

# Gratitude Training to Reduce Depression in Juvenile Prisoners

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**ABSTRACT:** *Juvenile delinquency is a broad concept of offense, the impact can make teenagers become criminals and become juvenile prisoners. The problems in prison often are about boredom, laziness and lack of motivation in following the activities inside the prison. The condition is characterized as a symptom of depression and efforts are made in the form of gratefulness training. The method used in this research is action research with experimental model of the one group pretest-posttest design and interview with 12 prisoners. Juvenile prisoners are boys and have age range of 16 to 18 years. The result of the research data using paired samples t-test obtained score  $t = 2,385$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The result shows the research hypothesis is accepted that gratitude training is effective to reduce depression in juvenile prisoners.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Depression, Gratitude training, Juvenile prisoners*

## INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a broad concept of abuses, starting from littering to murder (Santrock, 2011). Even many of them eventually had to deal with the law and detained at the Institute for Special Education of Children (LPKA). Santrock explains that teenagers who fall into this behavior usually come from low-income families, show strong self, unemployment, low quality education level and low family support system (Hurd, Zimmerman & Reischl, 2011) in the study of African American adolescents mentioned that the factor of adolescents becoming criminals is a low economic environment; they prefer to imitate the behavior of adults. This is not only happening in the family environment, but also in the wider community. The criminology theory explains why a person is a criminal. First, focus on individual characteristics (whether these behaviors arise when childhood or adolescence) and the social conditions that cause criminal behavior (Maier-Katkin, Mears & Bernard, 2009). On individual characteristics it is said that low self-control is not a major factor. A criminal usually shows a normal level of self-control before and after the event. Meanwhile, in social conditions the influence of social interaction, normative system and group dynamics describes this criminal behavior is inspired, defended and reinforced through consequences appropriate to social learning theory. Media

monitoring in Indonesia 2011-2016 conducted by KPAI shows that there are at least 44541 cases related to children. By 2015 there are 1072 cases of Children against the Law (Anak Berhadapan Dengan Hukum-ABH) and throughout the year 2011-2016 there are 9243 cases of ABH from all regions in Indonesia (bankdata.kpai.go.id). Researchers conducted observations and interviews on a number of juvenile inmates. The results of observations and interviews conducted on inmates at LPKA (Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak/Child Coaching Institution) Kutoarjo in August 2017 revealed that most of the juvenile inmates felt bored and sad. Therefore, most of the juvenile inmates become lazy and less motivated to follow the activities provided. Another problem that arises is the problem of sleep and appetite, both increased and decreased. One other problem is the suicide of juvenile inmates. This problem is then indicated by depression. The DSM-5 characterizes depression as depressive mood for most of the day (feeling sad, empty and crying), diminished interest in almost every day activity, appetite changes and decreases or weight gain, changes in sleep patterns, and decreased ability to think and concentrate. The researchers also measured adolescent prisoner depression rates by using the Indonesian version of the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) scale in August 2017. This measurement aims to determine the condition of depression of juvenile inmates. The results of 21 measured, two juvenile inmates known to have normal depression, three juvenile had mild depression levels, twelve other had moderate depression, three had a severe depression rate and one other could not be classified for not filling the scale BDI-II as a

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whole. Berk (2008) defines depression as a feeling of sadness, frustration, and no life expectancy, followed by loss of pleasure in most activities and sleep disturbances, appetite, concentration and energy. (Beck, 1985) defines depression from various attributes, namely: (1) mood-specific changes; (2) negative self-concepts related to self-reproach and self-blame; (3) regression and a desire to punish oneself; (4) vegetative changes; and (5) change of activity level. Depression manifested into a symptom divided into several aspects (Beck & Alford, 2009), namely: (1) emotional manifestations (2) cognitive manifestations, (3) motivational manifestations, (4) vegetative and physical manifestations, (5) and (6) hallucinations. Factors causing depression according to DSM-5 (2013) are temperament, environment, genetic and physiological; as well as course modifiers. Depressed prisoners also need treatment that leads to their mental health, to reduce depression levels (Boothby & Durham, 2015). (Ronel & Segev, 2014) argue that criminal justice actors should be encouraged to nurture the positive elements that exist in each individual so that selfishness diminishes, promotes positive change, reduces negative attitudes and behavior and increases rejection of crime. The quality of interventionist and recipient intervention relationships is important, as interventions are expected to improve positive behaviors such as reliability (keeping promises, on-time and on-the-job), honesty, respect for others' feelings, reflective listening practices, work by focusing on solutions, optimism, warmth, empathy, openness, enthusiasm, able to express views about the value of positive family relationships, work and have friends who do not discriminate and interpret the motives of others positively. It also aims to provide positive change to individual perpetrators of crime as well as help reduce the recidivism. One solution to the above things is with gratitude (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) define gratitude as a feeling of gratitude and pleasure in response to a reward, in which the reward is a benefit derived from others or the happiness gained from nature. Gratefulness can encourage a person to seek wisdom from a negative experience, as well as gratitude can enhance positive emotions that are useful for reducing symptoms of depression (Lambert, Fincham & Stillman, 2011). Gratitude training to be studied and used as an alternative treatment is expected to reduce the level of depression in juvenile inmates. (Watkins, 2014) mentions that there are four components used in preparing the gratitude training modules, namely: (1) grateful recounting is an exercise used by trainees to tell or write a list of goodness received, (2) grateful reflection or self-reflection or contemplation is an exercise to make participants reflect on the enjoyment gained in their lives, (3) grateful expression is meant by writing gratitude and thank-you note to someone who is very meaningful in life, but never given thanks, (4) grateful reappraisal or reassessing events that occur in the participants lives, whether they are good or bad.

