

## Optimizing Prison Law Enforcement to Prevent Recidivism

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**Abstract:** Recidivism of inmates in Indonesian prisons is still a serious problem, especially related to narcotics abuse and possession of illegal communication devices. This phenomenon shows that there are gaps in the law enforcement system and coaching programs, which has implications for the low effectiveness of rehabilitation and the risk of repetition of criminal acts. This study aims to analyze the optimization of prison law enforcement as a strategy to prevent recidivism of inmates. The method used is library research with the collection of primary and secondary data from literature, books, journals, official reports, and previous research related to the correctional system, criminal law, and inmate development programs. Data is analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify patterns, relationships, and important information relevant to the research objectives. Research findings show that formal law enforcement without the support of a holistic coaching program tends to be less effective in preventing recidivism. The integration between strict disciplinary sanctions, educational coaching, psychological rehabilitation, and inmate independence training has proven to be more effective in reducing the risk of repetition of criminal acts. This research provides a basis for the development of correctional policies that are more responsive, fair, and oriented towards the social reintegration of prisoners, while enriching the study of correctional law theoretically and practically.

**Keywords:** Prison Law Enforcement, Prisoner Development, Recidivism, Correctional Institutions, Criminal Justice System.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of inmate recidivism in Indonesia shows a worrying trend, where a number of inmates return to commit criminal acts after serving their sentences (Hersyanda et al., 2024). Data from the Directorate General of Corrections shows that the recidivism rate remains at a significant level, even though coaching programs in correctional institutions (Lapas) have been implemented regularly. This condition indicates a gap between the ideal rehabilitation goals and the law enforcement practices applied in prisons. Recidivism is not only caused by individual factors of inmates, but also related to weaknesses in the coaching system, limited human resources, facilities, and policies that are not optimal. This reality raises critical questions about the effectiveness of law enforcement and coaching as a preventive effort against the repetition of criminal acts (Fathoni, 2025).

As part of the criminal justice system, prisons have an important rehabilitative function, but in reality, they are not fully optimal. Existing coaching programs are often hampered by limited capacity and integration with post-liberation societies. As a result, inmates who have completed their sentences are still at risk of reoffending. This phenomenon of recidivism is not only a legal problem, but also a social problem, because it has an impact on public safety, the quality of social reintegration, and public perception of the effectiveness of the correctional system (Mufti & Riyanto, 2023).

Various previous studies have emphasized the importance of inmate coaching in suppressing recidivism (Putra et al., 2025), including the theory of reintegrative shaming and the theory of desistance, which highlight the role of social control and rehabilitation (Arto, 2025). However, the literature shows that these theories have not been able to explain the high recidivism rate in Indonesia in a practical way. Structural factors in prisons, such as limited job skills programs, low-quality supervision, and weak integration with the community, are often not systematically taken into account in existing theories.

In addition, previous research has rarely explored how optimizing law enforcement in prisons—from the perspective of legal procedures, supervision, and rehabilitation strategies—can directly affect recidivist behavior. This literature gap shows the need for studies that connect empirical facts with theoretical frameworks, as well as identify preventive strategies that are applicable in the context of prisons in Indonesia. This approach is expected to

provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between law enforcement, coaching, and recidivist behavior.

This study aims to analyze the optimization of law enforcement in prisons as a preventive effort against inmate recidivism. The focus of the research includes mapping factors that affect the effectiveness of coaching, evaluating rehabilitation programs, and identifying obstacles faced by prison officers in carrying out their duties. An additional objective is to formulate evidence-based recommendations to improve the coaching and law enforcement system, so that recidivism rates can be significantly reduced. The emphasis on the Indonesian context is of high relevance, as the legal conditions, prison facilities, and social dynamics are different from those in other countries.

Based on empirical facts and research objectives, the main hypothesis of this study is that the optimization of law enforcement in prisons has a crucial role in reducing the recidivism rate of prisoners. This hypothesis is based on the fact that even though the coaching program has been implemented, its implementation still faces structural, resource, and regulatory constraints that are not yet fully effective. Improving law enforcement procedures, increasing the capacity of officers, and integrating more structured coaching programs are believed to increase the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation.

