

## **Bibliotherapy And Stress: A Case Study Of Post-Sentence Female Prisoners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Female prisoners often experience post-sentence psychological stress influenced by social stigma, family responsibilities, and past trauma. This condition can worsen mental health and hinder their social reintegration process. This study aims to analyze the role of bibliotherapy in helping to relieve stress in post-sentence female prisoners, by exploring the impact of reading therapy on their psychological recovery process. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. This study was conducted at Class II A Banyuwangi Prison, focusing on female prisoners with post-sentence stress with human trafficking cases. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews with counselees and correctional officers, observations conducted in the prison environment, and documentation. The data analysis technique in this study used the Miles and Huberman model which included data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of Islamic-based counseling with the Qur'an reading bibliotherapy technique can increase the spiritual strength of counselees, help accept life's trials with patience and resignation through consistent spiritual routines, which act as emotional therapy, and form more mature characters, and prepare for the future with a calm and constructive soul.

**Keywords :** Bibliotherapy , Stress, Female Prisoners

### **ABSTRAK**

Narapidana wanita sering mengalami tekanan psikologis pasca-vonis yang dipengaruhi oleh stigma sosial, tanggung jawab keluarga, serta trauma masa lalu. Kondisi ini dapat memperburuk kesehatan mental dan menghambat proses reintegrasi sosial mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran biblioterapi dalam membantu meredakan stres pada narapidana wanita pasca-vonis, dengan mengeksplorasi dampak terapi bacaan terhadap proses pemulihan psikologis mereka. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. penelitian ini dilakukan di Lapas Kelas II A Banyuwangi, fokus pada narapidana wanita stres pasca vonis dengan kasus human trafficking. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam kepada konseli dan petugas lembaga pemasyarakatan, observasi yang dilakukan dilingkungan Lapas, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil dari Konseling berbasis ajaran Islam dengan teknik biblioterapi bacaan al-qur'an dapat meningkatkan kekuatan spiritual konseli, membantu menerima ujian hidup dengan sabar dan tawakal melalui rutinitas spiritual yang konsisten, yang berperan sebagai terapi emosional, dan membentuk karakter lebih matang, serta mempersiapkan masa depan dengan jiwa yang tenang dan konstruktif.

**Kata Kunci:** Biblioterapi, Stres, Narapidana Wanita

## Introduction

Behavioral actions have an important role for individuals in social life. The diversity of individual actions by justifying all treatments without thinking about the consequences with the aim of fulfilling their desires or needs, can lead to themselves being trapped and being designated as prisoners. This treatment is included in maladaptive behavior that only benefits one party, and becomes the dregs of society. (Frinda Dewi Pertiwi et al., 2024) . become the dregs of society. Prisoners are individuals, both male and female, who have been found guilty, because they have violated state laws and are required to carry out the sentences that have been set. Individuals who are labeled as prisoners certainly need to adapt to their surroundings properly. However, in fact, not all are able to do it properly (Faiq Sinatriya, 2020) , (Misbah & Iman, 2021) . The existence of various strict regulations that must be implemented, so that prolonged stress arises which is the root of new problems for prisoners. Women are more susceptible to stressors than men (Javaid et al., 2024) . Female prisoners also often experience excessive stress after receiving a judge's verdict (Oiladang & Kristianingsih, 2022) .

According to Falsetti M in Lina NH, stress is an unpleasant emotional experience accompanied by physiological changes and behavioral changes (Nur & Mugi, 2021) . This is in accordance with Abi's thinking that stress is a health crisis related to illness, anxiety, and depression (Bunyamin, 2021) . Stress arises because the pressure factors faced exceed the optimum limits of each individual including internal factors and external factors (Seto et al., 2020) .

