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THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY COUNSELORS (PK) TOWARDS CHILDREN'S CLIENTS IN BAPAS CLASS I PEKANBARU

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Abstract

The Pekanbaru Class I Correctional Center (Bapas) plays an important role in supporting the juvenile criminal justice system, especially in providing guidance, assistance, and supervision to Children Facing the Law (ABH). This study aims to comprehensively examine the role of Community Counselors (PK) in carrying out their functions to children's clients, as well as identify various obstacles that arise in its implementation. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews and documentation. Data analysis was conducted based on Travis Hirschi's social control theory which includes four main elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. The findings show that the role of PK is not only limited to administrative and legal aspects through the preparation of Litmas and assistance in the judicial process, but also includes social-emotional functions by building closeness and moral support for child clients. The four elements of Hirschi's theory are strongly seen in the relationship formed between PK and the child's client, which also supports the process of rehabilitation and reintegration into society. However, the implementation of the role of PK in the field still faces various obstacles, including the limited number and competence of human resources, lack of family support, and the stigma from the surrounding environment towards fostered children. For this reason, it is necessary to strengthen institutions, increase professional capacity through continuous training, and synergy between agencies to create a more inclusive, effective, and sustainable child development system.

Keywords: Community Counselor, Children, Father, Social Control, Rehabilitation

A. Introduction

Juvenile justice handles criminal cases related to children that belong to a system in society known as the criminal justice system which is intended to deal with child



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delinquency and is also expected to provide protection to children who are victims of child delinquency (Jefferson et al., 2015). The juvenile criminal justice system is one of the crucial aspects in law enforcement efforts that are fair and have a human rights perspective. Children as a vulnerable group and have special needs, require different treatment compared to adults in the criminal justice process. This is in line with the principles stated in the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by Indonesia through Law Number 23 of 2002 concerning Child Protection. The Convention affirms that the juvenile criminal justice system must prioritize the best interests of children, ensure the protection of their human rights, and prioritize rehabilitative and restorative approaches rather than repressive or punitive approaches. (Widodo, 2016) (Mubarok, 2022) (Dwi, 2025)

Along with the development of this understanding, the paradigm in the juvenile criminal justice system in Indonesia has undergone significant changes over the past few decades. The retributive approach that focuses only on punishment has shifted towards the concept of restorative justice, which emphasizes the restoration of social relations between perpetrators, victims, and society. This approach not only demands legal accountability, but also prioritizes social and psychological rehabilitation for children who are in the face of the law, in order to avoid stigmatization and marginalization that can negatively impact their development and future. (Pradityo, 2016) (Sugama et al., 2024)

In the context of the reform of the criminal law of children in Indonesia, Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA Law) is an important milestone that comprehensively regulates the mechanism for the protection and development of children who are in conflict with the law. The (Sukardi et al., 2019) SPPA Law emphasizes that the handling of children's cases must be carried out with the principles of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to be heard, and the involvement of the family and the community (Febriani et al., 2024). One of the main innovations in this law is the emphasis on diversion as an alternative to resolving cases outside the formal judicial channels, which aims to avoid children from formal legal processes and tends to burden the child psychologically. (Ariani et al., 2019)

The implementation of the principles of the SPPA Law cannot be separated from the role of key actors who directly handle and assist children during the judicial process. One of the main actors is the Community Supervisor (PK), which is under the auspices of the Correctional Center (Bapas). Community Counselors have a strategic task in assisting children from the initial stage of case handling to the coaching stage after a legal decision is rendered. In detail, PK's duties include the preparation of Community Research (Litmas) as (Nugroho, 2019) (Budiarti et al., 2018) a consideration for law enforcement officials in determining alternative case resolutions, child assistance during the trial process, as

well as guidance and supervision of children after legal decisions, especially in the implementation of coaching programs outside correctional institutions. (Warliyah et al., 2020)

Although the role of PK is vital in supporting the principle of restorative justice, implementation in the field often faces various obstacles that have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of coaching (Nurdin et al., 2021). One of the main obstacles is the limited number and capacity of human resources, which results in a very unbalanced ratio of PK to number of child clients. This condition is quite evident in Bapas Class I Pekanbaru, where the limited number of PKs is not proportional to the high number of child cases handled. The implication of this condition is a decrease in the quality of mentoring, guidance, and supervision that should be provided to children as a rehabilitation effort.

In addition to limited human resources, another significant obstacle is low family participation and support in the child-rearing process. Many children facing the law lose emotional and social support from their families, which is actually an important factor in the process of social reintegration. In these situations, PK often has to take on the dual role of legal companion as well as a surrogate figure for the family, which of course requires high interpersonal skills and empathy.

