

ANALYSIS OF LEGAL PROTECTION FOR JUVENILE CLIENTS INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS OFFENSES THROUGH PSYCHOSOCIAL GUIDANCE USING CUENTO THERAPY (A CASE STUDY AT THE CLASS I PROBATION OFFICE OF BANDAR LAMPUNG)



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ABSTRACT

This study examines legal protection for children involved in narcotics offenses at the Class I Bandar Lampung Probation Office, emphasizing not only legal assistance but also psychosocial support as part of child development. The research focuses on analyzing the factors that lead children to engage in narcotics offenses and evaluating the implementation of psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy as a preventive and rehabilitative approach. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The study is grounded in the legal protection theory of Philipus M. Hadjon and psychosocial counseling theory. The findings reveal that cuento therapy is an effective tool for both preventive and repressive legal protection. Through narrative-based interventions, children are encouraged to reflect on their actions, develop self-control, reduce psychological distress, and internalize moral values in a non-intimidating manner. This approach supports mental recovery, lowers the risk of reoffending, and facilitates smoother social reintegration. However, several challenges remain, including limited time for counseling sessions, difficulties in monitoring due to children's school activities, and geographical barriers between clients' homes and the probation office. In conclusion, integrating psychosocial guidance with legal protection provides a more holistic and child-centered approach within the juvenile justice system. This model prioritizes the best interests of the child while supporting rehabilitation and long-term behavioral change.

Keywords: *Legal Protection; Juvenile Narcotics Offenders; Psychosocial Guidance; Cuento Therapy; Probation Office*

INTRODUCTION

The juvenile justice system in Indonesia is fundamentally designed to prioritize the protection of children's rights and the fulfillment of the best interests of the child, particularly in cases involving children who are entangled in narcotics-related offenses. This orientation is grounded in the recognition that children are individuals in a critical phase of physical, psychological, and social development. Consequently, their involvement in criminal behavior cannot be separated from external influences such as family dysfunction, negative peer environments, socio-economic vulnerability, and psychological immaturity. For this reason, children in conflict with the law require a justice approach that is substantively different from that applied to adult offenders.

Unlike conventional criminal justice systems that emphasize retribution and deterrence through punishment, the Indonesian juvenile justice framework through the Juvenile Criminal Justice System embraces a rehabilitative and restorative paradigm. This paradigm places recovery and reintegration at the center of the justice process. Children in conflict with the law are not merely regarded as perpetrators of crime, but also as victims of environmental, social, and psychological failures that shape their behavior. Such a perspective demands a form of legal protection that goes beyond procedural guarantees and extends to comprehensive psychosocial recovery.

Legal protection for children can be analyzed through the framework proposed by Philipus M. Hadjon, which distinguishes legal protection into preventive and repressive forms. Preventive legal protection is oriented toward the avoidance of future legal conflicts by strengthening individual capacity, self-control, and resilience. In the context of children, this includes moral development, emotional regulation, and the formation of adaptive behavioral patterns. Repressive legal protection, on the other hand, is applied after a legal violation has occurred and aims to restore dignity, psychological well-being, and legal rights that may be affected during the criminal justice process.

Need for integrated legal protection becomes particularly urgent. Children involved in narcotics offenses often experience substance dependency, psychological trauma, social stigma, and marginalization. If legal protection is limited solely to juridical aspects—such as legal representation and court procedures—the justice process risks exacerbating psychological harm and increasing the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, legal protection in narcotics cases must incorporate psychosocial dimensions to ensure that children are not only legally processed, but also meaningfully rehabilitated and prepared for sustainable reintegration into society.

The Probation Office plays a central role in fulfilling this mandate within the Indonesian juvenile justice system. Bapas is responsible for providing assistance, supervision, and guidance to children at all stages of the criminal justice process, including pre-adjudication, adjudication, and post-adjudication phases. This strategic position enables Bapas to function as a bridge between the formal legal process and the rehabilitative objectives of juvenile justice. At the Class I Bandar Lampung Probation Office, children involved in narcotics offenses are primarily positioned as victims of environmental and systemic failure rather than as purely criminal actors. This approach is consistent with the spirit of the SPPA Law, which emphasizes rehabilitation, social reintegration, and the fulfillment of children's psychosocial rights.

Bapas Class I Bandar Lampung implements psychosocial guidance programs that utilize cuento therapy as a core intervention method. Cuento therapy is a narrative-based psychosocial approach that employs storytelling, symbolic narratives, and moral metaphors to engage children's cognitive and emotional processes. Rather than relying

on coercive or punitive techniques, cuento therapy allows children to internalize values, reflect on their experiences, and regulate emotions in a non-threatening and non-intimidating manner. Through structured storytelling sessions facilitated by probation officers, children are guided to recognize the consequences of narcotics abuse, reconstruct maladaptive thought patterns, and develop healthier moral and emotional frameworks.

