

REPEAT OFFENDERS CONVICTED OF DRUG CRIMES AT SUKADANA CLASS IIB STATE PRISON



¹Fazlullah Bima Vallery, ²Mulyani Rahayu

^{1,2} Program Studi Manajemen Pemasarakatan, Politeknik Pengayoman - Indonesia

e-mail:

¹fazbimav@gmail.com (corresponding author)

²mrahayu.widayat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the tendency of recidivism among narcotics prisoners at the Class IIB Sukadana State Detention Center, motivated by the persistently high rate of reoffending in Indonesia despite the implementation of correctional programs. The research aims to identify the internal and external factors influencing recidivism and to evaluate existing efforts to reduce its occurrence. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving correctional officers and recidivist inmates. The findings reveal that recidivism is driven by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors include low self-control and emotional instability, while external factors involve peer influence and socio-economic pressures that encourage individuals to return to criminal behavior. The study also finds that rehabilitation efforts, such as skills training and moral development programs, have contributed positively to reducing the tendency of recidivism. However, these programs are not yet fully optimal and require further strengthening to achieve more sustainable outcomes. In conclusion, reducing recidivism among narcotics inmates requires a more comprehensive rehabilitation system that addresses both psychological and social dimensions. Strengthening program quality, along with improved support systems during and after incarceration, is essential to ensure long-term behavioral change and successful reintegration into society.

Keywords: *Recidivism; Narcotics Prisoners; Detention Center; Internal Factors; External Factors*

INTRODUCTION

Recidivism shows that even though prisoners have served their sentences and undergone rehabilitation programs, many of them reoffend after their release. This phenomenon is most commonly found in drug-related cases, which dominate the prison population in Indonesia. Based on data from the Directorate General of Corrections in 2023, more than 13 thousand inmates have reoffended, with a recidivism rate ranging from 12 to 16 percent in the last five years. This condition proves that the goal of the correctional system to rehabilitate prisoners and prevent them from reoffending has not been fully achieved.

The Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center is one of the technical implementation units of the correctional system, with the majority of its inmates being prisoners convicted of drug-related crimes, some of whom are repeat offenders. Of the total 273 prisoners, 116 are repeat offenders, with 47 of them being repeat drug offenders. This data shows that even though guidance has been provided, its effectiveness still faces major obstacles. This phenomenon highlights the importance of an in-depth study of the factors that cause recidivism and the strategies that can be pursued to reduce it.

Recidivism itself can be influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include weak self-control, emotional stress, and drug addiction that is difficult to overcome. Meanwhile, external factors are often influenced by bad company, economic pressure, social stigma, and an environment that does not support the process of social reintegration. In this context, rehabilitation programs such as skills training and moral guidance have been proven to be helpful, but their implementation still needs to be strengthened in order to be truly effective in reducing the rate of recidivism. Therefore, research on drug offenders who are repeat offenders at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center is important in order to identify the contributing factors and formulate more targeted rehabilitation strategies.

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence recidivism among drug convicts at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center, both from internal and external aspects, as well as to examine the efforts that can be taken to reduce the rate of recidivism. Thus, this study is expected to not only provide theoretical understanding but also contribute practically to improving correctional and rehabilitation policies in correctional institutions.

A literature review of previous studies shows that drug recidivism is a phenomenon influenced by many factors. Hamidah's (2023) research found that economic, educational, and social factors were the main causes of drug recidivism in Lebak Regency. Maghfirah's (2022) research explains that social environmental factors play a major role in recidivism, in line with the Differential Association theory and the Labeling theory, which assert that criminal behavior can be learned from the environment and that social stigma can worsen the condition of former prisoners. Shay's (2020) research on female drug users in the United States shows that emotional stress, dysfunctional relationships, and mental health problems are the main causes of drug relapse and recidivism. Hery and Adeline (2020) emphasized that a punishment-oriented correctional system has not been effective in reducing recidivism, thus requiring a shift towards a rehabilitative system with integrated assessment.

