological states are often unstable, making anxiety a matter of concern. Age is known to be one of the factors influencing an individual's level of anxiety. However, Feist (2013) explains

that with increasing age, individuals tend to possess greater psychological maturity, which supports more effective coping with anxiety (Faatihah, & Gati, 2022).

Adult males generally have stronger mental resilience in responding to perceived threats than females (Faatihah, & Gati, 2022). However, women are generally more open in expressing their emotions, while men often suppress theirs, as they are expected to appear strong. As a result, men often do not disclose their anxiety, making them less likely to receive help. This can lead to emotional burdens and affect their overall mental health (Ningrum, 2023). Men's reluctance to express anxiety increases the risk of delayed treatment and emotional overload (Tan et al., 2023). This situation poses a unique challenge in LPKA Class I A Kupang.

Education also influences how adolescents deal with anxiety. At LPKA, most of the juveniles come from middle educational backgrounds such as junior or senior high school, although some have never attended school. Those with higher education levels tend to be more prepared and able to think more rationally when facing anxiety about their future. In contrast, those with lower educational backgrounds often feel more confused and unprepared, making them more prone to anxiety. Intelligence is defined as the ability to solve problems and adapt quickly and accurately. The development of intelligence is influenced by many factors, one of which is education level. The higher one's educational attainment, the more opportunities one has to develop thinking skills, absorb information, and enhance learning ability. The theory of empiricism by John Locke posits that education plays a crucial role in shaping character, including emotional control and expression. Quality education can help individuals become emotionally mature and wise in dealing with various situations (Ajhuri, 2019).

Stear's research found that academic pressure and social media increase anxiety in adolescents (Stear et al., 2023), while the 2023 National Survey of Children's Health reported anxiety as the most common mental health issue among teens (HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau, 2020).

Knowledge about the future and how to navigate it also plays an important role in managing anxiety. Many juveniles feel anxious because they are unsure of what will happen after release. They fear rejection from society and difficulties in finding employment, due to lack of information and understanding on how to overcome these issues. Experience offers individuals insights into previously encountered situations, making them more prepared to face similar future challenges. Such experience fosters physical and mental resilience, thereby reducing anxiety (Almar, 2024).

According to Pradipta, & Situmorang (2024), adolescents who are aware of mental health are better equipped to manage their anxiety, while Nobre et al. (2021) argue that good knowledge encourages adolescents to seek help when facing psychological issues. Life experience also affects how adolescents respond to anxiety. The juveniles at LPKA Class I A Kupang often feel anxious when facing hearings, exams, public speaking, or adapting to new environments because they have never encountered such situations before.

Adolescents are often judged by their appearance rather than their age. When they fail to meet such expectations, they are frequently criticised, which may result in feelings of hatred, inadequacy, and inferiority. Consequently, low self-esteem may intensify (Hurlock, 1997). Adolescence is often a period of significant challenge, where crisis situations can trigger new stressors. Past trauma can be a risk factor for the emergence of psychotic disorders in adolescents (Anggadewi, 2020).

Self-concept also plays a vital role in how individuals cope with anxiety. Many juveniles are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, such as fast learning abilities or social skills, yet still experience anxiety or irritability. Poor self-concept during adolescence can stem from both personal and environmental factors. Teenagers often hold unrealistic views of themselves, leading to isolation or antisocial behaviour, which in turn affects how others treat them. Lack of social support worsens their self-concept and fosters negative attitudes towards themselves. This is evident in behaviours such as withdrawal, poor interaction, or becoming aggressive and defensive. If not addressed, a negative self-concept may evolve into lifelong low self-esteem, as adolescents tend to reinforce this through antisocial behaviour (Hurlock, 1997).