The integration of cuento therapy into legal protection practices reflects a holistic and humanistic model of juvenile justice. From a preventive perspective, cuento therapy strengthens children's psychological readiness and moral awareness prior to their reintegration into society, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending. From a repressive perspective, it functions as a rehabilitative mechanism that addresses trauma, anxiety, and psychological distress resulting from involvement in narcotics-related offenses and the criminal justice process. This dual function demonstrates that effective legal protection for children cannot be confined to litigation assistance alone, but must also encompass structured psychosocial recovery.

The implementation of psychosocial guidance through cuento therapy faces several challenges. These include limited time allocation for counseling sessions, difficulties in monitoring children who remain actively engaged in formal education, and geographical barriers that hinder consistent supervision and continuity of counseling. Furthermore, the absence of standardized operational guidelines for cuento therapy may result in inconsistencies in implementation and service quality among probation officers. These obstacles indicate the need for stronger policy support, institutional coordination, and the development of standardized therapeutic frameworks to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this protection model.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of legal protection for children involved in narcotics offenses through psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy at the Class I Bandar Lampung Probation Office. In addition, the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach and identify structural and institutional constraints that limit its optimization. By emphasizing the integration of psychosocial interventions within the legal protection framework, this research contributes to the development of a child-centered juvenile justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation, restoration of dignity, and long-term social reintegration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on legal protection and guidance for criminal offenders, including children involved in narcotics offenses, have been widely discussed in the field of criminal law and criminology. Chazawi (2014) explains that punishment is not merely intended to inflict suffering, but also serves a corrective function aimed at preventing reoffending. This view is reinforced by Sudarto (2007), who emphasizes that criminal law policy should be oriented toward both social protection and offender rehabilitation.

Supramono (2001) and Sasangka (2003) argue that narcotics offenses possess strong social and psychological dimensions, making purely repressive approaches insufficient. Rehabilitation and guidance are therefore essential, particularly for child offenders. This perspective is consistent with criminological views presented by Simandjuntak (2011) and Santoso and Zulfa (2011), who highlight environmental influences, peer pressure, and psychosocial conditions as significant factors contributing to deviant behavior.

Legal protection literature further emphasizes the obligation of the state to safeguard individual rights through preventive and repressive mechanisms. Hadjon

(2007) asserts that legal protection must ensure legal certainty, justice, and respect for human dignity, including for offenders. Within the correctional framework, legal protection is implemented through guidance and rehabilitation-oriented programs. However, studies specifically examining psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy as a form of legal protection for child clients involved in narcotics offenses remain limited. This research therefore seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the implementation of cuento therapy-based psychosocial guidance in probation institutions.

Concept of Legal Protection

Legal protection is a fundamental principle within the legal system, aimed at safeguarding the rights and interests of individuals. According to Hadjon (2007), legal protection consists of two forms: preventive legal protection and repressive legal protection. Preventive legal protection seeks to prevent violations of rights through guidance, supervision, and regulatory mechanisms, while repressive legal protection functions as a corrective response through law enforcement and sanctions once violations have occurred.

In criminal law, legal protection is not directed solely toward victims, but also toward offenders, ensuring that law enforcement processes uphold justice and human dignity. Rahardjo (2000) emphasizes that law should function as a means to protect human beings and realize substantive justice. Accordingly, in cases involving children in conflict with the law, legal protection must take into account the psychological condition and developmental stage of the child.

Within the correctional system, legal protection is realized through guidance and supervision of correctional clients, as regulated under Law No. 12 of 2022 on Corrections and Government Regulation No. 31 of 1999. Legal protection for child clients is not limited to legal supervision, but also includes psychosocial rehabilitation aimed at preventing recidivism, particularly in narcotics-related cases.

Psychosocial Guidance and Cuento Therapy

Psychosocial guidance is a rehabilitative process intended to assist individuals in understanding themselves, regulating emotions, and adapting to social environments. This approach is particularly relevant for offenders with psychological and social vulnerabilities. Within the correctional context, psychosocial guidance constitutes an essential component of rehabilitation, especially for children who are still in the process of personality development.

Zuwirda (2015) explains that cuento therapy is a form of psychosocial counseling that utilizes storytelling as a medium for reflection and value internalization. Through narratives, individuals are encouraged to understand conflicts, recognize behavioral patterns, and derive moral lessons without direct psychological pressure. This approach is especially effective in group settings, as it promotes participation, empathy, and self-awareness.