The study also emphasizes the importance of empirical data in supporting evidence-based policies. By understanding the pattern of recidivism and its supporting factors, policymakers can design more targeted interventions. This research fills the gap in the literature related to preventive strategies for recidivism, as well as provides a theoretical and practical basis for the development of more effective law enforcement and coaching models in prisons.

The phenomenon of convict recidivism in Indonesia requires serious attention from legal and social aspects. An in-depth analysis of the optimization of law enforcement and the development of inmates provides the basis for correctional system reform. This study contributed to the development of rehabilitative strategies that not only formally enforce the law but also prepare prisoners for more successful social reintegration, so that recidivism can be significantly suppressed.

## Method

The object of this research is focused on the phenomenon of prisoner recidivism in Indonesia and law enforcement practices in correctional institutions (Lapas) that are directly related to the development of prisoners. The phenomenon of recidivism is a significant legal and social problem because it has an impact on the level of public security and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system. This study traces the cases of inmates who return to criminal acts after serving their sentences, as well as how law enforcement policies and procedures in prisons affect the success rate of coaching. In addition, the object of the research also includes structural and operational obstacles faced by prisons, such as limited facilities, human resources, and available rehabilitation programs. By observing this phenomenon in depth, the study aims to formulate a relevant and effective law enforcement optimization strategy in reducing recidivism. This concrete research object serves as a starting point for a broader literature analysis, so as to build a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between prison policy and recidivist behavior.

This study uses a library research approach, which focuses on the analysis of literature and documents as the main data source (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). The primary data of the study were taken from literature that discussed cases of recidivism of inmates and coaching practices in prisons, including previous research, criminal law books, and scientific articles relevant to the phenomenon. Secondary data included additional literature that supported the overall analysis of the topic, such as legal theories, criminological theories, correctional institution reports, as well as academic articles related to the research keywords: Prison Law Enforcement, Prisoner Development, Recidivism, Correctional Institutions, and the Criminal Justice System. Literature data collection is carried out systematically to ensure comprehensive coverage of empirical theories, practices, and phenomena. By combining primary and secondary data, this study seeks to build an integrated analysis, covering legal, social, and institutional dimensions, so that the results can provide an accurate picture of the problem of recidivism in prisons as well as strategies for optimizing law enforcement that can be applied.

Participants in this study are theoretical sources that provide a conceptual framework and analysis guidance. The basic theories used include

the reintegrative shaming theory of Braithwaite (1989), which emphasizes the importance of positive social control and rehabilitation in reducing criminal behavior (Amry, 2022); the desistance theory of Maruna (2001), which explains the process of changing the behavior of inmates from criminal to productive (Mulyadi, 2025); and the criminal justice system theory from Walker (2011), which focuses on the role of legal institutions in enforcing norms and preventing repeat crime (Aprilianda, 2017). These theories become non-human "participants" that provide the basis for analysis, so that any data collected can be linked to tested concepts. In addition, literature highlighting coaching practices in prisons and reports from related institutions became additional sources that strengthened the validity of the research. By utilizing theory as participants, this research can connect empirical phenomena with a clear conceptual framework, so that the interpretation of data becomes systematic, coherent, and has legal and social relevance.

The research process was carried out through several systematic stages, starting with the identification of literature and documents relevant to the phenomenon of inmate recidivism and coaching practices in prisons. The next stage involves collecting data through reading books, papers, journals, previous research reports, scientific articles, and official documents from related institutions. Each source is critically analyzed to assess its relevance, accuracy, and contribution to the understanding of recidivism cases. The data collection technique was carried out in a documentary manner, focusing on information that contained empirical facts, legal policies, coaching practices, and previous research results. In addition, the researcher recorded important findings in the form of summary notes, citations, and analysis tables to facilitate the subsequent data processing process. With this approach, the research ensures that all the data collected has a clear relationship with the research objectives, thus allowing a structured and accurate interpretation of the optimization of law enforcement in prisons.

