# PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVES IN RELATION TO RECIDIVISM AMONG INMATES AT CLASS IIB STATE DETENTION CENTER PRABUMULIH



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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the impact of the Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) on recidivism among repeat offenders at Rutan Class IIB Prabumulih. PGI represents an individual's conscious effort for active and continuous self-development, which, in the context of corrections, can be a potential approach to reducing recidivism. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that the PGI dimensions—readiness for change, planfulness, resource utilization, and intentional behavior—significantly contribute to helping inmates reduce their risk of reoffending. Inhibiting factors such as social stigma and lack of social support delay the rehabilitation process. This study highlights the importance of social support and correctional facilities in strengthening PGI among inmates to reduce recidivism rates.

**Keywords:** Personal Growth Initiative; Recidivism; Prisoners



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#### INTRODUCTION

Law is the highest authority in regulating all aspects of life in society. Therefore, Indonesia is known as a Rule of Law country. This principle is enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, in Article 1, Paragraph 3, which states that "Indonesia is a legal state." As a country that upholds the supremacy of law, Indonesia strives to make law the main foundation for regulating social life. The laws are intended to uphold justice, maintain national order, and prevent crime, ensuring that the community feels safe and peaceful in the environment they inhabit. In this context, laws in Indonesia are designed and implemented to ensure that legal norms are followed and respected by all citizens.

The primary purpose of law is to maintain order and provide legal certainty. Criminal law plays a crucial role in regulating social life with the aim of preserving public order. Life in a community, interacting and living together, does not occur merely by chance but is based on shared objectives (Syamsuddin, 2019). It can be said that no human can live alone and apart from social life. People come together in a society to meet their life needs. Through togetherness and interaction with one another, society can fulfill its living requirements (Saleh, 2018). Human characters vary and have different interests. These differences in needs and interests often lead to the emergence of conflicts or disputes. Such conflicts can frequently trigger criminal activities. Therefore, law is based on these conflicts arising from interests and needs (Paramitha et al., 2021). One way to prevent and control crime is through the application of criminal law, which imposes sanctions in the form of punishment.

Under criminal law, various actions deemed to violate societal norms are defined as crimes and are subject to criminal sanctions for those violations. These consequences serve as threats that are used as a strategy for combating crime, where criminal law is applied to offenders (Hamzani, 2022). One form of criminal law is imprisonment, as stated in Article 10 of the Penal Code, where imprisonment is enacted as one of the main penalties. Imprisonment results in the restriction of an individual's freedom in certain aspects, such as interacting with society, thus causing them to lose their freedom to engage in activities within the community, leading to suffering for the convicted during their sentence. An individual serving a prison sentence is referred to as a convict. This term is used to refer to someone who is undergoing imprisonment as a consequence of the legal violations they have committed.

According to Article 1, Paragraph 6 of Law Number 22 of 2022 on Corrections, a convict is someone who, for a certain period, serves the sentence imposed by a legally binding court decision, as well as a life sentence or death sentence awaiting execution, and who is undergoing rehabilitation in a correctional facility. Prisoners in correctional facilities not only serve their sentences but are also provided with rehabilitation. With this rehabilitation, it is hoped that prisoners can improve their self-quality so they can reintegrate into society, acknowledge their mistakes, encourage self-improvement, and prevent recidivism in the future. They should be encouraged to live as law-abiding citizens, be responsible, fully participate in development, and at the same time, protect society from ongoing criminal activities.

According to Article 1, Paragraph 6 of Law Number 22 of 2022 on Corrections, a convict is someone who serves a sentence imposed by a legally binding court decision for a certain period, as well as a life sentence or death sentence awaiting execution, and who is undergoing rehabilitation in a correctional facility. Recidivism in correctional facilities refers to convicts who have completed their sentences and are recorded again in the prisoner registry after previously being removed due to completing their sentence

(Strategic Plan of the Directorate General of Corrections 2020-2024). The recurrence of criminal acts, known as recidivism, is one of the main challenges in the correctional system. In Indonesia, the issue of recidivism has become a serious concern due to the high number of prisoners who re-offend after serving their sentences. According to reports from the Directorate General of Corrections, the recidivism rate shows a stable trend with a relatively high percentage. This indicates that the existing rehabilitation system has not been fully effective in preventing convicts from re-offending.