## AIM

This study aims to understand the depression that occurs in juvenile inmates and review the gratitude training as an alternative treatment to reduce depression in juvenile inmates. This research is expected to provide information and inputs to juvenile inmates and related parties such as LPKA (Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak or Child Coaching Institution) so as to better know and give

understanding about the depression that affects juvenile inmates and provide alternative treatment to depressed prisoners so as not to cause more severe depression.

## METHODS

This research uses action research method. Quasi experimental models of the one group pretest-posttest design were used to test the effect of treatment in which one group of subjects was measured using a BDI-II scale adapted to Indonesian; which was confirmed by interview. The first procedure is a pre-test for detection of prisoner depression, then training of gratitude and post-test, which is then followed by reflection. The subjects of this study were: (1) juvenile convicts aged 13-18 years; (2) the subjects had depression scores measured using BDI-II scale, (3) had an education level equivalent to junior high or packet B pursuit; and (4) are not attending any other training.

### Research Measurement

#### *BDI-II Scale*

BDI-II scale adapted to Indonesian by (Ginting, Van Der Vled, Srisayekti, & Becker, 2013). BDI-II scale is a standard scale arranged by Beck based on clinical observation on behavior and symptom demonstrated by a depressed patient. Scale consist of 21 items represented from observations made systematically reducing 21 symptoms and behavior that can be assessed from intensity 0-3. The BDI-II scale has been widely adapted into Indonesian, and items on that scale already adjusted to the subject's conditions. The writer uses the BDI-II scale which commonly used by students of the psychology profession.

#### *Gratitide Training Module*

Module refers to modified training modules by (Hayati, 2017) from (Watkins, 2014) consist of recounting pleasure and contemplating pleasure, reassessing events in life and expressing gratitude. The manipulation checks used in this study on knowledge of gratitude on the subject of research only use post-test only design. Where knowledge of gratitude is measured only through a questionnaire at the time of post-test. During the gratitude training, all 12 research subjects attended direct face to face training with a facilitator for two hours duration in one time meeting. One meeting has two sessions, so it takes two days of training. During the training, the facilitator would first explain the concept of gratitude, then the research subjects were asked to express the gratitude in accordance to the material given before. During the training process, games created with gratitude theme, were hold in order to bring relax atmosphere among the seubjects and facilitators. In 10 days period between pre-test to the post-test, subjects were asked to write their feeling and expression of their own gratitude every day.

## RESULTS

The results of the research on the subject of juvenile inmates in the pre-test and post-test sessions were analyzed using paired samples t-test. Subjects consisted of 12 juvenile inmates, but only nine data were analyzed, those with depression score. The result

**Table 1.**  
Paired Samples Statistic

	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Pre-Test	26.44	9	12.001
Post-Test	18.78	9	9.418

