



# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CINEMATHERAPY AS A COUNSELING TECHNIQUE AT THE SPECIAL CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTION (LPKA) OF PALANGKA RAYA

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## ABSTRACT

An extraordinary child development institution, henceforth referred to as LPKA is an institution where children serve their criminal sentences. LPKA is mandated to deliver education, skills training, and supervision and uphold children's rights in compliance with relevant rules. Cinematherapy is used as a form of counseling technique to coach children. This research aims to describe the implementation of cinematherapy techniques for correctional students (handicaps) in LPKA, Palangka Raya City. This type of research is qualitative. The primary data sources for this study included counselors, LPKA staff, and Andikpas at LPKA. Secondary data sources include books, literature, documents, journals, and other relevant materials related to the research topic. Data collection methods involved observation, interviews, and documentation. Data processing and analysis were carried out in three stages: data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis for this study was performed using NVivo version 12 software. This research shows that the implementation of cinematherapy at LPKA uses short and prolonged types of inspirational films. Short films, such as commercial advertisements, are produced in Thailand or Singapore.

Meanwhile, the long film is "Laskar Pelangi". The film source comes from YouTube. The film's themes are emotional management, the prohibition of bullying, and the prohibition of approaching adultery.

**Keywords:** Child; cinematherapy; counseling; LPKA; media

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A child is a gift from Allah Swt. who needs to be protected by everyone due to their limitations (Anggara & Subawa, 2018). This can be seen in various aspects, such as physical limitations, cognitive abilities (reasoning capacity), social skills, and communication. However, these limitations are identified as indicators that every child is progressing. Growth and

development reflect various changes occurring throughout a person's life. All these changes are dynamic processes emphasizing interconnected dimensions (Wong et al., 2009). For this reason, every child has the right to protection.

Following Law Number 11 of 2012 on the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (UU SPPA), one of the substances regulated in this law is that "children undergoing legal proceedings may be placed in a Special Child Development Institution (LPKA)" (Republik Indonesia, 2012). The most fundamental substance in the UU SPPA is the precise regulation of restorative justice and diversion, which are intended to avoid and distance children from legal proceedings. This prevents children from being stigmatized in conflict with the law due to deviant behavior. It is hoped that children reintegrate into the social environment as usual.

The number of cases involving children in conflict with the law has increased yearly. Among the nine clusters of complaints handled by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), cases of children in conflict with the law occupy the highest position (Yuliyanto, 2020). According to KPAI data, cases of children in conflict with the law (ABH) are the most frequently reported to KPAI. From 2011 to 2019, the number of ABH cases reported to KPAI reached 11,492 cases, far higher than reports of cases involving children facing health issues and substance abuse (2,820 cases), pornography and cybercrime (3,323 cases), as well as trafficking and exploitation (2,156 cases). As can be seen, the number of ABH cases involving sexual violence perpetrators tends to rise sharply. In 2011, the number of child sexual offenders was recorded at 123 cases. This figure increased to 561 cases in 2014, then decreased to 157 cases in 2016. From January to May 2019, the number of ABH cases involving sexual violence perpetrators reached 102 cases (Sulaiman, 2019).

According to Suparlan (2015), deviant behavior in children is caused by several biological, psychological, and sociological factors. This is supported by research conducted by Hartono & Gianawati (2013), which states that there are two factors leading to deviant behavior in adolescents: 1) internal factors, such as the development of sexual organs (biological) and motivation, and 2) external factors, including family, peer relationships, and mass media. In this study, the researcher will conduct research at the LPKA Class II in Palangka Raya City.

Based on the initial observations conducted, it appears that the psychological issues experienced by the juvenile detainees (andikpas) being rehabilitated at the LPKA Palangka Raya are pretty diverse. According to Sudarna (2024), psychosomatic symptoms in andikpas usually emerge when they first enter the LPKA. Psychosomatic refers to various physical illnesses caused by psychological conflicts and chronic anxieties. Psychosomatic disorders are psychological disturbances that can lead to physical complaints caused by psychological and social factors (Noer et al., 2023). The symptoms of psychosomatic illness are marked by various physical complaints, including muscle aches, pain in specific body parts, vomiting, bloating, stomach discomfort, itchy skin, tingling, headaches, chest pain, and back and spinal pain.