Recidivism reflects a failure in the rehabilitation and social integration processes that should be provided to prisoners during their sentences. Many prisoners, especially recidivists, demonstrate an inability to adapt back into society. This is often caused by internal and external factors, such as limited self-development capabilities, stigma from society, and lack of social support. These factors can potentially diminish the motivation and ability of prisoners to lead better lives after their release. Recidivist prisoners, who have previously served sentences but return to crime, indicate a failure in rehabilitation and social reintegration efforts. Many factors can lead prisoners to re-engage in criminal acts, ranging from political, social, and economic factors (Sarik, 2018).

The phenomenon of re-offending by former prisoners who have previously served sentences is a serious issue that requires significant attention. In the context of the criminal justice system, recidivism is crucial as it indicates unsuccessful efforts to rehabilitate individuals and prevent them from reoffending. This raises questions in society about the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and crime prevention measures that have been the responsibility of law enforcement agencies. The recurrence of criminal acts by some prisoners has become a significant problem that needs attention. This includes how prisoners perceive themselves in relation to the crimes they have committed, leading them to feel unburdened by having to deal with the law repeatedly (Kusumaningsih & Syafitri, 2021).

In this context, the Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) offers a relevant approach to help prisoners develop themselves and reduce the risk of recidivism. PGI is a conscious and active effort by individuals to participate in the processes of change and personal growth. PGI has four main dimensions: Readiness for Change, Planfulness, Using Resources, and Intentional Behavior (Robitschek et al., 2012). These dimensions are believed to assist prisoners in developing skills to cope with life's challenges and reduce the likelihood of re-engaging in criminal activities.

In the definition proposed by Robitschek (2003), it is emphasized that an individual has full power to direct their own personal growth process, which requires a high level of motivation to achieve independent growth. The individual's awareness of the need for self-development becomes a key element in the growth process, including for prisoners. By developing PGI, it can help prisoners enhance their ability to adapt to change, improve problem-solving skills, develop social skills, and take advantage of opportunities to grow into better individuals. This opens doors to improving their quality of life, acquiring new education or skills, finding suitable jobs based on their competencies, building healthy lives and relationships, and having meaningful life goals.

Personal growth refers to the physical, mental, and emotional changes that occur in a person throughout their life. Individual growth is a continuous process influenced by various complex factors encountered by that individual. To achieve optimal growth, aspects such as support and a healthy environment are essential. Therefore, as a society, we need to provide support for the desire for self-growth, including for prisoners. This initiative can be seen as a reflection of their outlook on life moving forward.

Research related to PGI shows that this initiative can play a role in helping individuals cope with life difficulties and adapt to change. Robitschek (1998) states that PGI is an important part of personal development that encompasses a set of skills and mindsets that enable individuals to continue learning and growing, even when faced with various obstacles. In the context of corrections, the development of PGI among prisoners can help them view life more positively and build plans for a better future.

Research by Robitschek and Cook (1999) highlights the importance of PGI in the process of individual development. They reveal that people with high PGI actively seek opportunities and embrace change to achieve greater growth, in addition to making conscious efforts to improve themselves. In their research, Robitschek emphasizes that individuals with high PGI are not only aware of the importance of long-term personal progress but also actively engage in the process of change. They intensively seek solutions to the conflicts or problems they face. This research emphasizes that the initiative of prisoners is crucial in the process of growth and development and should not solely rely on the encouragement from the rehabilitation processes conducted by officers. Prisoners must also take an active role in their efforts to develop.

However, implementing PGI in the correctional environment is not easy. Prisoners often face complex challenges, such as social stigma, lack of access to resources, and minimal social support. Additionally, recidivist prisoners also face negative judgments from society, which treats them as threats. This can exacerbate their psychological state and motivation to change, as well as hinder the process of reintegration into society.

Personal growth initiative is important, especially for prisoners' initiatives to strive for self-improvement, growth, and development into better individuals. Recidivist prisoners have indeed received personality and independence development programs as their preparation for living in society, so they should be able to adapt well. However, when they revert to criminal behavior or even repeat offenses multiple times, it is essential for officers to understand the personal growth initiatives of prisoners in order to identify behavioral patterns that may have led them back to incarceration. This can help them change the course of their lives, reach their full potential, and reduce the likelihood of re-engaging in criminal activities.

