

## OPTIMIZING INDEPENDENCE TRAINING THROUGH SEWING TRAINING AS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE SKILLS OF PRISONERS AT THE CLASS IIA SALEMBA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION



<sup>1</sup>Erikson Candra Saragih, <sup>2</sup>Markus Marselinus Soge

<sup>1,2</sup>Program Studi Teknik Pemasaryakatan, Politeknik Pengayoman - Indonesia

### e-mail:

<sup>1</sup>eriksoncandrasrgh@gmail.com (corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup>markusmarselinus@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*Correctional institutions play an important role in equipping inmates with productive skills to support their reintegration into society. At the Class IIA Salemba Correctional Institution, one such effort is sewing skills training, which aims not only to improve work competence but also to foster discipline, independence, and readiness for social life after release. This study examines the optimization of self-reliance development through sewing training and identifies the obstacles faced in its implementation. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The analysis is supported by optimization and skills development theories, with stages including data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that self-reliance development has been implemented through structured sewing training programs guided by supervisors and instructors. This approach helps inmates develop practical skills and work discipline. However, several challenges limit the program's effectiveness, such as a lack of sewing machines, inconsistent training schedules, limited budgets, a shortage of skilled instructors, and the absence of post-release follow-up programs. These constraints reduce the long-term sustainability and impact of the training. Therefore, improvements in facilities, human resources, and continuity programs are necessary to optimize the benefits of sewing training for inmates' future independence.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Reliance Development; Sewing Training; Inmate Skills*

## INTRODUCTION

Correctional institutions are an integral part of the criminal justice system in Indonesia, serving not only as facilities for punishment but also as centers for social rehabilitation. Since the ideas of Dr. Sahardjo in 1963, which emphasized the need for a more humanistic approach to criminal punishment, the correctional paradigm in Indonesia has shifted from being solely retributive to focusing on guidance and rehabilitation. This paradigm shift aligns with the principles of restorative justice, which stress that the purpose of punishment is not merely to retaliate against wrongdoing but also to rehabilitate offenders, protect society, and prepare individuals for social reintegration.

In practice, correctional institutions (Lembaga Pemasyarakatan or Lapas) in Indonesia carry a dual function: maintaining public security and fostering inmates through personality development and self-reliance programs, including education, vocational training, religious guidance, and life skills development. The correctional system in Indonesia continues to face serious challenges. According to the Directorate General of Corrections (2023), the total inmate population has exceeded 270,000, while the ideal capacity is only around 135,000, resulting in an overcrowding rate of more than 100%. Such conditions create multiple problems, including declining quality of rehabilitation programs, limited training facilities, heightened risks of inmate conflicts, and reduced effectiveness of social reintegration efforts. To address these issues, the government has increasingly emphasized self-reliance programs as a key strategy. These programs are designed to equip inmates with practical job skills that match labor market needs, thereby enhancing their chances of achieving economic independence upon release. In this way, correctional programs are expected to reduce recidivism while strengthening the position of former inmates as productive and accepted members of society.

Among various vocational training programs, sewing training has emerged as particularly strategic. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS, 2021) reveal that sewing and tailoring institutions occupy the highest proportion of non-formal education programs, present in 7,382 villages or sub-districts across Indonesia. This demonstrates that sewing skills carry strong socio-economic value, not only as a pathway to formal sector employment but also as a foundation for entrepreneurship in the creative industries. Considering this social relevance, sewing programs in correctional institutions are not merely skill-building activities but also empowerment strategies oriented toward real community needs. Beyond providing technical skills, sewing training helps build inmates' confidence, work ethic, and self-reliance, which are essential for successful reintegration.