Meanwhile, Faisal et al., (2022) found that social interactions within correctional institutions actually serve as a means of transferring criminal knowledge among prisoners, which reinforces the tendency toward recidivism. Kasogi (2022) assessed that the social rehabilitation program at Muara Sabak Prison has not been effective in reducing recidivism due to limited budgets, infrastructure, and the number of counselors.

From this literature review, it can be concluded that drug recidivism is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by social and economic environments, social stigma, and limitations in the correctional system. This study aims to complement existing studies by providing an empirical description of the factors causing recidivism and strategies to combat it at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center, with the hope of making a real contribution to improving the correctional system for drug offenders in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hamidah (2023) in her research in Lebak Regency revealed that drug recidivism is greatly influenced by economic, educational, and social environmental factors. The study used a criminological perspective with anomie theory and the objectives of punishment, and the results showed that economic limitations and low education often encourage recidivists to fall back into drug abuse. This study is in line with other findings that confirm that socioeconomic background has a significant influence on repeat criminal behavior.

Meanwhile, Maghfirah (2022) examined the criminological aspects of drug recidivism in Gorontalo using Differential Association and Labelling Theory. The results of this study confirm that the social environment plays a dominant role in encouraging a person to commit crimes repeatedly. The negative stigma of society towards ex-convicts encourages social exclusion, which in turn increases the likelihood of recidivism. This is reinforced by imitation theory, which explains that deviant behavior can be imitated from the surrounding environment. Thus, external factors such as stigma and social pressure play no less of a role than internal factors.

International studies also provide important insights. Shay (2020) studied recidivism among female drug users in the United States who had undergone rehabilitation programs in prison. The results of his research show that relapse into drug use is largely influenced by dysfunctional personal relationships, unaddressed mental health issues, and a lack of social support. These factors show that recidivism is not only a matter of individual weakness, but is also closely related to complex psychological and social conditions.

From a legal perspective, Hery and Adeline (2020) highlight the weak effectiveness of prison-based sentencing systems in handling drug cases. They argue that high drug recidivism in correctional institutions indicates the need for a paradigm shift from a punitive system to a rehabilitative system. Integrated assessment teams are considered to play an important role in identifying whether an offender is a user, addict, or dealer, so that appropriate rehabilitation measures can be determined. This study confirms that the success of drug offender rehabilitation is highly dependent on measurable rehabilitative policies.

In addition, research by Faisal et al., (2022) on the social interaction patterns of drug recidivists in Tebing Tinggi Prison found that fellow prisoners often exchanged criminal experiences while serving their sentences. This finding reinforces the Differential Association theory, which asserts that criminal behavior can be learned through social interaction. Instead of improving behavior, correctional institutions can actually become fertile ground for the transfer of criminal knowledge.

Rehabilitation efforts are also the focus of Kasogi's (2022) research, which examines the effectiveness of social rehabilitation programs at Muara Sabak Prison. The results of his research show that rehabilitation programs are not yet running optimally due to budget constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of counselors. This

situation has resulted in a high rate of drug recidivism despite the implementation of rehabilitation programs.

From all of the previous studies, it can be concluded that drug recidivism is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by internal factors, such as addiction and weak self-control, as well as external factors, such as social pressure, stigma, social environment, and limitations in the correctional system. Various previous studies agree that a punishment-based penal system alone is not effective enough in reducing recidivism rates. A rehabilitative approach, social intervention, and improvements to correctional programs in prisons are needed so that prisoners can truly recover and not fall back into drug-related crimes.

METHOD

The research method used in the study of repeat drug offenders at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center was a qualitative method with a case study approach. This approach was chosen because the study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence recidivism among drug convicts and the efforts made to reduce the rate of repeat offenses. According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of social phenomena through the experiences and perspectives of the research subjects, making it highly suitable for the context of this study.