This study aims to identify how PGI influences recidivism among recidivist prisoners at the Class IIB Prabumulih Detention Center and to explore the factors that hinder PGI in the correctional context. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research delves into the views and experiences of recidivist prisoners regarding their personal growth initiatives and the challenges they face in these efforts. It is hoped that this study will provide deeper insights into the importance of PGI in the rehabilitation process of prisoners and offer recommendations for policymakers to design more effective correctional programs aimed at reducing recidivism rates.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The Personal Growth Initiative theory developed by Robitschek (1998) describes PGI as the skills necessary to function well in personal life. PGI consists of four main dimensions: Readiness for Change, Planfulness, Using Resources, and Intentional Behavior. PGI provides a framework for prisoners to actively explore and develop themselves in facing life's challenges.

### **METHOD**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection methods through interviews, observations, and documentation. The research subjects are

recidivist prisoners located at the Class IIB Prabumulih Detention Center. Data analysis is conducted using the Miles and Huberman technique, which involves the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In-depth interviews are conducted to explore the views and experiences of prisoners regarding their personal growth processes. Supporting data are also obtained from correctional officers, who provide additional perspectives on the dynamics of PGI in the rehabilitation process.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research aims to identify the influence of Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) on the recidivism of prisoners, as well as the inhibiting factors that play a role in this process. The results were obtained through a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving recidivist prisoners at Class IIB Prabumulih Detention Center.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it was found that prisoners with high PGI tend to be more capable of adapting and avoiding criminal behavior in the future. The four dimensions of PGI—Readiness for Change, Planfulness, Using Resources, and Intentional Behavior—play a significant role in their rehabilitation process.

### **Readiness for Change**

Readiness for change is the condition in which an individual can assess their readiness to undergo personal growth. This is crucial in the rehabilitation process for prisoners to be willing and ready to accept rehabilitation programs. Readiness for change can be influenced by various factors, such as past experiences, internal motivation, or support from family. Some aspects of readiness for change for prisoners include the ability to accept mistakes, the desire to change, an understanding of past actions, and the ability to identify factors that drive them to commit repeat offenses. The higher the level of readiness, the greater the chance of successful behavioral change. In the dimension of Readiness for Change, the readiness of prisoners to initiate their personal growth process is measured.

Prisoners who are ready to change possess awareness and a strong desire to leave behind their old lifestyles. Those with such awareness tend to be more open to receiving new information and skills for their personal growth. The internal desire to grow is also evident in the three prisoners studied. Prisoners who have intrinsic motivation to grow tend to be more enthusiastic about realizing changes. This motivation is often triggered by clear life goals and the anticipated benefits of those changes. Prisoners who demonstrate this readiness are generally more open to the rehabilitation programs provided in the detention center, such as skills training and spiritual activities. They acknowledge the importance of change and demonstrate a strong willingness to improve themselves. This aligns with what Albert Bandura expressed in his theory, which indicates that an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals can influence their motivation (Bandura, 1997).

Awareness of past mistakes is a crucial step in the personal growth process. This feeling drives individuals to want to correct those mistakes, change the course of their lives, and become better than before. Recognizing mistakes is also accompanied by understanding the importance of learning from those experiences. With a willingness to learn from mistakes and a willingness to try new things, individuals will be better prepared to face the necessary changes, thereby increasing the chances of success in the personal growth process. Prisoners recognize the importance of self-development, particularly to improve and strengthen their personality and mentality in preparing for

the future. There is an awareness and hope of becoming better in the future. This aligns with Robitschek's opinion (Sharma & Rani, 2013) that an individual's readiness is marked by their ability to assess their preparedness to engage in the growth process

In addition to recognizing mistakes, an individual's readiness to change involves understanding their past errors and being able to identify the factors that drive them to commit crimes. The ability to identify the factors driving criminal behavior is an important skill within PGI.