Despite its potential, the effectiveness of sewing training programs in Indonesian prisons remains constrained by several challenges. Rahardjo and Anwar (2022) found that such programs often suffer from inadequate facilities, a shortage of professional instructors, and weak post-release support systems. Similar challenges were identified at the Jakarta Women's Correctional Institution (Lapas Perempuan Kelas IIA Jakarta), where sewing and batik programs were conducted but limited by insufficient facilities, low motivation among some participants, and a lack of follow-up support such as access to capital and employment opportunities (Kabarindo.id, 2023). Comparable issues were observed at Cipinang Correctional Institution, which collaborated with the Regional Job Training Center (PPKD) of East Jakarta to provide certified sewing and welding training. Although the program offered professional-level instruction, its implementation was hindered by limited participant quotas, short training duration, and the absence of long-term mentoring (Info\_PAS, 2025). These findings highlight that while sewing training

holds promise, its optimization remains a critical issue that needs to be addressed.

The legal foundation for correctional training in Indonesia is clearly established. Law No. 22 of 2022 on Corrections and Government Regulation No. 31 of 1999 on the Development and Guidance of Inmates stipulate that self-reliance training is aimed at producing economically valuable work skills, while personality development focuses on strengthening spirituality, morality, and mental health. Furthermore, the Correctional Inmate Assessment System (Sistem Penilaian Pembinaan Narapidana, SPPN) ensures that rehabilitation is evidence-based, evaluating behavioral changes through observation, interviews, and documentation. This system serves as the basis for granting inmates' correctional rights, such as sentence reductions, parole, and conditional release.

In line with international standards, such a systematic approach underscores that correctional treatment should not be punitive alone but must prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration. The Class IIA Salemba Correctional Institution serves as a significant case study. As one of Indonesia's largest and most complex correctional facilities, Salemba implements sewing training programs as part of its self-reliance development strategy. The aim is to provide inmates with practical skills that can support their livelihoods after release, either through employment in the formal sector or through entrepreneurial ventures. Given the strong relevance of sewing to Indonesia's creative economy, the program has the potential to meaningfully prepare inmates for reintegration. However, as in other correctional institutions, Salemba's sewing program faces persistent obstacles, such as limited facilities, insufficient instructors, and the lack of sustained post-training support. These conditions raise important questions about the extent to which sewing training can effectively improve inmates' skills and readiness for reintegration, and what strategies are needed to optimize the program's outcomes.

This study seeks to examine the optimization of self-reliance development through sewing training as a means of enhancing inmates' skills at the Class IIA Salemba Correctional Institution. The study investigates not only how the program is implemented but also what supporting and inhibiting factors influence its effectiveness, and how its impact contributes to reducing recidivism and preparing inmates for productive social reintegration. Academically, this research contributes to criminology and correctional management studies, particularly regarding the effectiveness of vocational training within correctional rehabilitation.

Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for correctional institutions and policymakers to design more sustainable and impactful inmate training programs, while also informing society about the importance of accepting and supporting former inmates. Ultimately, sewing training in correctional institutions should be understood not merely as vocational activity, but as a human development strategy that strengthens social cohesion and advances national development.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of self-reliance development programs in correctional institutions. Anggita and Pangestuti (2021) found that independence training in Class IIA Magelang Correctional Facility was aimed at enhancing inmates' skills through various fields such as culinary, agriculture, and fisheries. Their study also emphasized several obstacles, including limited resources, lack of staff expertise, and low inmate motivation. In contrast, the present study specifically focuses on sewing training in Class IIA Salemba Correctional Facility as a form of independence development. Unlike the broader scope of the previous study, this research seeks to optimize the sewing program by exploring ways to improve its effectiveness and

ensure greater impact on inmates' self-reliance after release.

### **Optimization Theory**

Optimization theory provides a systematic foundation for understanding how programs, including correctional rehabilitation initiatives, can achieve their most effective and efficient outcomes. Kosasih and Angkowo (2007) argue that optimization is fundamentally concerned with efforts to reach the most favorable conditions, while Siringoringo (2005) views it as the process of finding the best possible solution in order to maximize benefits or minimize disadvantages such as costs, time, or other constraints. This perspective implies that optimization is not merely about producing the largest possible output, but also about managing limitations wisely to ensure sustainable results.