Coordination and synergy between various institutions involved in the juvenile criminal justice system are also still a challenge. Although the SPPA Law has regulated the involvement of the police, prosecutor's office, courts, and correctional institutions, in practice there are often overlapping duties, differences in perceptions, and a lack of understanding of the role and responsibilities of the PK. As a result, the Litmas report prepared by the PK often does not receive optimal attention and implementation from other law enforcement officials, so that the potential for diversion and child development cannot run optimally.

From a psychosocial point of view, children who are confronted with the law are a vulnerable group and need special attention. The legal process often causes mental pressure, trauma, and negative stigma from the social environment that can worsen the psychological and social condition of children. Therefore, the existence of PK is not only important as a legal companion, but also as a figure who is able to provide moral guidance, motivation, and emotional support, so that children can go through the coaching process with hope and opportunities to change into better individuals.

However, this complex role requires PKs to have specific competencies and skills, including adequate psychological training, which unfortunately is not yet fully available in many areas. Therefore, PK capacity development and increased support from various parties are needed to ensure that PK's strategic role can be carried out optimally.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the role of Community Supervisors in Bapas Class I Pekanbaru in the context of the juvenile criminal justice system. The main focus of the research is the analysis of the implementation of PK tasks, the identification of obstacles and obstacles faced, and the study of the effectiveness of the guidance approach applied in assisting child clients. To strengthen the analysis, this study uses the framework of social control theory developed by Travis Hirschi. This theory is particularly relevant because it emphasizes the importance of social bonds as a major factor in preventing deviant behavior, especially in children and adolescents.

According to Hirschi, there are four main elements in social bonds, namely attachment (emotional attachment), commitment (commitment), involvement (active involvement), and belief (belief in social norms). (Hasaniah et al., 2020) In the context of the role of PK, these four elements are important indicators to measure the success of guidance and assistance for children. Is the child able to establish an emotional attachment with PK and his family? How committed is the child to undergoing the coaching process? What is the level of children's involvement in positive activities facilitated by PK? And whether the child develops a strong belief in the applicable social and legal norms.

Using an in-depth qualitative approach, this study seeks to holistically uncover the dynamics of child guidance in the face of the law, as well as the role of PK in building and maintaining social bonds that can encourage positive change in children. It is hoped that the results of this research will not only make an academic contribution to the development of guidance theory and practice, but also become strategic input material for policymakers in increasing PK capacity, strengthening cross-agency coordination, and designing a more effective and equitable child development system outside correctional institutions.

B. Method

In this study, the approach used is qualitative descriptive. This approach was chosen because it is able to provide a deep understanding of complex social phenomena, especially in describing the role of Community Counselors (PK) for child clients who are facing the law at the Pekanbaru Class I Correctional Center (Bapas). The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore relational dynamics, subjective meanings, as well as social interaction processes that cannot be represented quantitatively through numbers or statistics alone. (Nasution, 2023)

The location of this research was deliberately determined at Bapas Class I Pekanbaru, a correctional institution that plays a role in carrying out guidance duties for clients, including children who are undergoing legal proceedings. This location was

chosen because the researcher considers that this institution is an appropriate representation to describe the practice of community guidance in the context of juvenile justice.

The subjects or informants in this study were selected through purposive sampling techniques, which are sampling techniques based on certain considerations. These considerations are based on the informant's direct involvement in the issue being researched and his ability to provide relevant and in-depth information. The informants consisted of five people, namely two Community Advisors who actively handled children's clients, one Head of Father who had a policy and management perspective, and two child clients who had gone through the mentoring process. (Harahap, 2020)

The data collection process is carried out using several techniques. The main technique used is in-depth interviews with a semi-structured format. This technique was chosen because it gives the informant the freedom to express his or her experiences and views openly, while still being directed to the thematic focuses that have been prepared by the researcher. In addition to interviews, the researcher also used documentation as a secondary data source, which included official documents from Bapas such as Community Research (Litmas) reports, activity archives, and regulations related to the juvenile justice system and community guidance. To complete the understanding of the social context in the field, the researcher also conducted indirect observations, namely reflective observations of the atmosphere and work process in the Bapas environment, especially the interaction between the Community Supervisor and the child's client. (Rijali, 2018)

The collected data was then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The researcher first transcribes the interview, then identifies and groups the data into specific themes that are relevant to the research objectives. This stage involves the process of coding, categorization, and interpreting the meaning of each finding that appears repeatedly in the informant's narrative. (Wijaya et al., 2025)

In maintaining the validity and validity of the data, the researcher applied the triangulation technique, both in terms of sources and methods. Source triangulation was done by comparing information from various informants, while method triangulation was done by comparing the results of interviews, documentation, and observations. The researcher also conducts a member check, which is to ask for confirmation from the informant regarding the results of the transcription and interpretation of the interview, to ensure that the data processed is really in accordance with the informant's intention. (Somantri, 2005)

As part of the ethical responsibility in qualitative research, the researcher provides informed consent to all informants. They were explained about the purpose of the

research, their rights as participants, and the assurance that their identities would be kept confidential and only used for academic purposes.