Sudarna (2024) reveals that the symptoms commonly observed in andikpas are vomiting, dizziness, and loss of appetite. However, no cases of severe depression have been found among the andikpas. The complaints are primarily physical and can still be handled by the health staff at the LPKA. According to Sudarna (2024), these psychological conditions arise because the andikpas perceive that the LPKA officers are all strict, do not smile, and have other negative

associations. In reality, the correctional officers at the LPKA are like parental figures to them. They can express their feelings, ask for help when needed, seek advice for their future life, and many more.

In general, being an andikpas certainly significantly impacts their self-confidence, creating doubts and worries about whether they will ever become better and more valuable to society and negative thoughts about their future. However, children are a valuable asset for national development, and their quality and prospects should be considered and taken into account (Putra et al., 2018). Therefore, comprehensive guidance for the andikpas at the LPKA Palangka Raya is necessary to help them become productive and beneficial individuals in the future.

One form of guidance intended is the provision of therapy. Several therapeutic models in Western studies have identified various forms resulting from developments made by scholars in the field. In Indonesia today, many seminars and workshops are being held to discuss innovations and creativity in counseling or therapy and tips on becoming a creative counselor or therapist. Carson et al. (in Rahmadian, 2011) state that a counselor's creativity can provide significant benefits for the success of counseling. In line with this phenomenon, various types of therapy have been developed and applied in counseling services, such as Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), Art Therapy, Logotherapy, Visual Therapy, and others (Nikmarijal et al., 2022).

One form of visual therapy in counseling is cinematherapy (Pienaar, 2005). This therapeutic model was developed using bibliotherapy (Berg-Cross et al., 1990). Samuel Crothers, in 1916, was the first man to coin bibliotherapy as a term to describe the use of books as part of the counseling process (Jackson, 2001). Cross et al. (1990) mention that cinematherapy is a specific therapeutic technique that uses commercial films as a chosen medium to derive therapeutic meaning for the client, which can then reveal the client's perspective on themselves or others.

Cinematherapy uses experience, content processing, and characters in films to help clients change negative beliefs, manage destructive emotions, gain insights, develop themselves, and rediscover their strengths (Dermer & Hutchings, 2000). Through discussing films, clients can frame issues and find alternative solutions to problems, guided by a meaningful process with the counselor or therapist (Newton, 1995). Viewers can identify and internalize their personality traits (as seen in characters from the film) and adapt to their own lives. The steps involved in implementing cinematherapy include assessment (client and therapy goals), implementation (watching the movie), and debriefing (discussing the impact of the film in the following session) (Caron, 2006).

Cinematherapy techniques have been used in several cases. This technique has proven to be effective in reducing academic anxiety (Ananda et al., 2022), decreasing alcohol consumption habits (Sari & Kowan, 2023), increasing awareness of the dangers of smoking (Fatchurahman, 2017), enhancing career self-efficacy (Jayati & Nuryono, 2018), and improving social skills (Habsyah, 2020). All of these areas are closely related to the conditions experienced by juvenile detainees who are residents at the LPKA in Palangka Raya. Watching films is a form of entertainment that is almost universally liked. Using films as a counseling technique can attract clients' attention, including children at the LPKA in Palangka Raya.

## 2. METHODS

This research is qualitative and uses a case study approach. A case study is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores real-life, contemporary, limited systems (a case) or multiple limited systems (multiple cases) through the collection of detailed and in-depth data involving various sources of information or mixed information sources and reports on the case description and case themes (Creswell, 2015). The data collection methods used include observation, interviews, and documentation. The data obtained from the informants are analyzed using NVivo software 12<sup>th</sup> version.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Film Type

As a dynamic and diverse therapeutic approach, the technique of cinematherapy has emerged as a profound and captivating modality that harnesses the inherent power of films and cinematic experiences to catalyze profound personal growth, foster emotional resilience, and facilitate meaningful self-introspection (Blumer, 2010). The strategic use of short and feature-length films has proven to be a powerful and versatile tool, with each format offering unique advantages and applications.

In general, the types of films used by counselors with the residents of the LPKA in Palangka Raya are divided into two categories: first, feature-length films, and second, short films. A statement from a counselor supports this finding:

*"For example, with the movie 'Laskar Pelangi' that I showed. I played the film, and after they (the juvenile detainees) watched it, I asked, 'So, what do you think? What did you understand from the film? What lessons can we take from it?' The children replied, 'Oh, like this... like that...'. There was a much-related conversation between them and me." (Romiaty, personal communication, 2024).*

The counselor revealed that the film used during the counseling process was based on a novel by Andrea Hirata titled *Laskar Pelangi* (The Rainbow Troops). "In a classical setting, I always use that (media). I used to watch *Laskar Pelangi*," said the counselor, Romiaty (personal communication, 2024). This film was first released on September 26, 2006, and directed by Riri Riza. Salman Aristo wrote the screenplay in collaboration with Riri Riza and Mira Lesmana. Although it is considered an older film, *Laskar Pelangi* became the fourth most-watched film in Indonesia. The film's story addresses the educational disparities in Indonesia, particularly in rural areas. The film features local communities, especially children from Belitung Island, which also served as the filming location.