According to Siringoringo (2005), there are three main components of optimization: the objective, which can take the form of maximization such as increasing income, skills, or benefits or minimization such as reducing operational costs and resource inefficiencies; decision alternatives, which provide multiple possible strategies for utilizing available resources in the most effective way; and limited resources, which demand careful management of manpower, raw materials, facilities, and funding.

In the context of correctional institutions, these components are reflected in the implementation of inmate training programs, such as sewing training, which require clear objectives, well-formulated strategic alternatives, and efficient resource allocation. Thus, optimization theory is highly relevant to analyzing the effectiveness of correctional programs, as it highlights the balance between achieving rehabilitative goals and managing institutional constraints.

### **Skill Theory**

Skill theory offers a comprehensive explanation of how human abilities are developed and utilized to support productivity and adaptability in various contexts, including vocational training in correctional facilities. Gordon (in Megantoro, 2015) defines skill as the ability to carry out a task with ease and accuracy, emphasizing that skills are not innate but can be cultivated through practice and learning. Dunnette reinforces this notion by suggesting that skills are shaped by a combination of education and work experience, reflecting accumulated knowledge and expertise.

In a broader sense, Robbins and Judge (2008) conceptualize ability as the capacity of an individual to perform different types of tasks, encompassing both intellectual and physical dimensions, while Iverson (in Megantoro, 2015) underscores the importance of training in transforming basic ability into effective and efficient performance. These perspectives converge in portraying skills as dynamic capabilities that are strengthened through structured training, practical engagement, and personal motivation. Robbins and Judge (2008) further classify skills into four major categories that are essential for personal and professional development.

First, basic literacy skills, including reading, writing, listening, and numeracy, provide the foundation for communication and comprehension in any learning environment. Second, technical skills represent specialized abilities such as operating machinery, using computer applications, or mastering vocational crafts like tailoring, which are directly relevant to correctional training programs. Third, interpersonal skills refer to the capacity to interact and communicate effectively with others, a critical competence for inmates who must reintegrate into society and build positive social relationships after release.

Finally, problem-solving skills emphasize logical reasoning and analytical thinking

to identify challenges and formulate practical solutions, an ability that not only supports vocational work but also daily decision-making. When applied in correctional settings, skill theory underscores the importance of vocational programs such as sewing training not merely as technical instruction but as holistic interventions that enhance inmates' literacy, interpersonal relations, and problem-solving capacities. This comprehensive development of skills equips inmates with the tools needed to reintegrate into society, reduce recidivism, and build sustainable livelihoods upon release.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The qualitative method was chosen as it aligns with the aim of the research, namely to gain an in-depth understanding of the self-reliance development process of inmates through sewing training at Class IIA Salemba Correctional Facility. This approach is grounded in a post-positivist paradigm, which views social reality as complex, dynamic, and full of meaning (Sugiyono, 2023). The researcher served as the main instrument for both data collection and analysis, requiring strong theoretical understanding to explore information, interpret phenomena, and systematically describe the findings of the study.

The research design used was descriptive, aiming to portray data as it is without manipulation or experimentation. Through this design, the study focused on capturing the real conditions of the sewing training program, including its implementation, challenges, and opportunities for further development. In this way, the findings are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of strategies to optimize self-reliance development in correctional institutions.

The data sources of this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with the Head of the Work Activities Section, the Head of Work Facilities Subsection, the Head of Vocational Guidance Subsection, three inmates participating in the sewing training, and one instructor from the PPKD of Central Jakarta. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observation of the training process and the interactions that took place. Secondary data were collected from official documents such as work activity schedules, inmate lists, assessment reports, progress reports, and training materials. The integration of both data sources provided a more comprehensive picture of the training program.

