



Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN
2581-1657

E-ISSN
2581-2203

The Effect of Dispositional Mindfulness on the Mental Health of Children Facing the Law in LPKA Class II Palu

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 12 March 2026

Accepted: 28 April 2026

Available Online: 05 May 2026

Keywords:

Dispositional Mindfulness,
Mental Health,
Child Facing the Law,
LPKA

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Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.5.p.379-389>

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ABSTRACT

Children who are in conflict with the law (ABH) are a group of adolescents who are vulnerable to experiencing mental health problems due to psychological pressure, limited freedom, and social stigma during the coaching period. One of the psychological factors that can support mental health is dispositional mindfulness. This study aims to examine the influence of dispositional mindfulness on the mental health of children who are facing the law at the Palu Class II Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA). The method used is a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto design. The research subjects consisted of 24 fostered children who were selected through total sampling techniques. The research data was obtained using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) instruments, then analyzed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The results showed that the level of dispositional mindfulness was in the high category and mental health conditions were in the high category. However, the results of the regression analysis showed that dispositional mindfulness did not have a significant effect on mental health ($p = 0.899$; $R^2 = 0.001$). These findings suggest that the mental health of children who face the law is more influenced by other factors such as social support and a coaching environment.

1. Introduction

Mental health is one of the important aspects of an individual's life, especially in adolescence which is characterized by various psychological and social changes (Firdaus et al., 2023). The World Health Organization defines mental health as a condition of well-being that allows individuals to realize their potential, be able to cope with the pressures of daily life, work productively, and make a positive contribution to their social environment (Perwitasari et al., 2024). A good mental health condition allows a person to live life adaptively and maintain emotional balance in a variety of situations (Putri & Laeli, 2024). In the context of education,

mental health is often associated with psychological well-being which reflects the optimal psychological functioning of individuals (Hasanah & Rusman, 2025).

Globally, mental health problems in adolescents show quite high numbers (Maha et al., 2025). In 2019, it is estimated that about one in seven adolescents in the world experienced mental health disorders, which is equivalent to about 175 million boys and girls. This figure has increased compared to the conditions in 2000. In addition, a World Health Organization report shows that mental health disorders account for about 16% of the total burden of disease and injury in the 10–19 age group (Lekatompessy, 2023). Depression is even one of the leading causes of illness and disability in adolescents, while suicide ranks fourth in the age group of 15–19 years (Ulya & Setiyadi, 2021). The high number of mental health problems shows that adolescents are a group that needs serious attention in efforts to prevent and handle psychological problems. This condition also shows that mental health is influenced by various factors, both internal and external, that interact with each other in an individual's life.

One of the groups of adolescents who are vulnerable to experiencing mental health problems is children who are facing the law (ABH). Based on Law Number 11 of 2012 concerning the Juvenile Criminal Justice System (SPPA), children in conflict with the law are defined as individuals between the ages of 12 and 18 years (Trisnawati, 2023). The Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA) is an institution in the correctional system under the auspices of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. This institution serves as a place of guidance for children who have obtained a permanent legal decision from the court to serve their criminal term (Sukadana, 2023).

During the coaching period, children who are confronted with the law not only face legal consequences, but also various complex psychological pressures (Noeng, et al., 2025). Adjusting to a limited environment, separation from family, and social stigma can affect their psychological state (Wahyuni, 2021). Previous research has shown that children who undergo coaching in correctional institutions experience various psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Dohelp et al., 2024). Research at LPKA Kupang Class I also showed that 67.74% of adolescents experienced a fairly high level of stress, while 32.56% experienced a high level of stress during the coaching period (Nurwela & Rindu, 2022). This condition suggests that psychological stress has a major contribution to an individual's mental health. In addition, anxiety and self-adjustment are also important factors in an individual's psychological state, especially when in a new environment that demands adaptation (Mundaroh & Sholihah, 2026). Social relationship factors also affect the emotional well-being of individuals, where the quality of social interaction plays a role in shaping the psychological condition of adolescents (Azizah, 2026)

One of the psychological factors that is thought to support an individual's mental health is dispositional mindfulness (Mehrabi & Beshai, 2025). This concept refers to an individual's tendency to maintain awareness of ongoing experiences in daily life, including thoughts, feelings, and sensations experienced in the present moment

without making judgments of those experiences (Baer et al., 2008; Brown & Ryan, 2003). Individuals with higher levels of dispositional mindfulness tend to have better ability to manage emotions as well as deal with psychological distress (Puswiartika et al., 2025). This is supported by research findings that show that dispositional mindfulness plays a role in lowering stress levels so that individuals have a better psychological condition (Patabang et al., 2026).