of analysis shows that the pre-test average is 26.44 (Table 1). Although the post-test results note that there are three subjects who experienced an increase in depression score, but the average post-test score decreased by 7.66 to 18.78. Hypothesis test results using paired samples t-test known  $n = 9$ , then obtained correlation of 0.618 with a significance of 0.076. The numbers obtained are sufficient to show a high correlation, since subjects subject to pre-test and post-test are one of the same subject groups. T-test of subject depression score of pre-test and post-test is known  $t = 2.385$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results show the difference in depression score between pre-test and post-test on subjects who have attended gratitude training. The mean score on post-test of juvenile depression decreased by 7.667 from the mean pre-test score.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of depression test score on pre-test and post-test using BDI-II scale, the result of 12 juvenile inmates found six of them experienced decreased depression score, three people experienced depression score, two others had normal score and one person others cannot complete the BDI-II scale so the data cannot be analyzed. The depression experienced by most juvenile inmates makes it difficult for them to perform daily activities. Including when doing tamping or compulsory daily activities, they feel a big effort in doing these activities. Tamping is an activity or work performed by juvenile inmates in LPKA, such as assisting LPKA officers' work or participating in skills training (for examples: painting, crafting and others). Depression was measured using a BDI-II scale that measured six aspects of depression, emotional, cognitive, motivational, vegetative and physical aspects; delusions and hallucinations (Beck & Alford, 2009; Beck, 1967; Beck & Alford, 2009). It describes the emotional aspects of depression referring to a change in feelings or changes in behaviors that are directly related to feelings. This also applies to juvenile inmates. The average juvenile experienced sad emotional expression the first time he entered the jail. But this sad feeling gradually diminishes over time. This sad feeling arises from being away from the family. The cognitive aspects of depression include a number of diverse phenomena (Beck, 1967; Beck & Alford, 2009) consisting of distortions to oneself, his experiences and his future. Although in prison, but not make the subject feel pessimistic with their future. The subject has designed himself to go back to school and optimistic will turn into a better person. Another cognitive problem is the desire to commit suicide. Two subjects, at the time of the pre-test admitted that he had thought to hurt himself though he would not do. After the training of gratitude, the thought of self-harm is lost. The next aspect of depression is individual motivation that is regressive. Regressive refers to an individual who seems interested in the least demanding activity for him or her. However, not all juvenile inmates at LPKA are interested in these activities. The fourth aspect of depression is the vegetative and physical manifestations, the juvenile inmates feel more tired,

the appetite worse and the decreased interest in sex. The result of the research hypothesis test by using paired samples t-test shows the difference of teenage prisoner depression score on pre-test and post-test significantly with  $t = 2.385$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The mean depression score on post-test is lower than the pre-test depression score. The average depression score in the pre-test session was 26.44 and the depression score in the post-test session was 18.78. A lower post-test depression score than the pre-test depression score suggests the effect of training on gratitude on reductions in adolescent depression. (Watkins, 2014) describes the relationship between gratitude and depression. Although both are contradictory, yet they are related to each other. According to him, gratitude can reduce and prevent depression. First, be grateful can increase the pleasure in doing the activity. One benefit of being grateful is being able to take the positive side of a fun experience. Some of the inmates revealed that they went to jail because they were unlucky and were destined to be lived. They also experienced changes during the prison, among them being independent and trying to always worship every day. Some also admit, they learn to speak more subtly and politely to an older person while in prison. This they admit was never done when they were in the neighborhood outside the prison. Secondly, gratitude may add to the vigilance of a pleasant experience (Watkins, 2014). Some inmates admit that they have not been able to take wisdom while in prison. Third, gratitude can counteract the ruminations. Rumination is a form of maladaptive self-focuses that does not lead to active problem solving. Fourth, gratitude can push back a positive assessment. Individuals who are depressed may experience rumination because they experience unresolved issues that are associated with some loss and failure. The same is also expressed by juvenile inmates. When they have gained the knowledge of gratitude, they decide to try to be grateful. The benefits they gain from trying to apply gratitude in everyday life starts from the small things like being grateful for God's giving by performing the prayer. Fifth, gratitude will enhance social relationships. One of them is learn to thank to those who have contributed to their lives. One of the subjects gave thanks to LPKA officers, pointing out that the subject was able to acknowledge the guilt of not always following the rules of LPKA officers, but also thankful that LPKA officers were still willing to accept them as students in LPKA. The recognition received a positive response from LPKA officers. Although not all inmates have decreased depression scores, most teenage inmates have shown a positive influence of training in gratitude to reduce depression. Someone who has good positive emotions such as happiness, life satisfaction indicates low levels of depression (Goodmon, Middleditch, Childs & Pietrasiuk, 2016).

## CONCLUSION

The result of this study is that juvenile prisoners in LPKA are indicated to have depression at mild, moderate and severe levels. Training of gratitude is effective in reducing the depression scores of juvenile inmates. This is indicated by a decrease in the depression score on post-test measured after the training of gratitude. In addition, juvenile inmates also show increased understanding and knowledge about gratitude. Based on the results of the research can be submitted the following suggestions: (1) LPKA can continue this gratitude training to help juvenile inmates in self-

understanding and assist in the implementation of daily activities; (2) The researcher can then continue the research by considering the initial identification and check manipulation regarding the condition of gratitude, held the control group as the comparison of the research result.

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