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation study. Observation was used to examine the facilities, material availability, and training activities in the sewing workshop. Semi-structured interviews allowed for more in-depth exploration and gave respondents the flexibility to express their experiences openly. Documentation study was conducted to complement and validate the field data. All data were analyzed inductively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2023). This analysis emphasized identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among the data, thus producing findings that are valid, profound, and contextual.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study indicate that the sewing training program at Class IIA Salemba Correctional Facility plays an important role in supporting the self-reliance development of inmates. The program is part of the correctional institution's broader strategy to equip inmates with vocational skills that are relevant to labor market demands. Sewing was selected not only because it is relatively easy to learn but also because it remains a sustainable and marketable skill in Indonesian society, as reflected in national statistical

data showing the widespread demand for sewing and tailoring skills.

The training is conducted in collaboration with external partners such as local vocational training centers, which ensures that the curriculum, methods, and materials remain aligned with industry standards. The implementation process begins with assessing inmates' interests and abilities, followed by systematic training sessions that cover basic sewing techniques, machine operations, and later progress into more advanced tasks such as pattern-making and garment finishing. This structured approach reflects the correctional institution's attempt to ensure that the training is not only practical but also effective in preparing inmates for life after release.

The results further demonstrate that the training has contributed to significant skill improvements among participating inmates. Many of them entered the program without any prior knowledge of sewing or familiarity with sewing equipment. However, after undergoing the training, participants were able to operate sewing machines, recognize and interpret patterns, and produce simple clothing items with satisfactory results. In addition to technical progress, participants also developed non-technical or soft skills such as patience, attention to detail, discipline, and teamwork.

These outcomes align with the theoretical perspective of skill development, which emphasizes that knowledge, practice, and training transform basic abilities into specialized competencies. From a broader reintegration perspective, the possession of transferable skills such as sewing is crucial in reducing the risk of recidivism, as it provides inmates with the capacity to secure employment or engage in small-scale entrepreneurship upon release.

The study also identified several factors that support the successful implementation of the program. Institutional commitment is one of the most critical enablers, reflected in the provision of facilities such as sewing machines, fabrics, and a dedicated space for training activities. The presence of external partners contributes to the professionalization of the training by introducing updated techniques and maintaining industry relevance.

Moreover, the intrinsic motivation of inmates who wish to learn and prepare for their reintegration serves as a strong driving force that supports the continuity of the program. In this sense, the synergy between institutional support, external collaboration, and personal motivation creates a conducive environment for effective training. These factors demonstrate how optimization theory is applied in practice, as correctional facilities must utilize limited resources in the most efficient way to achieve meaningful rehabilitative outcomes.

Despite these achievements, the study also reveals significant challenges that limit the effectiveness of the sewing training program. One of the main obstacles is the shortage of facilities and equipment, which restricts the number of inmates who can participate at the same time. Not all participants have equal access to sewing machines or materials, resulting in uneven learning experiences. The limited number of professional instructors also hampers the depth of the training, as one trainer is often responsible for multiple participants, reducing the amount of individualized attention.

Additionally, the duration of the training is relatively short, making it difficult for inmates to master advanced sewing techniques or to refine their skills beyond basic proficiency. These limitations mirror findings in previous studies, which highlight that correctional vocational programs often struggle with resource shortages and structural constraints. Another critical challenge lies in the lack of post-training support. While inmates may acquire sewing skills during their incarceration, there are few mechanisms to ensure continuity after release. Access to capital, employment opportunities, or

entrepreneurship support is limited, making it difficult for former inmates to apply their newly acquired skills in real-world contexts. This gap between in-prison training and post-release application undermines the long-term impact of the program, as the absence of systemic support increases the risk that inmates will fail to utilize their skills productively. In the broader framework of rehabilitation, this issue highlights the importance of designing correctional training not only as an isolated program within prison walls but also as part of a continuum that extends into community reintegration.