The chosen qualitative research design allows researchers to explore information in depth through direct interaction with informants. Data collection techniques were carried out through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews were used so that researchers could ask questions that had been prepared in advance, while still allowing informants to explain their experiences and views more broadly. Observations were conducted to understand the dynamics of interaction and behavior of prisoners within the detention center environment, while documentation was used as supporting data, including administrative records, activity reports, and prisoner data.

The data sources in this study were divided into primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from informants consisting of repeat drug offenders, block guards, and the Head of the Prisoner Services Sub-Section. They were selected because they were considered to have knowledge and experience relevant to the focus of the study. Secondary data was obtained from official documents such as prisoner numbers, profiles of the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center, previous research results, and performance reports from the Directorate General of Corrections.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were transcribed, categorized, and then interpreted to find patterns, themes, and factors that influence recidivism. This analysis followed the steps commonly used in qualitative research, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, the researchers sought to find the relationship between internal factors such as self-control and addiction and external factors such as social environment and economic pressure that encourage drug recidivism.

By using the qualitative case study method, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the issue of recidivism among drug convicts at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center. The results of this research are also expected to form the basis for formulating more effective guidance and rehabilitation policies to reduce recidivism rates in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data analysis from NVivo, analysis of the results of interviews with prisoners and officers at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center provides an in-depth picture of the factors that influence recidivism, particularly among prisoners convicted of drug offenses. From the data generated, it can be seen that several keywords frequently appear in the interviews and describe dimensions that are relevant to the theories used in this study. Words such as “inmates,” “they,” “friends,” “skills,” “family,” “change,” “behavior,” “temptation,” and “work” reflect the main topics discussed in the context of internal and external factors, the detention center environment, and socioeconomic factors after release.

Related words such as “control” (7 times, 0.01%), ‘try’ (8 times, 0.29%), “focus” (5 times, 0.27%) reflect prisoners' efforts to control themselves and remain focused on positive change despite facing temptation. This reflects internal containment, where prisoners try to control their own behavior.

Words such as “family” (8 times, 0.36%), ‘friends’ (5 times, 1.42%), “group” (8 times, 0.50%), “social” (6 times, 0.51%) are related to the influence of the external environment, such as the support of family and friends, which plays a role in keeping prisoners on the right track. The words ‘family’ and “friends” highlight the important role of the social environment in supporting or hindering changes in prisoner behavior.

Words such as “temptation” (6 times, 0.25%), ‘involved’ (8 times, 0.53%), “return” (7 times, 0.64%) These words indicate temptations from peers and social environments involved in drugs, which become environmental pulls. Additionally, the urge to return to old behaviors (recidivism) is also an environmental push that can influence prisoners.

Related words: “behavior” (8 times, 0.77%), “change” (8 times, 0.13%), ‘follow’ (9 times, 0.42%), “activities” (8 times, 0.78%) These words describe the efforts of prisoners to participate in guidance and activities aimed at shaping positive behavior among prisoners. Related words: “emotional” (9 times, 0.14%), ‘stress’ (5 times, 0.19%), “calm” (6 times, 0.15%) These words indicate that stress and emotion management are an important part of rehabilitation. Prisoners learn to control their emotions through activities such as meditation and self-reflection.

Related words: “skills” (12 times, 0.66%), ‘work’ (9 times, 0.27%), “job” (5 times, 0.27%), these words illustrate the importance of skills training to support inmates' lives after release. These skills serve as their provision for survival and avoiding criminal behavior after release.

Related words: “spiritual” (9 times, 0.25%), ‘learning’ (7 times, 0.37%), “meditation” (8 times, 0.15%), Spiritual and intellectual activities, such as praying, meditating, and reading, play an important role in the rehabilitation process of prisoners. This helps them to be more introspective and closer to God.

Thus, this analysis helps to group the factors that play a role in recidivism based on Containment Theory and Therapeutic Community Theory, and provides a clearer understanding of the dynamics that influence inmates' decisions to re-engage in drug-related crimes.