## **Planning**

Planfulness is an important dimension in personal growth initiative (PGI). This aspect encompasses an individual's ability to plan personal development efforts in a structured, directed, and measurable way. With planning, inmates can set realistic and strategic goals for self-improvement.

The ability to plan for the future effectively allows inmates to have a clear vision of what they want after their release. Inmates with long-term plans are generally more motivated to pursue a better life and have clear objectives, such as seeking employment or building healthy social relationships. Those who successfully create plans tend to have greater resilience against temptations to revert to criminal lifestyles.

Inmates must be able to set goals in their lives aimed at their personal growth to become better individuals. However, when asked about their goals upon release, some inmates still lack a clear understanding of what kind of life they want to lead. This is influenced by a lack of opportunities, connections, and skills, which makes them less confident in setting goals for when they are released from prison.

In addition to goals, a clear plan is also an important element. For example, they strive to develop new skills, such as sewing and knitting. From interviews, insights were gained about the intentions and readiness of some inmates, as well as the perspectives of correctional officers regarding their plans after release. This aligns with PGI, where research (De Freitas et al., 2016) indicates that PGI plays a crucial role in enhancing individual well-being and supporting positive self-development. These findings align with Robitschek's opinion (Sharma & Rani, 2013) that orderliness is understood as the ability to think strategically and organize in personal growth efforts.

#### **Using Resources**

Using resources refers to an individual's ability to utilize external resources to achieve personal growth. This dimension includes inmates' ability to identify and make use of available resources. Inmates with good PGI tend to actively seek assistance and support from various parties, such as family, friends, and correctional officers. They also utilize the rehabilitation facilities available in prisons, such as counseling and skills training. Inmates who successfully use these resources are better able to overcome challenges and minimize pressures to return to criminal behavior.

One example is rehabilitation programs designed to assist inmates in the rehabilitation and reintegration process into society. Utilizing these programs means that inmates must actively participate in the activities offered, such as job training and education. These programs aim to provide new skills and knowledge that can be used after their release, helping them avoid reoffending.

Additionally, the dimension of using resources in PGI also encompasses the ability of individuals to leverage various available resources (such as family support, advice, and spiritual experiences) to facilitate personal change. Inmates actively make use of the resources available, such as skills training and religious guidance. The correctional

system strives to provide relevant resources for inmates' needs by giving them opportunities to deepen their spiritual knowledge.

Overall, inmates do not just utilize available resources in prison to carry out routines, but also for personal growth. They use religious activities, skills training programs, and daily work as valuable resources to strengthen their faith, hone their skills, and maintain discipline. Family support plays a vital role in facilitating inmates' changes. Family support significantly impacts inmates' emotional, psychological, and moral conditions (Makki et al., 2023). They leverage these relationships to find strong reasons not to repeat the same mistakes and to motivate themselves to become better individuals upon their release. This aligns with findings from research (Palupi & Salma, 2020) that the role of family in instilling parental hope values positively influences self-growth initiatives. The perception of parental hope plays a positive role in individual development to enhance self-quality or personal growth initiative.

In addition to family support, the environment within the prison and friendships also influence inmates' growth processes. Inmates surrounded by friends who support positive changes tend to be more successful in their self-development processes. This is consistent with what was expressed in (Hardin et al., 2007) that intentional engagement in personal growth behaviors with people who have high PGI leads individuals toward better outcomes.

This initiative is part of the personal growth initiative (PGI), where inmates actively use resources to support their processes of change and self-development. These findings align with Robitschek's view (Sharma & Rani, 2013) that Using Resources is the ability to identify and access external resources such as people or materials. However, aside from the negative influences within the prison, the research findings reveal that inmates believe selecting friends and environments is crucial, prompting them to be more selective in their social interactions. Support from friends and the environment is essential for inmates in their growth process. This is consistent with research conducted by Rahma (2022), which shows that the level of personal growth initiative among inmates can be influenced by the level of social support they receive.

The role of correctional officers in providing guidance and motivation significantly assists inmates during their rehabilitation process. Inmates show readiness and openness to seek help from officers when needed. This indicates that inmates do not rely solely on themselves but actively seek and accept support from officers. This proactive attitude demonstrates that inmates are engaged in finding solutions and requesting assistance from officers to leverage available support. This aligns with Ajeng Kusumawardani (2022), which highlights three roles of correctional officers: as facilitators for conducting rehabilitation for inmates, as communicators for executing rehabilitation, and as motivators for inmates during the rehabilitation process.