C. Finding and Discussion

1. Finding

The results of in-depth interviews with children's clients, Community Supervisors (PK), and the Head of Class I Pekanbaru Parents revealed a number of important points regarding the implementation of assistance and coaching for Children Facing the Law (ABH). These findings are grouped into several key aspects:

a. PK's Involvement in the Mentoring Process

Community Counselors (PK) have a very important role in the process of assisting children who are facing the law, especially in ensuring that children are not only treated legally, but also receive adequate psychosocial support. The role of PK begins from pre-adjudication by compiling Community Research (Litmas) which is the basis for a more humane process of diversion and legal decision-making. During the trial process, the PK accompanies the child so that his rights are protected and provides recommendations to law enforcement officials based on the child's real condition. In the post-adjudication stage, PK continues to foster and supervise children so that they can reintegrate socially properly, including strengthening children's relationships with their families and the surrounding environment.

PK involvement is not only administrative, but also involves a psychosocial approach that focuses on building emotional relationships and motivating children to change. Through this approach, PK seeks to strengthen the four elements of Hirschi's theory of social control—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—as a foundation for preventing children from returning to deviant behavior. However, in its implementation, PK faces various challenges such as limited personnel, lack of family support, and lack of coordination across institutions. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of PK and synergy between institutions is important to increase the effectiveness of mentoring and fostering children who are in conflict with the law.

b. The Impact of Mentoring on Children's Emotional Stability and Social Reintegration

An interview with a child client named Puji showed that the role of PK is very crucial in providing a sense of security and confidence during the legal process. Although initially communication was only done through video calls, the existence of PK still had a significant impact on the psychological condition of children. The assistance provides motivation, worship guidance, and moral education. In addition, the two clients interviewed stated that the role of PK in the social reintegration phase greatly helped them to live a new life after liberation. Daniel, for example, gets a job and a place to live

through PK facilitation, which makes him feel more in control and has a positive direction in life. The same thing was also expressed by Puji, who continues to carry out mandatory reporting periodically and receives monitoring from PK, including through communication with his family.

c. Challenges in the Implementation of Mentoring and Coaching

The implementation of mentoring and coaching by Community Counselors (PK) in the field often faces various complex and interrelated challenges. One of the main obstacles that is often found is the limitation of human resources, both in terms of number and capacity. In many correctional centers, including Bapas Class I Pekanbaru, the number of PKs available is not proportional to the number of client children who need assistance. This condition forces PK to handle many cases at once, making it difficult to achieve the ideal quality of assistance. In addition, limited facilities and technical support also limit the effectiveness of the coaching that can be provided.

Another significant obstacle is the low participation of families in the mentoring process. Family is an important element in forming a supportive environment for children, but the reality is that many children who face the law experience disconnection or even rejection from their own families. In situations like this, PK must take on a greater role as an emotional and social support figure, which of course increases the workload and demands high interpersonal skills and empathy. The lack of support from families also reduces the chances of successful social reintegration of children, which is one of the main goals of the restorative-based juvenile criminal justice system.

In addition, coordination between related institutions is also an equally important challenge. The juvenile criminal justice system involves many institutions, ranging from the police, prosecutor's office, courts, to correctional institutions and Bapas itself. However, there are often overlapping tasks, miscommunication, and differences in perception of the role of each party. This causes reports and recommendations made by the PK, such as Community Research (Litmas), to not always receive serious attention from other law enforcers. As a result, the process of mentoring and fostering children becomes less than optimal and is sometimes hampered by bureaucracy or procedural inconsistencies.