Moreover, personality type significantly affects anxiety. Children with perfectionist or ambitious personalities are more vulnerable due to their high personal standards. In contrast,

those who are more relaxed and patient tend to adapt more easily to pressure. Personality types influence the level and likelihood of anxiety disorders. Many individuals are unaware of their personality types, making it difficult to manage stress, demands, and problems. On the other hand, mentally resilient individuals are usually calmer and better able to control themselves in tough situations, leading to lower anxiety levels. Psychological factors such as negative thinking, concentration difficulties, and emotional instability further aggravate anxiety. Certain personality types can even trigger the brain's anxiety system, affecting how threats are perceived and evaluated, which ultimately shapes one's emotional reaction to specific situations (Afriany, 2024). Research by Wati and Subroto (2023) indicates that individuals with neurotic personalities are more likely to experience anxiety, while extroverts tend to feel less anxious (Nikčević et al., 2021).

Forms of Anxiety

Based on interviews with the juveniles at Class I A Juvenile Correctional Institution (LPKA) in Kupang, three main types of anxiety were identified as they approached release: neurotic anxiety, moral anxiety, and realistic anxiety. Neurotic Anxiety is many juveniles expressed anxiety about how they would be perceived by society after release. They feared rejection by family or friends due to their past mistakes. Freud explains that neurotic anxiety arises from an internal conflict between personal impulses and fear of social rejection (Mulki, Ta'adi, & Sunarjo, 2020). Mottershead et al. (2024) found that feelings of shame and guilt hinder the rehabilitation of offenders because of their anxiety about being judged. The proposed solution is that rehabilitation approaches should focus on building self-confidence and preparing juveniles for reintegration into society, while also addressing their fear of rejection.

Moral Anxiety, The juveniles also experienced anxiety about being judged by their families and communities for having violated moral norms. They feared being socially excluded. According to Freud, moral anxiety occurs when there is conflict between the ego (personal desires) and the superego (moral values). When someone believes they have failed to meet moral standards, they fear judgment (Mulki, Ta'adi, & Sunarjo, 2020). Rico et al (2024) suggest that moral disengagement may reduce moral anxiety, but it can hinder rehabilitation. The proposed solution is that Rehabilitation programmes should incorporate moral education and help juveniles understand the consequences of their actions. Therapy that encourages a healthy sense of guilt may assist them in correcting their behaviour.

Realistic anxiety occurs when juveniles are worried about their future—such as social acceptance, employment opportunities, and adapting to life after release. This form of anxiety arises from actual perceived threats, such as the difficulty of reintegration after incarceration (Noviani et al., 2023). Research by Alizamar and O'Neill shows that social support and access to education are essential in reducing realistic anxiety among adolescents after release (Alizamar et al., 2017; O'Neill et al., 2017). The proposed solution is it is vital to provide family and community support, as well as vocational training and education, to help juveniles adapt and manage their future-related anxiety.

Levels of Anxiety

Children experiencing mild anxiety may only feel slightly tense or uneasy, but are still able to perform daily activities effectively. They may even appear more alert and better prepared for life after release. In contrast, those with moderate anxiety exhibit clearer symptoms, such as frequent worrying, difficulty sleeping, fatigue, and uncertainty about the future. To cope with these feelings, they usually engage in calming activities, such as praying, talking to friends, or staying busy with daily routines. Generally, most of the juveniles experienced moderate anxiety, primarily caused by fear of an uncertain future—particularly regarding education, employment, and social acceptance. Nevertheless, they were still able to regulate their emotions, indicating relatively good coping abilities.

According to Nurhalimah (2016), anxiety is categorised into four levels: 1). Mild anxiety: linked to everyday stress, often increases alertness, 2). Moderate anxiety: narrows attention span but allows logical thinking, 3). Severe anxiety: impairs clear thinking and narrows focus to a single concern, 4). Panic: marked by extreme fear and impaired social functioning

In this study, most juveniles were at the moderate anxiety level, as seen through symptoms such as excessive worrying, sleep disturbance, irritability, and a strong desire for calm. According to Shipp et al. (2025), adolescents with generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) have a lower tolerance for uncertainty, making them more prone to anxiety about the future. This aligns with the experiences of the juveniles, who were also anxious about post-release life, uncertain whether they would be accepted by society or find opportunities for work or education.

Researcher recommendations is that understanding the levels and causes of anxiety is critical for developing appropriate interventions. Juveniles need support in managing their anxiety, particularly regarding their future. Suggested measures include: Providing coping skills training to help them manage uncertainty, Offering psychological counselling to help them recognise and manage anxiety and Conducting release preparation programmes, including vocational training, career guidance, and spiritual support with the right approach, juveniles can develop better mental readiness and greater confidence as they return to society.