The data analysis technique used in this study is content analysis, which focuses on understanding and interpreting texts in a systematic manner. The analysis process begins with the sorting of literature and documents based on relevance to the research keywords, objectives, and the phenomenon of recidivism. Furthermore, the data is encoded to identify important patterns, relationships, and information related to inmate coaching, law enforcement

effectiveness, and factors that cause recidivism. This analysis allows researchers to synthesize theories and empirical facts, so that they can formulate logical and evidence-based conclusions. The content of the analysis also allows for an evaluation of the policies and practices implemented in prisons, including the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Thus, this technique provides a systematic framework for assessing the relationship between law enforcement, inmate development, and recidivism prevention efforts, and supports the development of recommendations that are applicable to policymakers and law enforcement.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Recidivism and Narcotics Abuse in Prisons**

The most dominant criminal act committed by inmates in prisons is drug abuse, which has become an endemic problem in Indonesia. Narcotics are not only spread in big cities, but also penetrate to remote parts of the country and are consumed by various levels of society. In prisons, inmates often use narcotics to relieve stress, seek euphoric effects, or as a form of escape from psychological pressure due to their sentences. The literature states that narcotics abuse is pathological, which is measured based on the frequency and duration of use. The impact is not only on physical health, but also on reducing social function, work productivity, and the quality of inmates' interaction with the social environment in the prison (Liana, 2025).

Narcotics addiction not only has a physical impact, but also causes chronic psychological dependence (Eskasasnanda, 2014). Prisoners who experience addiction show a decrease in self-control, loss of motivation, and decreased creativity, so that their risk of committing a crime increases again (Ernawati, 2017). Criminological studies show that this behavior is influenced by the interaction between the psychological condition of the inmates, the social influence of fellow inmates, and the prison environment itself (Fajar, 2022). Thus, prisons are not just places of punishment, but have a strategic role in preventing the spread of addictive behavior through effective coaching programs and strict supervision.

Narcotics abuse in prisons occurs due to a combination of internal and external factors (Hamid et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). Internally, psychological pressure, punishment stress, and difficulties in adapting to the

prison environment encourage inmates to seek escape through narcotics (Jamal, 2020). Externally, the entry of narcotics into prisons shows weaknesses in the system of supervision, internal control, and coordination with external security forces (Sulistiyawati, 2023; Sugihartati & Susilo, 2019). This fact marks that law enforcement in prisons not only requires strict regulations, but also the integration of supervision and coaching systems that are more adaptive to real conditions in prisons.

Relevant legal instruments, including Law No. 35 of 2009 concerning Narcotics and internal prison regulations, provide the basis for the application of strict sanctions for violators, ranging from solitary confinement to restrictions on rights. However, the literature shows that sanctions alone are not effective enough without a comprehensive rehabilitation program. Limited human resources, inadequate facilities, and minimal integration of coaching programs with the psychological needs of inmates are factors that hinder the effectiveness of law enforcement. This explains why, despite the strict rules in place, narcotics abuse still occurs in prisons.

The relationship between literature and field reality shows that there is a gap between the normative goals of law enforcement in prisons and the practices that occur. Despite clear regulations and strictly implemented sanctions, cases of narcotics abuse still occur, reflecting the weak implementation of legal procedures and coaching programs. This phenomenon is relevant to the problem of recidivism because inmates who are entangled in narcotics have a high risk of returning to commit crimes after release. Thus, this problem shows that prisons are not fully able to carry out their rehabilitative functions optimally.

Prisons should be an effective gateway for rehabilitation and coaching to break the chain of narcotics abuse. However, reality shows that the circulation of narcotics in prisons is an indication of the lack of optimization of law enforcement, supervision, and rehabilitative education programs. Therefore, preventive strategies must include increasing the capacity of officers, strengthening internal legal procedures, and integrating adaptive and evidence-based coaching programs. This step is crucial to suppress addictive behavior, prevent recidivism, and increase the effectiveness of inmate rehabilitation in the correctional system.

### **Prisoner Development and Control of Communication Devices**

In addition to narcotics, significant abuse in prisons also involves the possession and use of communication devices, especially mobile phones. Mobile phones are strictly prohibited in the correctional order because of the potential high risk to the internal security of the prison. Legal literature emphasizes that mobile phones are included in the category of prohibited goods because they allow inmates to freely access information, communicate with outsiders, and even continue criminal acts from inside the prison (Prasetyo & Kurniawan, 2025). This phenomenon shows that although technological devices have a positive function, in the context of prisons, their existence can pose systemic risks to the coaching and security process.