The broader implications of these findings emphasize the critical role of vocational training in correctional rehabilitation. The sewing program enhances inmates' human capital by equipping them with tangible skills that can increase their employability. At the same time, it fosters social reintegration by preparing inmates to achieve economic independence and self-sufficiency, thus reducing their likelihood of reoffending. This aligns with restorative justice principles, which prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration rather than punishment alone.

From a policy standpoint, it suggests that correctional facilities need to strengthen partnerships with vocational institutions and industries to improve the quality and sustainability of training. Moreover, correctional policies should address the post-release dimension by providing job placement services, access to microcredit, and entrepreneurship mentoring programs. Without such measures, the potential benefits of in-prison vocational training remain underutilized.

In relation to theoretical perspectives, the study's findings affirm the relevance of optimization theory and skill development theory in the context of correctional programs. Optimization theory, which focuses on achieving the best outcomes within resource limitations, is reflected in the efforts of correctional institutions to maximize the impact of sewing training despite constraints in facilities, time, and instructors. Skill theory, which emphasizes the role of education, practice, and training in transforming basic abilities into specialized competencies, is evident in the way inmates progress from having little or no knowledge of sewing to acquiring practical and marketable skills. These theoretical linkages underscore the transformative potential of vocational training in prisons, not only in terms of technical competence but also in fostering broader capacities such as problem-solving, discipline, and interpersonal communication.

The results of this study indicate that the sewing training program at Class IIA Salemba Correctional Facility is a valuable initiative with considerable potential in supporting inmate rehabilitation and reintegration. While it faces challenges related to limited resources and the lack of post-release support systems, the program has demonstrated its ability to equip inmates with both technical and non-technical skills that are relevant for life after incarceration.

Strengthening institutional commitment, expanding resources, and integrating post-release support are crucial for optimizing the outcomes of such programs. By addressing these challenges, correctional vocational training can serve as a concrete and sustainable pathway toward reducing recidivism and promoting successful reintegration into society.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the optimization of self-reliance development through sewing training at Class IIA Salemba Correctional Facility has been carried out quite effectively. The training program is conducted regularly and supported by adequate facilities such as sewing machines, learning materials, and structured schedules.

The involvement of both internal staff and external instructors ensures that the

program runs in an orderly manner, while the peer-tutoring system allows inmates with advanced skills to support their peers. When viewed through the lens of optimization theory, the program has succeeded in maximizing available resources, and from the perspective of skill theory, it has successfully enhanced inmates' competencies across various dimensions, including literacy, technical, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills.

Nevertheless, the research also identifies several challenges that hinder the full optimization of the program. The most pressing issue relates to limited funding, particularly for procuring raw materials such as fabric, thread, and sewing accessories, much of which still relies on external partners. In addition, the number of instructors remains insufficient to provide intensive and equitable guidance for all participants.

Another critical limitation is the absence of structured post-release programs, leaving inmates with newly acquired skills without clear pathways to employment or entrepreneurship after their release. These obstacles highlight the need for more comprehensive strategies that extend beyond the prison walls to ensure the sustainability and real impact of vocational training.

In light of these findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the sewing training program. First, correctional institutions need to allocate additional budgets specifically for raw materials to ensure that training activities can run smoothly and diversify the products created by inmates. Second, increasing the number of instructors, both internal and external, would allow for more intensive and individualized training. Third, partnerships with industries and local SMEs in the garment sector should be strengthened to create sustainable channels for marketing inmates' products and providing employment opportunities after release. Finally, it is crucial to design structured post-release programs for inmates who have completed sewing training. Such programs may include advanced vocational training, entrepreneurship workshops, financial support through microcredit schemes, or job placement initiatives with industrial partners.

In addition, enhancing the role of peer tutors by equipping them with more systematic training would further improve the quality of instruction within the facility. By implementing these recommendations, the sewing training program at Class IIA Salemba has the potential not only to optimize inmates' skills during incarceration but also to ensure meaningful reintegration into society, thereby reducing the risk of recidivism.