From the psychosocial side, children who are confronted by the law are a group that is vulnerable to mental pressure and negative stigma from the surrounding community. The legal process can cause trauma and a sense of helplessness, so children need assistance that is not only administrative, but also deep and humane. PK is required to have special skills, such as effective communication skills, understanding of children's psychology, and high empathy in order to provide moral support and motivation. However, training and psychological support for PK are still often inadequate, so their ability to handle the psychosocial aspects of children is also limited. Therefore, capacity

building and the provision of adequate support facilities are urgently needed to overcome these barriers and improve the success of child development.

d. Collaboration with the Family and the Community

PK explained that the success of the guidance program is highly dependent on family support and the social environment. Family involvement is an important aspect in the coaching process, and intense communication is carried out by PK with the client's family. In addition, Bapas also formed Pokmas Lipas (Correctional Care Community Group) as a partner in child supervision during the social integration process.

e. Child-Friendly Approach Policy and Innovation

In terms of policy, the Head of Bapas conveyed the importance of a restorative and humanist approach in dealing with children's clients. He also emphasized that child assistance is not only a matter of administration, but also related to their future. As an innovation, Bapas Class I Pekanbaru developed the "Bapas Sahabat Anak" program which emphasizes a friendly, fun, and non-judgmental approach during interactions with children's clients.

2. Discussion

a. The Role of Community Counselors (PK) in Children's Clients

The results of an interview with the Community Supervisor (PK) at the Class I Correctional Center (Bapas) Pekanbaru revealed that the role of PK is very central in the process of handling child clients who are facing the law. The duties of PK cover a variety of important aspects that are interrelated and reflect a holistic approach to child protection and development.

1) Preparation of Litmas and Legal Assistance

The main task of PK starts from the pre-adjudication stage through the preparation of Community Research (Litmas), which is the basis for consideration by law enforcement officials in the diversion and trial process. Litmas contains comprehensive information about the background, psychosocial conditions, and potential for social reintegration of children. During the legal process, the PK assists the child's client from the investigation stage, the transfer to the prosecutor's office, to the trial. The presence of PK provides a sense of security and psychological support, considering that the judicial process can be a traumatic experience for children. (Narasindhi & Wibawa, 2023)

2) Post-Conference Guidance and Supervision

After the verdict is handed down, the role of the PK continues in the post-adjudication stage. PK is tasked with guiding and supervising children who are serving sentences at the Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA) or who are undergoing parole. The goal is to help children readapt to the social environment in a healthy and productive way.

3) The Difference Between Child and Adult Approaches

PK distinguishes approaches to children and adults, referring to the Law on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA Law). Assistance to children is carried out from pre-adjudication, while in adults it begins from post-adjudication. This shows that there is a more protective and rehabilitative approach to children.

4) Cross-Sector Coordination and Social Support

PK also serves as a liaison between children's clients and law enforcement officials such as the police, prosecutor's office, and courts, as well as building active communication with children's families and social environments. This function is important for strengthening external support during the rehabilitation process.

5) Psychological and Emotional Approach

In practice, PK uses a psychology and empathy-based approach to understand the emotional state of the child client. In addition to providing legal assistance, PK also provides motivation and moral support, such as reminding the importance of worship and maintaining relationships with family.

6) Success Indicators

PK is not only measured from the administrative side, but also from changes in attitudes, behaviors, and independence of children. PK plays a role in helping clients reorganize their lives to be able to live a productive life after the legal process. (Krisnapati et al., 2022)

b. Analysis Based on Social Control Theory (Travis Hirschi)

Travis Hirschi's Social Control Theory emphasizes four key elements that play a role in preventing individuals from deviant behavior: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. All of these elements can be found in the practice of mentoring carried out by PK to child clients.

1) Keterikatan (Attachment)

The emotional attachment between the child and PK is very important in creating a sense of security and support. Puji, one of the clients, expressed a sense of calm because of PK's explanation and support during the legal process. PK also maintains communication with families, which strengthens the child's social support system. While Daniel only feels attachment after being released, when PK gives him a job and a place to live, it shows attachment can grow over time.

2) Commitment

The commitment to positive change is seen in the client's determination not to repeat his actions. Clients like Puji express a desire to be better so as not to

trouble their parents. Meanwhile, support in the form of work and a mandatory reporting system from PK encourages clients like Daniel to maintain positive behavior. PK also measures the success of the client's return to school or the world of work.

3) Keterlibatan (Involvement)

Productive activities such as working in a barbershop, going back to school, or attending training, are a means to maintain children's involvement in constructive activities. The "Bapas Sahabat Anak" program designed with a child-friendly method is also a means of strengthening this aspect of engagement.

4) Keyakinan (Belief)

Moral and legal values began to be internalized in the client. Puji said that he was afraid of repeating his mistakes because he was aware of the impact on his family. PK strengthens beliefs through a spiritual approach and the strengthening of prevailing social norms, with a restorative approach that focuses on recovery, not retaliation.

c. Obstacles in the Implementation of the Role of PK for Children

In its implementation, PK faces various challenges that have an impact on the effectiveness of mentoring:

1) Resource Limitations

The lack of facilities such as counseling rooms, operational vehicles, and limited budgets are the main obstacles. The high workload also makes it difficult for PK to pay deep attention to each client.