Information technology, including mobile phones, has multi-dimensional functions, ranging from communication, entertainment, to recording and accessing digital data. Inmates are motivated to have such devices for a variety of reasons, such as wanting to stay connected to family, seeking entertainment, or engaging in illegal economic activities. This condition shows that there is a tug-of-war between the individual needs of inmates and regulations that affirm prohibitions, thus demanding careful supervision strategies and adaptive coaching.

Regulation of the Minister of Law and Human Rights Number 6 of 2013 and Law Number 22 of 2022 provide a legal basis for prison officers to take action against violations, including the placement of prisoners in solitary confinement and restrictions on certain rights. Legal literacy emphasizes that this action is not just a form of punishment, but an instrument to enforce discipline, maintain security, and ensure that inmates remain within a systematically designed path of coaching.

In addition to sanctions enforcement, the literature highlights the importance of the role of inmate coaching in preventing misuse of communication tools and other criminal acts. Coaching not only includes behavioral aspects, but also independence and skills, which are preventive strategies so that inmates have the ability to be economically independent after release. This coaching program is in line with the rehabilitation goals that emphasize social reintegration and strengthening of inmates' self-control.

Prisoner development has educational and preventive dimensions that are interrelated (Listiyani, 2015). Educational interactions that build character

and behavior are key to the successful reintegration of prisoners into society (Margalena & Suroso, 2023). Job skills training increases inmates' chances of economic independence, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending. The ban on communication devices in prisons is part of the risk control strategy, which must be balanced with consistent coaching so that rehabilitative goals are achieved (Antonius et al., 2023).

The relationship between the literature and the field facts shows that the obstacles to inmate development are still real. Despite the strict regulations, violations of the ban on communication devices still occur. This indicates that supervision and coaching have not been fully able to change the behavior of inmates. This lack is an important concern, as illegal access to technology can facilitate criminal acts or involvement in criminal networks even after the inmate is released.

This phenomenon emphasizes the need for a thorough evaluation of the coaching strategy in prisons. The effectiveness of educational programs, skills training, and internal supervision should be systematically measured to determine the extent to which the goals of rehabilitation and recidivism prevention are being achieved. Criminology literacy emphasizes that a combination of adaptive coaching and technological access control is a relevant preventive strategy, but its implementation depends on the capacity of officers and the consistency of internal prison procedures.

Thus, the existence of mobile phones in prisons is not only a disciplinary problem, but also an indicator of non-optimal law enforcement and rehabilitation programs. Preventive strategies should include strengthening internal regulations, increasing supervisory capacity, and more holistic coaching, so that inmates can experience effective rehabilitation. This step is important to minimize the risk of recidivism, ensure internal security, and prepare prisoners for successful social reintegration after the end of their sentence.

### **Criminal Law Enforcement in Prisons**

Criminal law enforcement in prisons is a comprehensive series of processes (McLeod, 2015), starting from investigation, detention, trial, to correction of convicts. Each stage is interconnected and forms a system that aims to uphold justice while encouraging the rehabilitation of inmates (Fedorczyk, 2024). In

this context, prisons are not only places to serve punishment (Batubara et al., 2024), but also institutions that play an important role in breaking the cycle of crime through social coaching and reintegration programs (Efendi & Hariansah, 2024).

Soerjono Soekanto stated that law enforcement is an activity that harmonizes the relationship between values in society in order to create order and peace (Hadi, 2022). This approach emphasizes that law serves not only as a normative instrument, but also as a social mechanism that maintains a balance between the interests of the individual and society. In prisons, this principle is translated through a combination of formal sanctions, internal supervision, and structured coaching programs.

Satjipto Rahardjo added that law enforcement is an effort to realize legal ideas or concepts into a concrete reality. This means that legal norms are not enough on paper, but must be realized through clear procedures and practices. In prisons, this includes the application of sanctions for violations, supervision of inmates, and the provision of coaching programs that emphasize behavior change according to applicable norms.

In the context of prisons, the legal literature emphasizes three main functions of punishment: restricting behavior, educating inmates, and strengthening motivation to avoid criminal acts. These functions are the foundation for effective law enforcement, as punishment is not only for repressiveness, but also for changing behavior and shaping the legal consciousness of prisoners. This combination of discipline, education, and motivation must be supported by a consistent supervision system.