1. Internal (Personal) Factors

Personal or internal factors, such as motivation to change, self-control, and a sense of responsibility for their actions, greatly influence the likelihood of recidivism. Prisoner 1 said,

“I try to stay focused on my goal here, which is to improve myself. I often participate in constructive activities, such as training and classes, which help me avoid getting involved in negative things.” (N-1, April 25, 2025).

Inmate 5 also revealed,

"Economic pressure does exist, because I am worried that it will be difficult to find a job after I am released. However, I try to stay calm and focus on the skills I am learning here." (N-5, April 25, 2025).

Prisoner 6 added,

"I am aware of my past mistakes, and I know I have to improve myself. Temptations are inevitable, but I have decided to keep moving in a better direction." (N-6, April 25, 2025).

These internal factors include a personal desire to change, but many prisoners feel that even though they have the intention to change, temptations remain, especially when they feel pressured by social and economic situations outside.

2. External Factors (Social Environment and Family)

The influence of peers and family plays a significant role in inmates' decisions to return to criminal behavior or stay on the right path. A block guard officer revealed, *"Family supervision is very important. If the family is active, inmates are usually more enthusiastic about participating in programs and have more hope for returning to society successfully."* (P-1, April 23, 2025).

Inmate 4 shared,

"My family does support me, even though they can't visit often. They still send letters and encourage me, but sometimes I feel their supervision is lacking." (N-4, April 25, 2025).

Inmate 3 added,

"The influence of peers is very strong, especially here. Friends involved in drugs often try to lure me back into that world, but I keep trying to resist." (N-3, April 25, 2025).

A supportive social environment and good family supervision can reduce the risk of recidivism, but the influence of peers involved in drugs often poses a significant temptation for inmates.

The factors that influence recidivism in drug cases at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center can be analyzed through the Containment Theory proposed by Walter C. Reckless. This theory emphasizes that a person will avoid criminal behavior if they are able to resist negative impulses through internal and external control. Conversely, weak self-control and strong environmental pressures and influences make individuals more vulnerable to returning to criminal behavior. In the context of drug convicts at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center, there are four main dimensions in this theory, namely internal control (inner containment), external control (outer containment), environmental pushes, and environmental pulls.

The results of the study show that the internal control of prisoners is still weak. Many of them return to drugs even though they have served their sentences and are aware of the legal risks that await them. Anxiety, psychological pressure, and uncertainty about the future often cause self-control to falter. However, some prisoners try to strengthen their self-control by participating in positive activities such as skills training, sports, and religious guidance. These activities serve as a means of distraction and character building, allowing them to focus more on their long-term goal of self-improvement. Nevertheless, many prisoners still find it difficult to maintain consistency in self-control, leaving them vulnerable to returning to criminal behavior.

In addition to internal control, external control through rules and supervision also influences prisoners' behavior. Prison officers strive to enforce supervision and rules consistently, but with a humane approach so that prisoners do not feel oppressed.

Structured guidance programs, such as skills training and rehabilitation activities, also serve as instruments of external control that can guide prisoners toward positive change. However, the limited number of officers and facilities pose obstacles to ensuring maximum supervision. Social conflicts between inmates also arise from time to time, so external control is not always effective.

Beyond internal and external control, environmental pushes are a significant factor in encouraging recidivism. The economic pressures faced after release, the difficulty of finding work due to the stigma of being a former inmate, and unstable family conditions create a heavy burden. Many prisoners end up returning to drugs as a shortcut to survival. Social stigma from a community that is reluctant to accept ex-convicts also exacerbates the situation, causing despair and triggering a desire to return to old ways. These pushes show that recidivism is often triggered not only by individual weaknesses, but also by structural injustices in society.

Meanwhile, environmental pulls are also a strong factor that lures prisoners back into criminal behavior. Relationships with peers who are still involved in drug trafficking, social ties formed in the criminal world, and a social environment that does not support positive change make it difficult for them to break out of the cycle of crime. Many prisoners admit that invitations from old friends are a major temptation to return to their old ways. However, for those with strong determination and family support, these environmental pulls can be more easily overcome. Positive emotional support from family and community has been shown to strengthen prisoners' resilience in the face of environmental temptations.