2) Lack of Family Support

Some families do not understand the role of PK or are not actively involved in the coaching process. The lack of openness and concern from the family weakens the process of social reintegration of children.

3) Stigma Social

The negative view of the community towards children who have been involved in legal cases is a big obstacle. Discrimination and rejection from the environment make it difficult for children to adapt normally.

4) Psychological Condition

Children who experience trauma, mental distress, or emotional disorders require a special psychosocial approach. Unfortunately, not all PKs receive support from professionals such as psychologists or counselors.

d. The Difference in the Role of Community Counselors (PK) in Bapas and Coaching Officers in Prisons

In the correctional system in Indonesia, there is a fairly fundamental difference in roles between Community Supervisors (PK) who serve in Correctional Centers (Bapas)

and coaching officers who are in Correctional Institutions (Lapas) or Special Children's Development Institutions (LPKA). This difference lies not only in the location of the task, but also in the function, approach, and stage of mentoring the client.

Community Supervisors at Bapas play a role in a wider process, starting from the pre-adjudication, adjudication, to post-adjudication stages. At the pre-adjudication stage, PK is in charge of conducting community research (Litmas) and accompanying children during the examination process at the police, prosecutor's office, and court. The function of PK at this stage is very crucial because it plays a role in ensuring that children receive legal protection and fair consideration, including diversion efforts to avoid a formal criminal justice process. In addition, at the post-verdict stage, PK also carries out guidance and supervision for children who are undergoing probation, parole, or social integration programs.

Meanwhile, coaching officers in prisons or LPKA focus more on coaching children who are serving sentences in the institution. Their role emphasizes more on supervision, discipline enforcement, and implementation of coaching programs in a closed environment. The approach used tends to be structural and administrative, with the aim of establishing compliance with institutional rules and encouraging behavior change during the criminal period.

In approach, PK in Bapas prioritizes psychosocial and reintegrative aspects. They work directly with children, families, and communities to ensure that the process of returning children to the social environment goes well. PK also often uses a more personalized and restorative approach, in accordance with the principles of restorative justice that are the basis of the juvenile justice system in Indonesia.

On the other hand, coaching officers in prisons focus more on the implementation of structured and scheduled coaching programs, such as skills training, formal or non-formal education, and religious activities. Their interaction with the community is relatively limited because the scope of work is within the institution.

Thus, the role of PK in Bapas and coaching officers in prisons complement each other in the correctional system. PK plays an important role in assisting children from the beginning of the legal process until the child returns to society, while prison officers carry out corrective and coaching functions while the child is in the institution. Both have their own contributions in ensuring that the child development process runs in a complete and sustainable manner.

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research analyzed using the Social Control Theory approach from Travis Hirschi, it can be concluded that the role of Community Counselors (PK) at the Class I Pekanbaru Correctional Center (Bapas) is very vital in the process of

assisting children who are facing the law. The role of PK is not only limited to legal aspects, but also includes emotional, social, and moral assistance which is an important part of rebuilding the child's life. This is realized through various functions, such as the preparation of Community Research Reports (Litmas), assistance during the judicial process, supervision after the verdict is handed down, and strengthening the relationship between children and their families and social environment.

In the interactions between PK and the child's client, the four main elements of Hirschi's Social Control Theory—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—are evident. Attachment is reflected in the emotional relationship that exists between PK and the child, as well as the involvement of the family in the mentoring process. Commitment can be seen from PK's efforts to encourage children to build a positive future through education and work. Involvement arises from PK's encouragement for children to be active in useful activities and avoid deviant behavior. Meanwhile, belief is reflected in the change in children's mindset towards norms and laws, which encourages awareness to live better and responsibly.

Although the role of PK is very important, its implementation in the field faces various obstacles, including limited numbers of personnel and supporting facilities, lack of family participation, negative stigma from the community, and unstable emotional conditions of children. Therefore, synergistic support from various parties is needed to overcome these obstacles so that the coaching process can run optimally and effectively.

Furthermore, the fundamental difference between the role of PK in Bapas and officers in Correctional Institutions (Lapas) lies in the approach used. PK at Bapas focuses on assistance outside the correctional institution (non-custodial) and the process of social reintegration of children into society. Meanwhile, officers in prisons play a more role in coaching in institutions (custodial), such as training and personality development during the child's sentence.

Thus, the role of Community Counselors is very strategic in efforts to rehabilitate and socially reintegrate children who are facing the law, which ultimately contributes to better human resource development and reduction of recidivism rates in society.

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