Internal factors can be seen from the inability of prisoners to adapt to the new environment which results in disruption of the physical and mental health of female prisoners while serving their sentences (Friestad et al., 2023) . Meanwhile, external factors are triggered by the emergence of societal stereotypes, the severance of family responsibilities, and even a history of trauma that they have (Khan et al., 2024) . In addition, prisoners also lose their freedom to move freely, get minimal rights, and lose opportunities for husband and wife sexual needs (Pardede et al., 2021) .

As research from the Institute for Criminal Policy Research revealed that female prisoners are more vulnerable to social stigma because societal expectations that tend to place women in the role of caregivers or "guardians of family honor" make their legal sentences considered a greater social failure (Subroto & Witdodo, 2024) . Thus, this label can cause female prisoners to feel alienated and discriminated against when they return to society. This term is usually called social stigma or societal views. Societal stereotypes cause prolonged anxiety in prisoners, which can have a negative impact on the physical and mental health experienced, such as anxiety disorders, excessive stress, and even severe depression (Anggit et al., 2017) . The social stigma attached to prisoners often affects their reintegration process into society, creating effective psychological barriers (Subroto et al., 2024) . Prisoners who feel judged or ostracized often experience feelings of low self-esteem, social isolation, and loss of hope, which worsens their mental condition.

This condition can hinder them from rebuilding social relationships, getting a job, or even living their daily lives with confidence. In addition, not all individuals can manage and control the stress they experience, which has an impact on physical and psychological aspects. Therefore, preventive measures are needed to reduce stress inmates in prisons by implementing bibliotherapy counseling techniques.

Bibliotherapy is a counseling or therapy technique that uses certain reading materials to help individuals understand, evaluate, and resolve emotional or psychological problems. (Hasfera, 2018) . Bibliotherapy is also defined as a type of therapy that uses the activity of reading books as a media tool to help overcome individual problems (Amalia et al., 2022) . This is clarified by Berry that Bibliotherapy is an activity with reading material media that aims to reduce or solve problems that are being faced by someone (Agustin & Rahmah, 2018) . In its application, this technique has various types of discussion contexts,

one of which is bibliotherapy in Islamic Counseling. Islamic counseling techniques use the realm of reading the Qur'an and dhikr which act as a potential approach to stress management for female prisoners after sentencing because they combine therapy with spiritual aspects. (Hidayat et al., 2023) .

Reading the Qur'an and dhikr not only provide a comfortable impact in a calming rhythm and intonation, but also strengthen the spiritual aspect of prisoners so that it can help them in accepting the conditions after the verdict is handed down. In addition, the Qur'an and dhikr also provide an inspiring impact that can motivate and optimism, making this approach comprehensive in stress management. for prisoners (Suteja & Setiawan, 2024) .

The bibliotherapy technique is one of the Islamic-based counseling therapy techniques that has been proven to reduce various problems including problems in prisoners. Proven (Anggit et al., 2017) , through the process of self-acceptance, emotional understanding, and positive motivation that can be obtained from reading the Qur'an and dhikr (S. Muarif et al., 2022) . This research has been conducted by (Dewi et al., 2020) with the title " *The Effect of Al-Qur'an Reading Therapy as Islamic Bibliotherapy on the Mental Health of Lesbian Prisoners* ", the method used in this study used qualitative literature study research, the results of the study explained that Bibliotherapy can be one of the effective approaches for lesbian groups to improve their mental health. Furthermore, a research study conducted by (Made et al., 2021) with the title " *The Effect of Bibliotherapy on Reducing Anxiety in Children Undergoing Hospitalization at Bhayangkara Hospital, Denpasar* ", the method used in this study was qualitative from the study showed that bibliotherapy is very effective as a technique for reducing anxiety in children undergoing hospitalization at Bhayangkara Hospital in 2021.