In addition to feature-length films, counselors at the LPKA also use inspirational short films. Most counselors stated that, in the context of LPKA, short films are more effective for several reasons, one of which is the limited time available at LPKA, as the detainees have a packed schedule of activities in addition to counseling sessions. Findings from interviews with informants supported this:

*"Showing feature-length films is not very effective. For the context of the LPKA situation. Why? Due to LPKA, there is not much time. If we want to show a feature-length film, it is difficult because other activities were already scheduled"* (G. O. Faz, personal communication, 2024).

*"Therefore, to work it out—based on our experiences—we usually watch on the spot, and the time is not long. So, the longest film we show is about 10-15 minutes. It is usually more like 5-7 minutes"* (G. O. Faz, personal communication, 2024).



**Figure 1.** Film Cover "Laskar Pelangi"

The informant revealed that some short films are sourced from commercials produced in Thailand or Singapore. One function of advertisements is as a medium for promotion or marketing. It is hoped that through an advertisement, potential customers will be interested in using the advertised product or service. Advertisements are also made as engaging and creative as possible so the public can notice them. Below is an excerpt from the interview with the informant:

*"Short films from Thailand, like insurance ads, are often used, or even cartoons relatable to the lives of the juvenile detainees at LPKA. For teenagers, the issues are usually about youth and whatever we want to discuss that day. These are the most common. The most common are short films from advertisements"* (G. O. Faz, personal communication, 2024).

Many of these Thai advertisements have become viral on the internet, receiving positive reactions from netizens, with some reaching hundreds of millions of views on YouTube. One iconic element that consistently appears in the stories of these popular Thai ads is their highly emotional plotlines, which can make viewers laugh and cry.

There are several reasons why advertisements created in Thailand can become so viral. These reasons include: 1) Engaging storytelling: Advertising in Thailand can craft creative ads with dramatic stories that capture attention and touch many people's hearts. Viewers often become so immersed in the narrative that they momentarily forget they are watching an

advertisement for a product. 2) A roller-coaster plot: The best Thai ads feature a plot twist where the protagonist's fate changes, often with a happy ending. However, sometimes the story ends surprisingly or unexpectedly. 3) A strong sense of humanity: The stories told in Thai ads generally focus on the kindness of people. Without seeming preachy, these stories satisfy the viewer and convey a positive message, restoring faith in the goodness within every human being.

In addition to confirming with the counselors, the researcher also asked the juvenile detainees (andikpas) about the duration of the films they had watched. The dialogue was as follows:

*"We were gathered together, and then a film was shown. A counselor was accompanying us. After all the equipment was prepared, we were instructed to follow the activity properly. The counselors had a pre-condition before showing the film. From what I observed, the film was not too long. Maybe it was a short movie. I also felt the viewing session was brief"* (MAZ, personal communication, 2024).

For another juvenile detainee, the researcher tried to dig deeper into the question about the short films:

*"I remember that during the activity, a counselor showed us a film to discuss. There were a few sessions before we entered the film viewing and discussion session. They (the counselors) referred to it as counseling through film. We were guided and directed to understand the storyline, the characterization, etc. As I recall, the film lasted only 5-7 minutes"* (MA, personal communication, 2024).

Both informants, who were juvenile detainees, confirmed that the counselors had shown them short films as part of the counseling. Short films' concise narratives and exploration of human conditions, often touching the heart, can be a powerful catalyst for self-reflection and emotional processing. The short duration and thematic focus allow therapists to sharpen specific emotional or psychological themes, creating a sense of closeness and impact that can resonate deeply with the client. On the contrary, longer films, with their broad storylines and character development, can provide a more immersive cinematic experience (deep mental engagement) and a holistic exploration of complex interpersonal dynamics, the nuances of the human soul, and the diverse nature of human experience (Benini et al., 2022; Wilson, 2008).

