

Executive Function and Self-Regulation of Children in Conflict with The Law

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Keywords: ABH, Executive Function, Self-regulation

Abstract: This study aims to obtain an overview of the executive function and self-regulation of children in conflict with the law (ABH), namely children dealing with the law who have the status of perpetrators of crimes or criminal acts. This research is a quantitative research with a descriptive research design. The sample in this study were 120 children in conflict with the law (ABH) who were undergoing coaching at the Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) Class 1 Tangerang, Banten and the Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (LPKA) Class 2 in Bandung, West Java. The instrument used in this research is an executive function questionnaire adapted from the Executive Skill Questionnaire and a self-regulation questionnaire adapted from the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SSRQ). The results of this study indicate that as many as 4.2% ABH have very low executive function, 4.2% ABH have low executive function, 25% ABH have high executive function, and 66.7% ABH have very high executive function. Meanwhile, in the aspect of self-regulation, the results of this study indicate that 0.8% of ABH have very low self-regulation, 5% of ABH have low self-regulation, 44.2% of ABH have high self-regulation, and 50% of ABHs have very high self-regulation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Children in conflict with the law (ABH) is one of the social problems. Currently, the problem of ABH is always in the spotlight of many parties because the number of cases of children dealing with the law is increasing every day. According to data from the Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI), from 2011 to 2019, the number of reported ABH cases reached 11,492 cases, much higher than the reported cases of children entangled in health and narcotics problems (2,820 cases), pornography and cybercrime (3,323 cases), and trafficking and exploitation (2,156 cases).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the potential for juvenile delinquency has shown an increasing indication. This increase in the potential for delinquency is thought to occur due to the large amount of free time and time outside of school activities that are owned after online learning. As data from the Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (ICJR) which shows an increase in juvenile delinquency along with the increasing number of

children imprisoned during the Covid-19 pandemic compared to the previous year. Juvenile delinquency that violates the law can be divided into two: delinquency that leads to criminal acts and special delinquency. Delinquency that leads to criminal acts, including stealing, abortion, raping and so on. While special delinquency is delinquency regulated in the Special Crimes Act, such as narcotics, money laundering, cyber crime, human rights violations, and so on. (<https://sahabatkapas.org>).

Juvenile delinquency occurs due to the wrong socio-emotional development so that they take actions that are not in accordance with the normative. In addition, criminal acts are generally closely related to temperament, chaotic psychological constitution, inner conflicts and frustrations that make them express these conflicts in the form of criminal acts (Amalia & Nuqul, 2020). This condition shows that there are internal factors in adolescents that encourage criminal acts so that children become criminals or if referring to the law, they are referred to as children in conflict with the law.

Article 1 of the Undang-undang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak number 11 of 2012 states that children

in conflict with the law are children who are in conflict with the law, children who are victims of criminal acts, and children who are witnesses of criminal acts. Children in conflict with the law are children who are 12 years old but not yet 18 years old who are suspected of committing a crime; Children who become victims are children who are not yet 18 (eighteen years old) who have suffered physical, mental and or economic losses due to criminal acts; A child who is a witness is a child who is not yet 18 (eighteen years old) who can provide information for the benefit of the legal process starting at the level of investigation, prosecution and trial regarding a criminal case that has been heard, seen and or experienced. This research focuses on the study of children in conflict with the law. The writing of ABH in this study refers to children in conflict with the law or children who are perpetrators of criminal acts or crimes.

Article 85 paragraph 1 of the Undang-undang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak states that children who are sentenced to prison are placed in the Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak (hereinafter abbreviated as LPKA). Of course there are changes in the lives of children who must be placed in LPKA, including they have to be separated from family and friends and have to lose their daily activities before they live life in LPKA (Maslihah, et al, 2015). On the other hand, Article 85 paragraph 2 of the Undang-undang Sistem Peradilan Pidana Anak explains that children who are placed in LPKA have the right to receive guidance, guidance, supervision, assistance, education and training, as well as other rights in accordance with the provisions of the legislation.