## REFERENCES

- Afrizal, R., Kurniawan, I., & Wahyudi, F. (2024). Relevansi Pelayanan Tahanan Dalam Sistem Pemasarakatan Terhadap Tujuan Pemasarakatan (Tinjauan Perubahan Undang-Undang Pemasarakatan). 53, 101–110.
- Amalia, Y. R. (2020). Hubungan Negatif Antara Konsep Diri Dengan Kenakalan Remaja Pada Narapidana. 1995 (July), 1–23.
- Anggita, D. C., & Pangestuti, N. (2024). Pembinaan Kemandirian dalam Rangka Peningkatan Keterampilan Narapidana. *JIP - Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(1), 109–166. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v7i1.3119>.
- Cynthia, I. F., Syahid, A., & Dewi, R. S. (2022). Implementasi Pelatihan Keterampilan Menjahit Pada Warga Binaan Di Lembaga Pemasarakatan Kelas Ila Karawang. *Jurnal Eksistensi Pendidikan Luar Sekolah (E-Plus)*, 7(2), 140–146. <https://doi.org/10.30870/e-plus.v7i2.17623>.
- Fatahilah, S., & Jarodi, O. (2023). Pelaksanaan Pembinaan Kemandirian guna

- Meningkatkan Keterampilan Narapidana di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas I Medan. *Jurnal Intelektualita: Keislaman, Sosial dan Sains*, 12(02). <https://doi.org/10.19109/intelektualita.v12i002.19647>.
- Fitria, B. M. (2023). Strategi Pembinaan Narapidana Residivis Narkotika Di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Kelas Iia Magelang. *JUSTITIA: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum dan ...*, 7(1), 103–115.
- Nabil, N. M. S. (2022). Pembinaan Kemandirian Dalam Meningkatkan Keterampilan Kewirausahaan Bagi Narapidana Pada Lapas Klas Iia Mataram. *Jurnal Komunikasi Hukum*, 8(2), 815–824. <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/jkh/issue/view/863>.
- Nasihudin, N., & Hariyadin, H. (2021). Pengembangan Keterampilan dalam Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 2(04), 733–743. <https://doi.org/10.59141/japendi.v2i04.150>.
- Novitasari, Y., & Wibowo, P. (2021). Pembinaan Kemandirian Dalam Membangun Kepercayaan Diri Narapidana Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19. *Widya Yuridika*, 4(2), 485–494. <https://doi.org/10.31328/wy.v4i2.2411>.
- Rahardjo, M. M., & Anwar, U. (2022). Upaya Peningkatan Keterampilan Narapidana sebagai Bentuk Pembinaan Kemandirian di Rutan Kelas IIB Banjarnegara. *Indonesian Journal of Social Science Education (IJSSE)*, 4(2), 114. <https://doi.org/10.29300/ijssse.v4i2.6634>.
- Sari, L. N. (2021). Analisis Sosiologis Reintegrasi Sosial Klien Pemasyarakatan. *ENTITA: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 3(1), 75–92. <https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v3i1.4615>.
- Sihombing, L. A., & Nuraeni, Y. (2023). Efektifkah Restoratif Justice ? Suatu Kajian Upaya Optimalisasi Sistem Peradilan Pidana Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Hukum Mimbar Justitia*, 9(2), 273. <https://doi.org/10.35194/jhmj.v9i2.3952>.
- Simamora. (2025). Peranan Lembaga Pemasyarakatan dalam Memberikan Pembinaan terhadap Narapidana. 3(1).
- Tosepu, Y. A. (2023). Asumsi, Opini Dan Fakta. *Academia,edu*.
- Zaki, M. G. S., & Anwar, U. (2022). Pembinaan Kemandirian Melalui Keterampilan Kerja dalam Upaya Meningkatkan Keahlian sebagai Bekal Narapidana Kembali ke Masyarakat (Studi pada Rutan Kelas IIB Kebumen). *Jurnal Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Undiksha*, 10(2), 301–309.