Furthermore, research conducted by (Anggit et al., 2017) entitled " *Stress Levels and Self-Esteem of Female Prisoners in Class II A Correctional Institutions in Bogor City* ", the method used is the *quasi-experimental time series design method* . The sampling technique was carried out using *total sampling* by taking all members of the population as samples, the results of the study showed that most female prisoners experienced a decrease in stress. According to (Suwanto, 2020) in his research entitled " *Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) Approach to Bibliotherapy Techniques as an Intervention in Group Counseling* ", the method used in this study was qualitative with a literature study design, the results showed that Bibliotherapy as a technique in group counseling service activities is one of the alternatives to the need to deal with individual development problems in community life. The similarities and differences in previous studies are similar in the use of Bibliotherapy techniques. While the difference lies in the absence of the application of Islamic values in the bibliotherapy technique process.

Based on the results of the review of the research phenomena carried out, it can be briefly described that there are prisoners in Class II A Banyuwangi Prison who have physical and psychological disorders that result in prolonged stress and are unable to control the problems they are currently facing. The lack of sympathy and empathy from fellow prisoners adds to the stressors experienced.

The existence of problems as well as the emergence of inconsistencies in previous research findings, researchers are interested in exploring in depth the existing phenomena by applying bibliotherapy techniques to prisoners who have stress disorders. In addition, the purpose of deepening this research is to see the results of informant regulation in the problems faced as well as to become an update in writing written works in the world of education.

## Research Methods

The study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Case studies are one of the qualitative methods that explore an event in depth and detail (Sugiyono, 2020) .

By using this type of research, researchers are expected to obtain in-depth information about certain events, environments, and situations that make it possible to understand or express something in more detail (Fadli, 2017) . This study was conducted with the aim of obtaining an in-depth picture of post-sentence stress management for female prisoners using bibliotherapy techniques.

This study took place in Class II A Banyuwangi Prison with one inmate as an informant. Criteria for selecting informants: 1) female inmates, 2) aged 20-40 years, 3) have prolonged stress disorders. The data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation with informants. The type of interview used a semi-structured interview. The aim is to obtain results related to the results of the application of bibliotherapy in overcoming post-sentence stress in female inmates. After collecting data, the next stage is to analyze the data. Data analysis is an effort to describe and sort data to be managed according to the procedures or steps that have been used (Samiaji Sarosa, 2021) . Data analysis used in this study with the Miles and Huberman model: 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, and 3) drawing conclusions.

Data reduction focuses on important information from prisoners collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. Data presentation is done to facilitate the identification of data patterns and relationships, while drawing conclusions produces main themes and in-depth narratives about the effectiveness of counseling. This correctional institution was chosen because it has characteristics relevant to the focus of the study, namely the rehabilitation of prisoners through a coaching program that is in line with the Islamic counseling approach.

## **Results And Discussion**

### **Increased Spiritual Power**

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted by researchers related to the application of bibliotherapy to handle post-sentence stress in prisoners. Bibliotherapy is a therapy that uses reading materials that are tailored to the problems faced by the sufferer, and adjusted to the age of the sufferer. (Hulyatuzzahroh & Musafiri, 2023) . The author applies bibliotherapy using verses from the Qur'an that are in accordance with the problems he faces. Using bibliotherapy techniques with an Islamic-based counseling approach can strengthen his mentality, encourage him to accept the situation and remain grateful even in difficulties, so that this spiritual strength functions as a positive coping mechanism in facing life's challenges (Munthe et al., 2022) . Through counseling and spiritual guidance, the client realizes that every test, including the verdict, is part of Allah's plan that contains wisdom. The values of patience and trust that are internalized help him let go of the past and focus on self-improvement (Vasconcelos, 2021) . Increased spiritual strength In the counseling process, the client learns not to get caught up in negative and emotional feelings related to his past. His trust attitude can be seen from his ability to let go of emotional burdens and accept the situation with an open heart. Prisoners can feel the transition of thoughts from stressful conditions, while at the same time fostering a more constructive mindset in dealing with detention.