Regarding ABH's involvement in criminal cases, Mulyawan believes that at a very young age, ABH has the courage to commit acts that violate the law (commit criminal acts). Whereas a child is not a "bad" child, so we should not be too quick to label the child as a "criminal" or any label that can make the child uncomfortable in social interactions. However, basically the child is a victim of a social system caused by several factors, such as unhealthy environmental and social factors, being influenced by consumerism culture, and the absence of a positive figure in his family who can be used as a role model for the child in living his life. These factors make children start to feel isolated and ostracized by their social environment so that they take shortcuts to exist by committing various kinds of criminal acts, such as joining their friends (who feel the same fate) creating a community, for example forming a motorcycle gang community

(www.pn-palopo).

Separovic (in Setiawan, 2017) stated that "There are two factors that cause crime, namely (1) personal factors, including biological factors (age, gender, mental state and others) and psychological (aggressiveness, carelessness, and alienation), and (2) situational factors, such as conflict situations, place and time factors. Related to personal factors as the cause of crime or crime is cognitive ability. Cognitive abilities are controlled by an area of the brain called the frontal lobe, which includes problem-solving skills, working memory, the ability to process information, retain relevant information, the ability to plan and strategize to achieve goals, flexibility to the environment, and self-control (Inaroh, 2020). This ability is known as an executive function.

Ursache, Blair, & Raver (2012) mention executive function as the ability to control and manage cognitive and behavioral processes, which are usually seen as processes used for self-regulation of thinking and behavior in order to achieve goals. Meanwhile, according to Hughes and Graham (2002), executive function refers to a set of cognitive regulatory processes, including working memory, inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility that enable the organization of thoughts and behavior. Kendall-Taylor, Erard, Davey and Simon (2010) state that working memory is the ability to work with a variety of information simultaneously, inhibitory control is the ability not to behave automatically, self-control and not easily distracted by environmental stimuli, while cognitive flexibility is the ability to change ways of thinking, such as changing behavior to suit different situations, or seeing things from a different perspective.

Welsh et al. (1991) describe executive function as a set of higher cognitive abilities that control and regulate other functions and behaviors. Executive function is a series of processes, which are related to self-regulation and other resources in order to achieve a goal. The term self-regulation has similarities with the term self-control. Finkel & Campbell (2001) and Baumann & Kuhl (2003), mention that self-regulation is needed in all human activities and affects various individual conditions. In this case self-regulation can affect individual performance, including in social relations or interpersonal relationships.

According to Bandura (in Alwisol, 2006) humans are individuals who can regulate themselves, create cognitive support by observing and thinking, adapting to their environment, and providing consequences by providing punishment

for their behavior so that it can allow for mutually influencing relationships between environments, behavior and the individual himself. Papalia, et al. (2009) mentions self-regulation as the basis of socialization processes because it relates to the existing domains of physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development, and control the impulses of their behavior.

Regarding the relationship between executive function and self-regulation, Borkowski (1996) argues that the key to self-regulation is executive function. While Hofmann, et al (2012) describe executive function as a component of self-regulation capacity, which is dynamically and contextually integrated with goal setting, motivation, and problem solving to achieve successful self-regulation. It is further explained that how basic aspects of executive function (memory operations, behavioral inhibition, and task switching) can support good self-regulation. On the other hand, barriers to executive function encourage the emergence of risk factors which in social psychology research are related to self-regulation problems. Thus, interventions on executive function can improve self-regulation in problem populations (Hofmann et al., 2012). Therefore, an understanding of the executive function and self-regulation of ABH is needed to design appropriate interventions.

Based on what has been described, researchers are interested in knowing the description of the executive function and self-regulation of ABH. Thus, the researchers conducted a study entitled executive function and self-regulation of Children in Conflict with the Law (ABH)..

2 METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive design. The sample involved was 120 ABH who were undergoing coaching at the Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak Class 1 in Tangerang, Banten and the Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak Class 2 Bandung, West Java.

The instrument used to measure executive function is an executive function questionnaire adapted from executive function skills from Dawson & Guare (2010). The questionnaire contains 36 items that measure 12 executive functions, namely response inhibition, emotional control, sustained attention, organization, flexibility, goal-directed persistence, working memory, task initiation, planning/ prioritization, time management, metacognition, and stress tolerance. The reliability of this executive function questionnaire is 0.95.