In addition to analyzing the factors that cause recidivism, this study also highlights efforts to reduce it using Maxwell Jones' Therapeutic Community Theory approach. This theory emphasizes the importance of a rehabilitative community that helps prisoners through four main dimensions: behavior management shaping, emotional and psychological control, intellectual and spiritual development, and vocational and survival skills.

In terms of behavior modification, inmates are encouraged to abandon deviant behavior and develop positive behavior through structured rehabilitation programs. Officers strive to set a real example by sharing stories of inmates who have successfully changed their ways, thereby motivating other inmates. However, programs specifically designed to modify drug abuse behavior are still limited and need to be developed in a more focused manner.

The dimension of emotional and psychological control is also very important, as many inmates experience stress, anxiety, and frustration during their sentences. Sports, counseling, and group therapy are means of channeling energy and managing emotions in a healthy way. Some inmates admit that regular exercise helps them become calmer and less emotionally triggered. However, more intensive psychological counseling services are still greatly needed, given that many inmates find it difficult to overcome trauma, low self-esteem, and anxiety about life after release.

Intellectual and spiritual development also play a role in shaping inmates' self-awareness. Religious activities such as communal prayer and meditation provide inner peace, foster a sense of hope, and instill a new, more positive meaning in life. Although spiritual activities are going quite well, intellectual development in the form of formal education and practical skills is still limited. In fact, education and intellectual insight are very important for broadening inmates' perspectives and preparing them to face challenges after release.

The final dimension is job skills and livelihood. The Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center provides various training programs, such as sewing, carpentry, and computers. Prisoners feel that these skills give them confidence and prepare them to find work after release. However, these skills need to be balanced with real support in the form of job opportunities or post-detention programs in order to be truly applicable. Without external support, the skills acquired are often insufficient to prevent them from returning to a life of crime.

Overall, this study shows that drug recidivism in Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center is influenced by a combination of interrelated internal and external factors, as well as environmental pushes and pulls. Efforts to prevent recidivism cannot only focus on guidance within the detention center, but also need to pay attention to the psychological, economic, social, and spiritual aspects of prisoners. Through the application of a more comprehensive therapeutic community approach and ongoing support after release, it is hoped that prisoners will be able to transform themselves into better individuals, so that the chances of returning to criminal behavior can be minimized.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Research on criminal recidivism at the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center indicates that this phenomenon is a complex problem influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, as well as environmental pushes and pulls. Based on Walter C. Reckless's Containment Theory, weak internal controls, including low self-control, anxiety, and an inability to manage stress, make inmates vulnerable to returning to criminal behavior. While external controls through rules and officer supervision do serve as social restrictions, limited human resources and infrastructure prevent optimal supervision.

Environmental pressures, such as economic pressure, difficulty finding employment, social stigma, and a lack of family support, further increase the risk of recidivism. Furthermore, environmental pressures from peers and former criminal networks are powerful temptations that often lead drivers back into drug use. Thus, the causes of recidivism stem not only from individual weaknesses but are also closely related to the surrounding social and environmental structures. Efforts to reduce recidivism are explained through Maxwell Jones's Therapeutic Community Theory, which emphasizes the importance of holistic training encompassing behavioral development, emotional and psychological management, intellectual and spiritual development, and job and survival skills. The study found that although the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center provides training programs, their effectiveness remains limited, particularly in the areas of psychological counseling, intellectual education, and post-release support.

Therefore, it can be concluded that drug recidivism in the Sukadana Class IIB Detention Center occurs due to weak self-control, suboptimal supervision and training, and strong negative environmental pressures and pulls. To reduce recidivism rates, a more comprehensive rehabilitation strategy is needed, encompassing strengthening self-control, intensive psychological counseling, developing spirituality and relevant job skills, and providing concrete support from family, community, and the workplace after release. Only with a comprehensive approach can recidivism be reduced and social reintegration more effectively achieved.

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