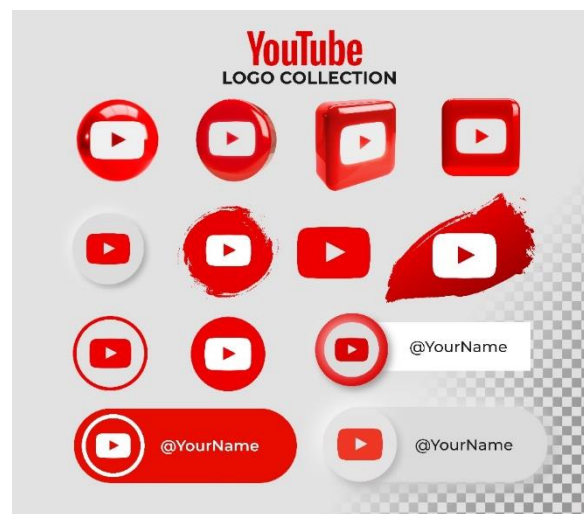
### **Source of Film**

Cinematherapy has emerged as a powerful modality that harnesses the transformative power of film to catalyze personal growth and facilitate emotional healing. While the educational value of films in enhancing students' understanding across various disciplines has been well documented, the specific teaching approaches and practical applications of utilizing online media sources, such as YouTube and social media, in the context of cinematherapy remain relatively underexplored (Saldaña, 2009).

Based on the data obtained, counselors at LPKA mostly use YouTube as a source for finding inspirational films that are used during counseling sessions with juvenile detainees (andikpas) at LPKA Palangka Raya, as shared by the counselor: "So, I search on the internet, and usually I just link it and play it on YouTube. In the past, I used to download it" (G. O. Faz,

personal communication, 2024b). Next, Dwijayanti also revealed, "I get it from YouTube. From YouTube, I pick films that are about 5 to 10 minutes long" (P. Dwijayanti, personal communication, 2024). Similarly, Romiaty mentioned, "Usually, it has a title, right? So, I search for it on YouTube" (Romiaty, personal communication, 2024b). Willy shared a similar view, "I think, if I am not mistaken, that it is not on YouTube because it is just a short film segment" (Willy, personal communication, 2024).

The rise of digital media platforms has significantly expanded the accessibility and diversity of cinematic content available for therapeutic interventions. As educators and clinicians strive to harness the power of film to encourage personal transformation, it becomes increasingly important to examine the unique benefits and considerations associated with incorporating online media sources into cinematherapy practices (Dawson, 2007).



**Figure 2.** YouTube Logo

However, platforms like YouTube, which serve as a "warehouse" for all types of films, must be operated wisely. Since it functions like a warehouse, not all films featured on YouTube contain positive content. Certain films portray behaviours or ideas that are not in line with societal norms and ethics. For this reason, Allah Swt. reminds us in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Maidah/5: 100,

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْحَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْحَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Translation:

*Say: "The bad and the good are not equal, even though the abundance of the bad may impress you. So be conscious of God, O you who possess intelligence, that you may succeed"* (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

The word *al-Khabits* refers to anything disliked due to its destructive or disgraceful nature, whether material or immaterial, according to reason or religious law. Therefore, this term encompasses the negative aspects of beliefs, speech, or actions. Its opposite is *ath-Thayyib*,

which includes what is permitted and allowed by religion or sound reasoning. What is permitted by religion is certainly not harmful, or in other words, anything inherently harmful, its cause, or any form of evil is disliked by Allah and His Messenger. It is not accepted by sound reasoning (Shihab, 2012a). Therefore, after Allah has emphasized the significant difference between good and evil, counselors must distinguish between the types of films they will download from YouTube and similar sources.

### Film Theme

Based on the information obtained from the informants, films with specific themes are used as triggers for the counseling sessions. As Romiaty, a counselor from LPKA's partner, explained: "So, there are three short films that I show about emotional management that they watch, and then we discuss." She added, "These three short films are related to emotional management. So, we raised the emotional management topic and then watched the film." The details were: "The films were about not getting angry, controlling self, and managing emotions" (Romiaty, personal communication, 2024a). About the theme of emotional management, Allah's words in Surah Al-Hadid/57: 23 are as follows,

لَكَيْلًا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

Translation:

*"That you may not sorrow over what eludes you, nor exult over what He has given you. God does not love the proud snob"* (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

In his Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains that the meaning of the verse above is Allah Swt. Conveys the reality of hardship and ease, pleasure, and misfortune, so that we, as His servants, do not grieve excessively or beyond reason, leading to despair over things we desire but cannot attain, nor should we be overly joyful and arrogant, forgetting our place when we achieve success. Allah does not like those who despair after failure, nor does He like those who are arrogant and boastful about their success (Shihab, 2012b).