The instrument used to measure self-regulation is a self-regulation questionnaire adapted from the Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SSRQ) from Carey, Neal, and Collins (2004). This questionnaire contains 31 items that measure self-regulation of 2 factors, namely impulse control and goal-setting. The reliability of this questionnaire is 0.75.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis showed that the average score of the respondents' executive functions was 186.7 with the smallest score being 47 while the largest score was 239. The explanation can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Executive Function	120	47	239	186.87	35.22
Self-Regulation	120	76	138	109.35	11.93
Valid N (listwise)	120				

In the aspect of executive function, the results showed that as many as 4.2% of respondents had very low executive function, 4.2% had low executive function, 25% had high executive function, and 66.7% had very high executive function. The explanation can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Categorization of Executive Functions

	Freq.	Perc.	Cumulative Percentage
Very Low	5	4.2	4.2
Low	5	4.2	8.3
High	30	25.0	33.3
Very High	80	66.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

In the aspect of self-regulation, the average respondent has a self-regulation score of 109.3 with the smallest score of 76 and the largest score of 138. Based on table 3, 0.8% of respondents have very low self-regulation, 5% have low self-regulation. low, 44.2% have high self-regulation, and 50% have very high self-regulation.

Table 3. Categorization of Self-Regulation

Based on the results of the study, the majority of

	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very Low	5	0.8	0.8
Low	5	5.0	5.8
High	30	44.2	50.0
Very High	80	50.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

ABH who were the subjects of this study had very high executive functions. That is, they have a high capacity to regulate their thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behavior. According to Dawson and Guare (2010) aspects of planning, organization, time management, working memory, and metacognition play a role in the selection of goals and solutions to overcome the problems encountered. Meanwhile, aspects of response inhibition, emotional control, sustained attention, task initiation, flexibility, and goal directed persistence are skills in guiding behavior when moving towards goals. Various studies have shown that executive function is important in many domains, such as achievement, temperament and behavior, daily life skills, and self-regulation (Garrett, 2015). Thus, in the context of this study, the majority of subjects have a great capacity to be fostered into positive personalities using a variety of common approaches. However, some subjects, as many as 4.2% have low executive functions that must be nurtured using special approaches.

The results of this study also show that the majority of ABH involved in this study have very high self-regulation. That is, they have a high ability to control and direct their behavior so that it remains in accordance with the goals they want to achieve. According to Manab (2016) individuals who commit deviant actions, be they children, adolescents, or adults, have low self-regulation abilities. However, the results of this study indicate that the majority of ABH as perpetrators of criminal acts have very high regulations. There are several possibilities that cause high self-regulation scores in the subjects of this study. First, the high self-regulation is caused by the optimal guidance received by the subject while undergoing coaching at LPKA. Second, from the beginning the subject had high self-regulation, but the subject's involvement in deviant behavior was legally caused not because of low self-regulation but because of the lack of information the subject had about criminal acts. Third, the subject did not fill out a questionnaire based on the actual situation. Despite all the possibilities, keep in mind that self-regulation is closely related to the goals set by the individual.

Goals will direct behavior and the high self-regulation is determined by how much the individual is able to direct his behavior in accordance with the goals he has. This is in line with what was conveyed by Carver and Scheier (1982) that self-regulation requires three components, namely establishing goals (standards), comparing current self with standards (monitoring), and changing circumstances if they are not in accordance with standards (operations). The consequence of this is that ABH children need to be nurtured to get a lot of information about social values, social rules, and various positive things that can support the formation of positive personal goals.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study indicate that as many as 4.2% ABH have very low executive function, 4.2% ABH have low executive function, 25% ABH have high executive function, and 66.7% ABH have very high executive function. Meanwhile, in the aspect of self-regulation, the results of this study indicate that 0.8% of ABH have very low self-regulation, 5% of ABH have low self-regulation, 44.2% of ABH have high self-regulation, and 50% of ABHs have very high self-regulation.

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