Various studies show that dispositional mindfulness relates to the reduction of symptoms of depression and anxiety and contributes to the improvement of the psychological well-being of the individual (Zhang & Shen, 2023). In addition, dispositional mindfulness is also seen as an internal factor that can increase psychological resilience and help individuals in dealing with various life pressures. Therefore, a good level of mindfulness is expected to make a positive contribution to the mental health condition of individuals (Afani & Kurniawan, 2021). In addition to mindfulness, other internal factors such as self-efficacy and hope are also known to play a role in helping individuals cope with psychological stress and maintain mental stability (Fadhila & Ahyani, 2026). Nonetheless, studies that specifically examined the influence of dispositional mindfulness The mental health of children involved with the law in LPKA is still relatively limited.

The group of children who undergo coaching at the institution have psychosocial challenges that are not the same as adolescents in general. In addition to having to be separated from the social environment outside the institution, they are also required to follow various strict rules. This situation can limit the process of self-expression and affect the fulfillment of several basic needs, including the need for a sense of security (Harahap & Situmorang, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of dispositional mindfulness on the mental health of children who are facing the law at the Palu Class II Special Children's Development Institute (LPKA).

2. Methodology

This study applies a quantitative approach with an ex-post facto design to determine the effect of dispositional mindfulness on children's mental health conditions in LPKA Class II Palu. This design was chosen because the variables studied were not manipulated or treated, but were observed based on the conditions that had occurred. The research subjects consisted of 24 fostered children who were selected through the total sampling technique, which is a sampling method that involves all members of the population as a sample because the number is relatively limited.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire with a Likert scale which was compiled based on the adaptation of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) and the Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF). Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) to measure the level of dispositional mindfulness which consists of five main dimensions, namely observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience, non-reactivity to inner experience. Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF) is used to assess

mental health conditions that include emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The instrument used has gone through a process of adjustment to the research context and has been tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. The test results showed a coefficient value of 0.725 for the dispositional mindfulness variable and 0.720 for the mental health variable, indicating that the instrument had an adequate level of reliability.

The questionnaire used consisted of positive and negative statements with four alternative answer choices, Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The scoring system is adjusted to the characteristics of the item, where positive statements are scored 4, 3, 2, and 1, while negative statements are scored 1, 2, 3, and 4. The data collection process is carried out directly within LPKA after obtaining permission from related parties. The data obtained were in the form of variable scores of dispositional mindfulness (X) and mental health (Y). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the data conditions as well as simple linear regression to test the influence of variable X on variable Y. Before inferential analysis was carried out, the data was first tested through normality and linearity tests to ensure the fulfillment of the analysis assumptions with a significance level of 0.05. The entire data processing process is carried out using SPSS software version 27.

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis in this study is based on quantitative data derived from the results of filling out questionnaires by 24 respondents at LPKA Class II Palu. The questionnaire used contained a number of statements representing the variables of dispositional mindfulness (X) and mental health (Y). The responses given by respondents to each item are then calculated into a total score, which is then used to identify the level trends of each variable as well as as a basis in statistical testing. The example of the statement items used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Questionnaire Items

| Variable | Dimensions | Indicator | Example Statement |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Dispositional Mindfulness | Observing | Awareness of ongoing internal and external experiences | I realized the emotional changes that were happening in me |
| | Description | Ability to recognize and express experiences verbally | I was able to explain how I felt |
| | Act With Awareness | Perform activities attentively and not automatically | I realized what I was doing when I was doing |
| | Non-Judging of Inner Experience | Accepting thoughts and feelings without giving negative judgments | I don't think of my mind as something bad |
| | Non-Reactivity to Inner Experience | Ability to manage responses to thoughts and emotions | I can control myself when facing difficult situations |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| Mental Health | Emotional Well-Being | Ability to feel positive emotions and life satisfaction | I feel satisfied with my life |
| | Social Welfare | Ability to interact and contribute in a social environment | I feel like I have a role in my social environment |
| | Psychological Well-Being | Ability to accept yourself, develop potential, and have a purpose in life | I feel like my life has a clear purpose |

Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the characteristics of data on the dispositional variables of mindfulness and mental health. The results of the analysis showed that dispositional mindfulness tended to be in the high category with relatively small data variations. Meanwhile, mental health also showed a tendency to be in the high category based on the distribution of respondent data, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis Results

| Variable | N | Red | Median | Standard Deviation | Minimum Score | Maximum Score |
|---------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Dispositional mindfulness | 24 | 32,71 | 32,00 | 4,41 | 25 | 41 |
| Mental Health | 24 | 45,12 | 44,50 | 5,37 | 36 | 55 |

Data grouping was carried out to identify the distribution of dispositional levels of mindfulness and mental health of the study subjects. The classification results showed that most were in the high category for the dispositional mindfulness variable, with a small percentage in the very high and low categories. These findings indicate that in general individuals have good ability to be aware of and manage internal experiences, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Dispositional Mindfulness *Classification*

| Classification | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Very High | 3 | 12,5% |
| Height | 19 | 79,2% |
| Low | 2 | 8,3% |
| Quantity | 24 | 100% |

Classifications of mental health variables showed that most were in the high category, which reflected relatively good mental health conditions. However, there are still a small number of individuals in the low category. This shows that most fostered children are able to maintain emotional and psychological stability despite being in a coaching environment that has various limitations, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Mental Health Classification

| Classification | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Very High | 2 | 8,3% |
| Height | 19 | 79,2% |
| Low | 3 | 12,5 % |
| Quantity | 24 | 100% |

The assumption test is carried out to ensure that the data meets the requirements in the regression analysis which includes the normality test and the linearity test. The normality test uses the Shapiro–Wilk test because the sample count is less than 50 so that this method is considered more precise in detecting data distribution. The data is declared to be normally distributed if the significance value is greater than 0.05. The test results showed that the dispositional mindfulness variable had a significance value of 0.732 (> 0.05) and the mental health variable of 0.228 (> 0.05), so that both could be declared to be normally distributed. Thus, the assumption of normality has been met and the analysis can proceed to the next stage, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Normality Test Results

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----|-------|--------------|----|------|
| | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Dispositional Mindfulness | ,109 | 24 | ,200* | ,973 | 24 | ,732 |
| Mental Health | ,156 | 24 | ,136 | ,947 | 24 | ,228 |

The linearity test is a statistical test used to find out whether the relationship between independent variables and bound variables is linear or forms a straight line. The relationship between the two variables is considered linear if the significance is greater than 0.05. The significance value of deviation from linearity is 0.186 (>0.05). The results assumed that there was a linear relationship between the dispositional mindfulness variable and the mental health variable. The results of the linearity test are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Linearity Test Results

| | | | Sig. |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Mental Health | Between Groups | (Combined) | ,215 |
| Dispositional Mindfulness | | Linearity | ,879 |
| | | Deviation | From ,186 |
| | | Linearity | |
| | Within Groups | | |
| | Total | | |

Hypothesis tests can be carried out if the normality test and linearity test are met. Hypothesis test using simple linear regression analysis. In this analysis, the results of the determination coefficient test showed an R value of 0.027 which showed that the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and mental health was in the very weak category. The R Square value of 0.001 shows that the dispositional mindfulness variable only contributes 0.1% to mental health while 99.9% is influenced by other factors as seen in table 7.

Table 7. Determination Coefficient Test Results

| Models | R | R Square | Adjusted Square | R | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|--------|-------|----------|-----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0,027 | 0,001 | -0,045 | | 3,872 |

The results of the test using simple linear regression showed that a coefficient value of 0.023 led to a positive association between dispositional mindfulness and mental health, although the association was at a very weak level. These findings indicate that improvements in the dispositional mindfulness variable contribute only a very small contribution to changes in mental health. A significance value of 0.899 ($p > 0.05$) showed that the relationship was not statistically significant. Thus, it can be stated that dispositional mindfulness does not have a significant influence on the mental health of children who are facing the law in LPKA Class II Palu, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

| Variable | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| constant | 21,735 | 6,028 | - | 3,605 | 0,002 |
| Dispositional mindfulness | 0,023 | 0,183 | 0,027 | 0,027 | 0,899 |

The insignificance of the results of this study can be influenced by several factors. First, the relatively limited number of respondents is 24 people, so it has the potential to affect the power of statistics in detecting relationships between variables. Second, the use of self-report-based instruments allows the emergence of subjectivity bias in filling out questionnaires, especially considering the psychological condition of children who are faced with the law which tends to be dynamic and can change according to the situation they are experiencing.