In the guidance of child clients involved in narcotics offenses, cuento therapy can be applied as a method to help children understand the consequences of their actions, develop self-control, and build a sense of responsibility. Thus, cuento therapy functions not only as a counseling technique, but also as an instrument of preventive and rehabilitative legal protection. The implementation of cuento therapy based psychosocial guidance in probation institutions aligns with the objectives of the correctional system, which aims to develop law-abiding individuals capable of positive social reintegration.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research approach to examine the implementation of legal protection for child clients involved in narcotics offenses through psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy at the Probation Office (Balai Pemasyarakatan). The approach is designed to analyze institutional practices, guidance mechanisms, and the role of probation officers in providing legal protection and rehabilitation for children in conflict with the law.

The research was conducted at the Probation Office as the institution authorized to carry out guidance and supervision of correctional clients, particularly children undergoing legal processes related to narcotics offenses. The selection of this research location was based on its strategic function in implementing guidance programs and psychosocial interventions aimed at preventing recidivism and supporting social reintegration.

Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through direct interaction with research subjects using in-depth interviews and field observations. Interviews were conducted with probation officers (Pembimbing Kemasyarakatan), institutional officials, and child clients involved in narcotics cases to obtain information regarding the implementation of psychosocial guidance, the application of cuento therapy, and challenges encountered during the guidance process. Observations were carried out to examine guidance activities, interaction patterns between officers and clients, and the implementation of counseling sessions in the institutional setting.

Secondary data were derived from legal instruments, official documents, and institutional records relevant to correctional guidance and child protection. These included Law No. 12 of 2022 on Corrections, Government Regulation No. 31 of 1999 on the Guidance and Supervision of Correctional Clients, internal guidelines of the Probation Office, and supporting academic literature referenced in the thesis. These documents were used to strengthen the legal and institutional context of the analysis.

Data collection was conducted through three stages: observation to capture factual conditions and guidance practices, interviews to explore experiences and perspectives of probation officers and child clients, and document analysis to verify information and ensure consistency with applicable regulations. The collected data were analyzed descriptively through a thematic analytical process, involving data organization, classification based on key themes such as legal protection mechanisms, implementation of psychosocial guidance, and obstacles in practice and interpretation to draw conclusions. This method enabled a systematic understanding of how cuento therapy functions as a form of legal protection and rehabilitation for child narcotics offenders within the probation system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Causing Child Clients to Engage in Narcotics Offenses

The findings of this study demonstrate that the involvement of child clients in narcotics offenses is the result of complex and interrelated factors encompassing social, familial, psychological, and cognitive dimensions. These factors do not operate independently but interact to shape behavioral patterns that increase children's vulnerability to narcotics abuse and related criminal conduct. Understanding these causal factors is essential, as they provide the empirical foundation for determining appropriate forms of legal protection and rehabilitative intervention within the probation system.

One of the most dominant factors identified is the influence of the social

environment, particularly peer groups. Child clients are often introduced to narcotics through close friends or community networks in which substance use is normalized. At the developmental stage of adolescence, children tend to prioritize peer acceptance and social belonging, making them highly susceptible to peer pressure. Weak informal social control within peer groups allows deviant behavior to be perceived as acceptable or even desirable. This condition aligns with criminological perspectives that emphasize the role of social learning and association in shaping delinquent behavior.

Family-related factors also significantly contribute to children's involvement in narcotics offenses. The study reveals that many child clients originate from families characterized by limited supervision, weak emotional bonds, or ongoing internal conflict. Inadequate parental guidance and communication reduce children's capacity to develop strong moral values and self-discipline. In some cases, economic hardship further exacerbates this condition, creating psychological stress and feelings of neglect that drive children to seek escape or validation through narcotics use. The family's failure to function as an effective agent of socialization thus increases the likelihood of deviant behavior.

Internal psychological factors constitute another important dimension influencing child involvement in narcotics offenses. The findings indicate that many child clients exhibit emotional instability, low self-control, and limited coping mechanisms when facing stress or conflict. These psychological vulnerabilities contribute to impulsive decision-making and risk-taking behavior. Children with limited emotional regulation skills are more likely to experiment with narcotics without fully considering the long-term legal, health, and social consequences of their actions. This condition is compounded by low levels of legal awareness, where children lack sufficient understanding of the criminal nature of narcotics offenses and their potential impact on future life opportunities.

The study highlights cognitive and educational limitations as contributing factors. Several child clients demonstrate low educational attainment and limited access to accurate information regarding narcotics abuse. This deficiency restricts their ability to critically assess risks and resist external influence. As a result, narcotics involvement is often perceived as a temporary or harmless activity rather than a serious legal violation. These findings reinforce the view that child involvement in narcotics offenses reflects broader structural and developmental challenges rather than purely individual moral failure.