Another counselor used a different theme, as shared by Willy: "For example, a case about bullying." He added, "We showed two videos. One about bullying, and the other about sexual harassment" (Willy, personal communication, 2024b). Another counselor from a partner institution of the LPKA shared,

*"For example, if the case involves teenagers, then the films we show focus on teenage issues. Moreover, when they are all male, we usually try to find a male character as the main figure, for example, in a film about bullying. So we choose a common issue so that everyone can relate and engage in the discussion because it is connected to the film"* (G. O. Faz, personal communication, 2024c).



The theme of prohibiting bullying aligns with the Qur'anic verse in Surah Al-Hujurat/49: 11,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الإِسْمُ الفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

Translation:

"O you who believe! No people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you slander one another or insult one another with names. Evil is the return to wickedness after having attained faith. Those who do not repent are the wrongdoers" (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

The word *yaskhar* refers to mocking or ridiculing the shortcomings of others, with the intent to make fun of them, whether through speech, actions, or behavior. Meanwhile, the word *qaum* is commonly used to refer to a group of people. The language initially applied it to a group of men, but since the verse mentions women explicitly, women can also be included in the meaning of *quantum*. Although the term *al-mu'minun* (believers) could also encompass *al-ruminant* (female believers), the verse mentions *explicitly nisa'* (women) because mockery and gossip tend to occur more among women than men (Shihab, 2012c).

The word *talmizu* comes from *al-lamz*. Scholars differ in their interpretation of this term. Ibn 'Asyur, for example, interprets it as direct mockery aimed at the person being mocked, whether through gestures, lips, hands, or words understood as insults or threats. This is a form of disrespect and abuse. The verse above prohibits mocking others, as the intent is directed toward another person. The wording is chosen to indicate the unity of society and how one should feel that the suffering and humiliation faced by others is shared by oneself. On the other hand, those who mock others will face the negative consequences of their mockery, and it is even possible that the mocker will receive worse ridicule than the one being mocked (Shihab, 2012c).

The Qur'anic verse that addresses sexual harassment or actions similar to it, such as adultery and rape, can be found in Surah Al-Isra/17: 32,

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزَّوْجَىٰ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ۖ وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

Translation:

"And do not come near adultery. It is immoral and an evil way" (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

This verse emphasizes: "And do not approach adultery, even by engaging in actions—such as fantasizing—that could lead you to fall into this wrongdoing. Indeed, adultery is a horrific act, beyond any reasonable limits, and a wicked way to fulfill biological needs."

In addition to the counselors' statements, the juvenile detainees (andikpas) also shared that they had been shown short films with specific themes used during the counseling process, as stated by MAZ: "Like sharing. Then, not being arrogant. What else... There are many" (MAZ, personal communication, 2024b). Another juvenile detainee also mentioned a theme "About self-reflection" (MA, personal communication, Mei 2024b). These two detainees stated that they had been shown short films that contained educational elements and lessons that could be applied to everyday life.



**Figure 3.** Discuss The Film/Video

Cinematherapy is often described as a three-step process: assessment, implementation, and explanation (Chieffo et al., 2022). During the assessment phase, the therapist carefully selects films that address a specific issue or theme the client faces, such as sadness, trauma, or identity. The implementation phase involves the client watching the film, where they can identify characters, categorize their experiences, and gain new insights into their lives. The final step, explanation, involves a discussion between the therapist and the client about the film's theme and how it relates to the client's experiences (Wilson, 2008).

Using film themes in therapy represents a powerful and innovative approach to addressing various psychological and emotional issues. By leveraging films' emotional power and narrative, therapists can help clients gain new insights, explore sensitive topics, and develop greater self-awareness and resilience (Pearson, 2006; Toye et al., 2015).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study explores the application of cinematherapy with children at the LPKA in Palangka Raya. In conclusion, the implementation of cinematherapy at LPKA can be seen through the types of films, the sources, and the themes of the films shown by the counselors. The films used were of two types: short films and feature-length films. The films were sourced from YouTube, and the themes addressed were emotion management, the prohibition of bullying, and the prohibition of engaging in adultery. These themes were chosen because many children in the LPKA have been involved in offenses such as murder, theft, fighting, and adultery. After receiving rehabilitation at LPKA, it is hoped that the children will return to society with improved behavior.

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## Authors' contribution

**Ihsan Mz:** Conceptualization – writing - original draft. **Sattu Alang:** Supervision. **Kamaluddin Tajibu:** Validation. **St. Rahmatiah:** Review. **Isnaeni Marhani:** Review & editing.

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