The increase in the spiritual strength of the client is the result of the counseling and spiritual development process that helps him understand and accept the verdict he undergoes as part of God's plan with certain wisdom. Through internalization of the values of patience and trust. Changes in attitudes and behavior shown after undergoing counseling sessions indicate better acceptance of the situation, as well as the ability to adapt to difficult situations (Nadila & Lubis, 2024) . Counseling support based on Islamic teachings provides a strong framework for his spiritual growth, which is in line with previous research findings that strengthening spiritual aspects can improve mental health and individual well-being. Thus, the client's experience underlines the importance of a spiritual approach in the rehabilitation and recovery process for prisoners. **The increase**



**in the client's spiritual strength by** getting closer to Allah and improving quality. Through activities such as congregational prayer, dhikr, reading the Qur'an, and self-introspection (Wati, 2019) . This is confirmed by the following interview data:

*"Praying in congregation and reading the Quran, Sis. I feel calmer after that, like I have the strength to accept my current situation. Alhamdulillah, I feel calmer after reading the verses that you gave me. I will try to focus more on worship to calm my heart."*

Based on the interview data above, congregational prayer and reading the Qur'an have a positive influence on the inner peace of the client. The client feels an increase in peace and emotional strength after carrying out the worship, which helps in accepting the current situation. By reading the verses of the Qur'an given by the counselor, the client feels calmer and is determined to focus more on worship as a way to calm the heart and face life's challenges. One of the proofs of this activity is presented in the following picture:

**Figure 1. Quran Reading Activity**



Source: Researcher Documentation

Based on the picture above, the activity of reading the Qur'an is carried out every day. This activity takes place at *the An-Nisa Musholla* and is one of the spiritual routines that are consistently implemented by counselors. In addition to improving the ability to read the Qur'an with correct tajwid, this worship routine also functions as emotional therapy (Insiyah, 2022) (Ismail et al., 2023) . This technique can be done through reading carefully selected verses of the Qur'an and dhikr such as QS. Al-Ra'd: 28 which explains about calmness (Indriani et al., 2024) , then QS. Al-Baqarah: 286 which explains about patience, QS. Al-Baqarah: 155-157 which explains about life's tests, and finally reading QS. Al-Insyirah verses that talk about difficulties that are always accompanied by ease. These spiritual activities help counselees find peace of mind, relieve anxiety, stress, and improve their emotional condition during detention. This coaching process does not only focus on rituals, but also forms a more patient and sincere mentality and character. Thus, counselees are able to interpret every challenge in their lives as part of destiny that must be accepted with full trust in Allah. He also used his prison term as a time for introspection, self-improvement, and deepening his spirituality, so that he was more prepared to face the future with an open heart and a calmer soul.

The increase in spiritual counselee strength is the result of counseling and training based on Islamic teachings that help counselees understand and accept the verdict as part of Allah's plan with certain wisdom. Through internalization of the values of patience, tawakal, and worship practices such as congregational prayer, dhikr, and reading the Qur'an, counselees feel inner peace, emotional strengthening, and the ability to face life's challenges. These spiritual activities not only relieve stress and anxiety, but also form a more patient and sincere character, using the prison period for introspection and self-improvement. This approach shows that the integration of religious teachings in

rehabilitation is effective in improving mental health and building counselee readiness to face the future with a soul

### Changing Mindset Towards Optimism

Changing mindsets towards optimism makes clients shift from feelings of despair to hope for a better future (Matuza et al., 2023) (Cassella et al., 2024). Changes in mindset towards optimism occur because counseling helps clients see life's trials as opportunities to improve themselves, not as permanent punishments (Hauser, 2009). Clients are encouraged to focus on future opportunities and change their perspective on the past as valuable experiences. Where clients express their negative thoughts in writing which will then be evaluated by the counselor. From there, the counselor can conclude that clients can change their previously negative mindset to be more optimistic. This process helps them overcome the emotional stress they experience, increase their self-confidence, and provide hope for their future after serving their sentence. In addition, support from family, peers, and counselors creates a sense of security and motivation to change. This optimistic mindset strengthens their mentality, so that clients are better prepared to face challenges in the present and the future. The indicators in the Change in Mindset Towards Optimism presented in the following chart:



**Figure 2. Indicators of Change in Mindset towards**

Source: Researcher Processing

Based on the chart above, it shows that the indicators of Mindset Changes Towards Optimism include Positive attitudes towards challenges, Ability to manage stress, Hope for the future, Social support and Problem Solving. A positive attitude towards challenges is the key to facing difficulties in life in a constructive way. By developing this attitude, individuals can improve their quality of life, cope with stress, and achieve greater goals. Meanwhile, the ability to manage stress is an important skill that can help individuals face life's challenges more effectively (AS Muarif & Munir, 2019). By implementing the right strategies, individuals can improve their physical and mental health, and achieve a better quality of life. Managing stress is not only about reducing pressure, but also about building resilience and the ability to adapt to difficult situations. Furthermore, Hope for the future is an important aspect of an individual's life that provides meaning, motivation, and resilience. By developing and maintaining hope, individuals can overcome obstacles, pursue goals, and achieve a more satisfying life. Hope is not only about thinking about the future, but also about taking concrete steps to create the desired future. Social support as an important component of individual well-being (Gabriel et al., 2022). Provides a variety of benefits for both mental and physical health, as well as helping individuals cope with stress and life challenges. By building and maintaining positive social relationships, individuals can improve their resilience and overall quality of life. Lastly, problem solving is a very valuable skill in everyday life, both in personal and professional environments. By following systematic steps and using a variety of appropriate methods, individuals can improve their ability to overcome challenges and find effective solutions. As expressed in an interview with a resident named Mrs. Yeti as follows:

*"It was hard at first, but I have started to accept reality and learn not to depend on other people's judgments. I believe that as long as I try to improve myself, Allah will definitely help me. I have made plans to live temporarily with my family, help with a small business at home, and be active in religious activities at the local mosque. This is so that I remain productive and connected to a positive environment. At first, I was afraid, Ma'am. But now I am more confident. I realize that I have a second chance, and that is a great blessing. Alhamdulillah, my family is very supportive. I feel stronger because they accept me unconditionally. This makes me more optimistic."*

From the interview results above, it can be concluded that the Counselee initially found it difficult to accept reality, but now he has learned not to depend on other people's judgments and focus on improving himself with the belief that Allah will help him. The Counselee has made plans to live with his family for a while, engage in a small business at home, and be active in religious activities at the mosque to remain productive and in a positive environment. Although initially there was fear, now he feels more confident and sees a second chance as a gift. The unconditional support of his family makes him feel stronger and more optimistic in facing the future.

The client experiences a change in mindset from feeling hopeless to optimistic, thanks to counseling and social support. He begins to see life's trials as an opportunity to improve himself, not a punishment, by focusing on the future and learning from past experiences. In addition, the client is more open and active in planning for the future, such as being involved in business and religious activities, and improving social relationships. This change is also seen from increased self-confidence and reduced stress. Unconditional support from family and positive interactions with the environment help the client develop resilience and the ability to face challenges better.

## Conclusion

Stress is an inevitable part of life, so how to deal with stress can only be done with proper management so that stress does not have a negative impact. Stress management with bibliotherapy techniques using the Qur'an not only prevents the negative impacts of stress but also improves the quality of life of individuals. Negative stress for post-sentence prisoners can gradually improve by applying bibliotherapy counseling techniques. This can be seen from the changes experienced by the counselee with increasing spiritual levels and changing mindsets to be more optimistic. The application of bibliotherapy by applying the reading of the Qur'an and also the practice of istigfar to informants results in a calmer attitude, no panic, and being able to empower themselves gradually.

The limitations of this study are observations in the form of research on the perspective of other impacts caused by post-verdict and suggestions for further research are expected to research and review stressors by applying bibliotherapy techniques by adding relevant variables, increasing the number of informants with quantitative methods so that the results are more accurate.

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