The findings confirm that child clients' involvement in narcotics offenses is rooted in multidimensional causes that require comprehensive intervention. Addressing these factors solely through punitive legal measures is insufficient and may even exacerbate psychological harm. Therefore, identifying and understanding these causal factors is a prerequisite for implementing effective legal protection and psychosocial guidance aimed at rehabilitation and prevention of recidivism.

Legal Protection for Child Clients Involved in Narcotics Offenses through Psychosocial Guidance Using Cuento Therapy at the Class I Probation Office of Bandar Lampung

Legal protection for child clients involved in narcotics offenses at the Class I Probation Office of Bandar Lampung is implemented through psychosocial guidance that integrates cuento therapy as a rehabilitative and child-centered intervention. This form of legal protection reflects the fundamental principle that children in conflict with the law must be treated differently from adult offenders, with an emphasis on development, recovery,

and reintegration rather than punishment.

Psychosocial guidance is conducted by Probation Officers through structured counseling sessions designed to address emotional, psychological, and social aspects of child clients' behavior. Cuento therapy serves as a core method within this guidance framework, utilizing storytelling as a reflective medium to convey moral values, legal norms, and life lessons. Through narratives, child clients are encouraged to explore personal experiences indirectly, allowing them to express emotions and reflect on behavioral consequences without feeling interrogated or judged. This method is particularly effective for children who struggle with verbal expression or exhibit resistance to conventional counseling approaches.

The findings indicate that cuento therapy plays a significant role in fostering self-awareness and emotional regulation among child clients. Storytelling sessions enable children to identify parallels between narrative characters and their own life experiences, facilitating deeper reflection on decision-making processes and personal responsibility. As a result, child clients demonstrate increased openness, improved communication skills, and greater willingness to engage in dialogue regarding their involvement in narcotics offenses. These outcomes suggest that cuento therapy strengthens internal motivation for change rather than relying on external coercion.

Psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy embodies both preventive and corrective dimensions of legal protection, as conceptualized by Philipus M. Hadjon. Preventively, guidance sessions aim to enhance legal awareness, moral reasoning, and self-control, thereby reducing the risk of future offenses. Correctively, the guidance functions as a rehabilitative response following the commission of a narcotics offense, ensuring that the legal process does not undermine the child's dignity and developmental needs. This dual function illustrates that legal protection within the probation system can operate harmoniously with rehabilitative objectives.

The implementation of cuento therapy at the Class I Probation Office of Bandar Lampung faces several institutional and contextual challenges. One significant obstacle is the limited time available for psychosocial guidance, as Probation Officers are required to manage multiple cases simultaneously. High caseloads restrict opportunities for sustained and individualized intervention, potentially reducing the long-term impact of counseling sessions. Additionally, the absence of standardized operational guidelines for cuento therapy leads to variations in implementation practices, depending largely on individual officer competence and experience.

External social factors further complicate the effectiveness of psychosocial guidance. Child clients often return to environments characterized by negative peer influence, weak family support, or exposure to narcotics networks. These conditions undermine the behavioral changes achieved during counseling sessions and increase the likelihood of relapse. This finding underscores the need for integrated legal protection that extends beyond institutional guidance to include family and community involvement.

The study confirms that psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy constitutes a meaningful and effective form of legal protection for child clients involved in narcotics offenses. By addressing emotional, cognitive, and moral dimensions, this approach enhances the rehabilitative function of the probation system and supports the broader objectives of Indonesia's correctional policy. The findings demonstrate that legal protection for children must move beyond procedural safeguards to incorporate structured psychosocial interventions that promote sustainable behavioral change and social reintegration.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The involvement of children as clients in narcotics-related criminal offenses is caused by a complex interaction of social, familial, psychological, and environmental factors, particularly peer influence, weak parental supervision, emotional vulnerability, and limited understanding of the legal consequences of narcotics abuse. In response to this condition, legal protection for child clients at the Class I Probation Office of Bandar Lampung has been implemented through psychosocial guidance using cuento therapy, which represents a rehabilitative and child-centered approach in accordance with the principles of the juvenile justice and correctional systems.

The application of cuento therapy enables child clients to express emotions, reflect on their actions, and internalize moral and legal values through storytelling techniques that are appropriate to their developmental stage, thereby contributing to emotional regulation, behavioral awareness, and responsibility formation. However, the implementation of this guidance has not yet reached optimal effectiveness due to constraints such as limited human resources, the absence of standardized technical guidelines, and external influences from family and social environments that are beyond institutional control.

Therefore, this study recommends strengthening institutional capacity through the development of standardized guidelines for cuento therapy, improving the professional competence of probation officers, enhancing collaboration with families and community institutions, and providing greater policy and resource support to ensure that psychosocial guidance functions effectively as both a form of legal protection and a mechanism for rehabilitation and social reintegration of child clients involved in narcotics offenses.

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