#### **Intentional Behavior**

The Intentional Behavior dimension in PGI encompasses an individual's ability to consciously and purposefully perform actions to achieve self-development goals. Intentional behavior reflects inmates' ability to act in accordance with their objectives. Inmates exhibiting intentional behavior tend to be consistent in following their plans and strive hard to avoid situations that could trigger criminal actions. Those with a high level of intentionality typically focus more on the process of personal change, even when facing external pressures. Individuals committed to change demonstrate more disciplined behavior, diligently participate in rehabilitation programs, and begin to apply the skills they have learned in their daily lives. Intentional behavior serves as a concrete indicator

that inmates are genuinely striving to change and are prepared for a better life after their sentence is completed.

Leveraging support from family, accepting help from officers, and being selective in choosing friends also indicate a commitment to personal growth. This is consistent with Robitschek's assertion (Sharma & Rani, 2013) that intentional behavior represents actual actions taken to implement plans and effect personal change in the process of personal growth.

Although PGI can positively impact reducing the risk of reoffending, several external and internal factors were found to hinder the development of PGI among recidivist inmates:

### 1. Low Self-Awareness Among Recidivist Inmates

Some recidivist inmates lack self-awareness regarding the importance of change in their lives. They have not fully realized the negative impacts of their past behaviors, leading to a lack of motivation to change. Laziness may also occur, making them reluctant to initiate personal growth initiatives. Another barrier to growth is low internal motivation, which may stem from low self-esteem, feelings of hopelessness, and pessimism about the future. Some inmates fear returning to society and feel they will not be accepted because they have been labeled as "exconvicts." This label makes it difficult for them to accept themselves, even though they desire to grow and develop (Irfani & Wibowo, 2022).

#### 2. Challenges in Setting Life Goals

Although there may be an intention to change, not all inmates can set their life goals. Some may have goals but struggle to create a plan because they feel confused or unsure about what to do to help them achieve those goals. Various factors contribute to this, including a lack of opportunities, connections, and the skills possessed by the inmates. Data indicates that many inmates have limited education, resulting in a lack of skills and poor planning to facilitate personal change. Additionally, limited access to rehabilitation programs can hinder their ability to gain the skills needed to plan for their futures after release from prison.

#### 3. Stigmatization by Society

The stigma attached to former inmates is a major barrier. Inmates released from prison are often viewed negatively by society, making it difficult for them to reintegrate. This negative judgment can impede their ability to adapt and create self-doubt when starting a new life. The stigma frequently leads inmates to feel hopeless, increasing the likelihood of reverting to criminal behavior.

#### 4. Importance of Social Support

Social support from family and friends is a crucial factor in strengthening PGI. However, not all inmates receive adequate support from their social environments. Inmates lacking social support often feel lonely and directionless, hindering their personal change process. In some cases, inmates who do not receive sufficient social support eventually revert to criminal behavior as a means of escaping the uncertainties of life.

### 5. Limited Resources and Rehabilitation Facilities

The limitations of resources and rehabilitation facilities in prisons also pose challenges. Some inmates express that they do not always have adequate access to

rehabilitation programs, such as counseling or skills training. This situation is exacerbated by overcrowding in correctional facilities, which prevents inmates from being transferred to institutions where they could access proper rehabilitation programs. As a result, their opportunities for optimal self-development become limited. Insufficient rehabilitation leads to difficulties in fostering a strong PGI, as inmates lack the means to harness their potential.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This study indicates that Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) plays a crucial role in helping recidivist inmates reduce the risk of reoffending. The four dimensions of PGI—readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, and intentional behavior—positively influence the mindset and behavior of inmates towards improvement. Inmates with high PGI are more likely to adapt to life outside prison and avoid criminal behavior.

However, several barriers exist in this process, including social stigma, lack of social support, limited access to resources, and environmental pressures within the correctional facility. These factors can hinder inmates from fully developing their PGI, ultimately increasing the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, support from various parties is essential to help inmates maximize their potential and reintegrate into society as better individuals.

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