Impact of Anxiety

Interviews with juveniles nearing release from LPKA Class I A Kupang revealed that anxiety affected multiple aspects of their lives. Some reported feeling irritable, having difficulty sleeping, being unable to concentrate on studies, and constantly feeling restless. For instance, some said they often got into arguments with friends, struggled to sleep at night, and felt confused about the future. Some even displayed physical signs of anxiety, such as tapping their feet or constantly fidgeting with their fingers when feeling tense. These are clear signs of significant anxiety.

According to Emiun, anxiety manifests in three primary ways: 1). Mood: such as irrational fear or dread of something bad happening, leading to sensitivity and sleep difficulties, 2). Cognition: including excessive worry over uncertain events, reduced concentration, and mental fatigue, 3). Motor activity: such as restlessness, purposeless movements, or muscle tension. These symptoms were consistent with what the juveniles were experiencing—emotional tension, negative thoughts, and physical restlessness (Legawati, 2020).

Research from various countries supports these findings. A study by Al-Shekaili found that one-third of children and adolescents in Oman experienced anxiety symptoms during the pandemic, such as irritability and social withdrawal (Al-Shekaili et al., 2024). Similarly, Yang's research involving over 50,000 adolescents showed that nearly half experienced sleep disturbances and mood swings, which negatively affected their social relationships (Yang et al., 2025). Another study by Rabner found that adolescents with anxiety often struggle to concentrate or think clearly, even though their IQ remains unaffected. They tend to overthink and doubt their ability to complete even simple tasks (Rabner et al., 2024). Wahyuni (2021) also found that adolescents with low self-concept are more vulnerable to physical symptoms of anxiety, such as restlessness and muscle tension.

Suggested solutions is Given the significant impacts, it is essential to provide comprehensive psychological support and rehabilitation for juveniles nearing release. Recommended actions include: Emotional support, such as counselling to help them stay calm and avoid negative thinking, Training in emotional regulation and concentration, so they can think clearly and manage stress, Religious and spiritual activities, which have already been implemented at LPKA and help foster calmness and confidence, Vocational training, so they feel prepared to work or pursue education after release, School and external counsellor visits, to rekindle hope and rebuild social connections and collaboration with external institutions, such as PKBI, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and educational institutions, to ensure sustained support after release. In addition, LPKA Class I A Kupang has taken the right steps by providing individualised care tailored to each child's needs. Officers maintain a patient and educational approach, focusing not only on discipline but also on the psychological well-being of the juveniles.

Study limitation of this study was conducted exclusively at LPKA Class I A Kupang, so the findings may not be generalisable to other correctional facilities. The data collection methods (e.g. interviews and questionnaires) may also introduce subjective bias, as anxiety is a deeply personal experience. The short research duration may have limited the ability to

capture long-term anxiety patterns. Furthermore, the study did not account for external factors such as family or social support, which may influence anxiety. Finally, it did not explore in depth the effects of the interventions implemented at LPKA on juvenile anxiety levels.

CONCLUSION

The most dominant cause of anxiety among juvenile inmates at LPKA Class I A Kupang prior to their release is a lack of knowledge and experience in preparing for the future (future uncertainty), which is further exacerbated by gender-related factors—males tend to suppress emotions—as well as low levels of education that limit rational and solution-oriented thinking. The most prevalent form of anxiety experienced by the inmates is neurotic anxiety. The most commonly observed anxiety response is behavioral and emotional, which places the overall level of anxiety in the moderate category. The most significant impact of anxiety is reflected in mood symptoms, such as irritability and emotional instability.

For future research, efforts should focus on empowering juvenile inmates with knowledge and skills to prepare for their future. Life skills and job training programs that are future-oriented can help reduce anxiety. Furthermore, emotionally supportive approaches that allow these juveniles to express their feelings should be strengthened. Providing clearer information on educational and employment opportunities after release will help them feel more prepared and reduce the uncertainty that contributes to their anxiety.

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