The findings of this study are in line with Keyes (2002) theory which states that mental health consists of three main dimensions, namely emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Aryono, 2021). In the context of this research dispositional mindfulness more related to aspects of emotional and psychological well-being, such as the ability to manage emotions and self-acceptance (Thohar, 2018). However, in children who are faced with the law, the social welfare aspect has a very large role because it is in a coaching environment that has various social limitations (Situmorang, 2025).

The environmental conditions of the coaching institution, the pattern of social interaction, and the limited freedom experienced by children can significantly affect their mental health conditions. This suggests that mental health in the context of coaching institutions is not only influenced by internal factors of individuals, but also by external factors related to the social environment in which they are located. This view is in line with Daradjat (1994) theory which states that mental health is influenced by internal and external factors.

The results of this study are different from previous studies that found that dispositional mindfulness has a significant relationship with mental health. Research conducted by Cheung et al. (2020) that indicate that individuals with dispositional mindfulness those who are higher tend to have more effective emotion regulation skills, thus having an impact on improving subjective well-being and decreasing levels of psychological distress. Other research conducted by Juozelskyte and Catling (2024) also shows that dispositional mindfulness

contributes significantly to reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in college students, so it is seen as a protective factor in maintaining mental health.

These differences in results can be explained by differences in the characteristics of the study population. Previous research was conducted on student and adolescent populations in a relatively more open and supportive educational environment. In such contexts, dispositional mindfulness has a greater chance of influencing an individual's psychological state. On the other hand, children who are dealing with the law (ABH) in LPKA, mental health is more related to the process of adaptation to the coaching structure and social dynamics that develop within the institution, so that the direct relationship between dispositional mindfulness and mental health becomes less prominent.

This study examines a special population, namely children who are dealing with the law (ABH) in LPKA, which is still relatively rarely studied in the context of the relationship between dispositional mindfulness and mental health. The focus on this group makes an important empirical contribution to enriching the psychological literature and counseling guidance, particularly in the coaching environment. In addition, the findings of this study provide a contextual perspective that the influence of dispositional mindfulness on mental health is not always universal, but rather is influenced by population characteristics and the social environment, thus opening up space for the development of more comprehensive follow-up research.

However, this study has a number of limitations. The relatively limited number of samples and the scope of the research location involving only one institution cause the results of the research to not be generalized widely. In addition, the use of self-report-based questionnaire instruments also has the potential to cause subjectivity bias, depending on the psychological condition of the respondents when filling in. The low determination coefficient value also indicates that dispositional mindfulness makes only a small contribution to mental health, so there are still various other factors that have been influential but have not been studied, such as the environmental conditions of coaching, social support, previous life experiences, and the dynamics of children's social interactions. Therefore, further research is expected to involve these external variables and use a more comprehensive approach to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the mental health of children who are facing the law.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that dispositional mindfulness in children who face the law in LPKA Class II Palu is in the high category, which reflects a good ability to realize and understand internal experiences during the coaching period. Mental health conditions are also in the high category, which indicates the ability to maintain emotional and psychological balance in a limited environment. Nevertheless, dispositional mindfulness did not show a significant effect on mental health. These findings indicate that children's mental health is more influenced by external factors, such as the coaching environment, the dynamics of social interaction, and

the support available during the coaching process. These factors play a role in shaping psychological experiences, especially in situations that demand adaptation to rules, limitations of freedom, and changes in the social environment. Therefore, efforts to improve mental health should not only focus on strengthening internal factors, but also need to consider supportive environment-based interventions. Thus, the research objectives in describing variable conditions and testing the influence of dispositional mindfulness on mental health have been achieved.

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How to cite this article:

Jusmawati., Puswiartika, D., Munifah., & Arifyadi, A. (2026). The Effect of Dispositional Mindfulness on the Mental Health of Children Facing the Law in LPKA Class II Palu. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(5), 379-389.