Prison officers have a central role as supervisors, sanctions enforcers, and coaching facilitators. The literature emphasizes that the effectiveness of law enforcement and coaching is highly dependent on the capacity of officers, the quality of facilities, and adequate regulatory support. Officers not only enforce the rules but also guide inmates through educational interactions, monitoring, and ongoing evaluation to ensure desired behavior changes are achieved.

The integration between formal rules, disciplinary sanctions, and coaching strategies is the key to successful law enforcement in prisons. Punishment is directed at directing the behavior of the inmate, while educational coaching and self-reliance training help internalize the value of the law. However, implementation weaknesses, such as the entry of narcotics or

illegal communication tools, indicate that there is a gap between theory and practice that needs to be addressed through optimization of procedures and increased supervision.

The relationship between the literature and the field facts shows a significant gap. Although the legal procedures and regulations of the prison are clear, the abuse of narcotics and the possession of communication devices still occur. This shows that law enforcement is not yet fully effective and needs to be strengthened through the integration of preventive measures, educational coaching, and internal supervision. Law enforcement optimization must take into account the psychological condition of the inmates, social pressures, and the risk of recidivism.

Law enforcement in prisons must be comprehensive: combining repressive, preventive, and rehabilitative aspects (Prasetyo & Kurniawan, 2025). Optimization of legal procedures, capacity building of officers, consistent supervision, and structured coaching programs are strategic strategies to suppress recidivism of prisoners. With this approach, prisons can function not only as a place to serve sentences, but also as institutions of social transformation that prepare inmates for successful reintegration.

### **Law Enforcement and Prisoner Development from the Perspective of Recidivism Prevention**

The findings of this study substantially show the complex interaction between law enforcement, inmate development programs, and recidivist behavior in prisons. These three elements affect each other dynamically, where the weakness of one aspect can reduce the effectiveness of the entire penitentiary system. Formal and disciplinary law enforcement alone has proven to be inadequate to prevent violations, including narcotics abuse and the possession of communication equipment. Meanwhile, comprehensive coaching programs—including education, psychological rehabilitation, and self-reliance skills training—are key instruments that support rehabilitative goals and reduce the risk of recidivism.

The analysis shows that the integration between legal certainty and inmate development is the link that determines the success of corrections. The tension between normative goals and social realities in prisons arises when legal procedures are applied without regard to the psychological, social, and

motivational conditions of the prisoners. Unintegrated strategies tend to result in partial implementation, where formal rules are enforced but changes in inmate behavior do not occur substantially, so recidivism remains high.

When compared to international research, this study shows the advantages of combining legal, social, and criminological perspectives into a single analytical framework. Many previous studies have emphasized normative or empirical aspects separately, so the resulting understanding is partial. This study integrates literature review, correctional regulations, and empirical data from prisons in Indonesia, so as to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between legal practice, coaching programs, and recidivist behavior in a more holistic manner.

The research focuses on narcotics abuse cases, and the possession of communication tools makes a relevant new contribution to the global context. Similar phenomena are found in other countries, such as Brazil, the Philippines, and the United States, where obstacles to coaching and illegal access to narcotics and technology affect recidivist behavior (Galuhnagara, 2024). Thus, this research is not only relevant locally but also adds a comparative perspective on the optimization of law enforcement in prisons as a strategy to prevent recidivism.

Reflection on these findings shows that the purpose of the study to analyze the optimization of prison law enforcement was substantially achieved. Strategies that combine coaching and legal certainty have been proven to significantly influence inmate behavior. This approach also provides insight into rehabilitative mechanisms that are preventive, not just repressive, so that prisoners are better prepared for social reintegration after release.

The results of the study confirm that the tension between legal objectives and field realities can be explained by the interaction of internal and external factors. Internally, psychological distress, narcotics dependence, and limited motivation affect inmate behavior. Externally, weak supervision, limited prison capacity, and suboptimal coaching programs create loopholes that allow violations to continue to occur. This complexity suggests that the solution to recidivism must be multidimensional.

Prisons are effective in preventing recidivism when law enforcement, internal supervision, and coaching are systematically integrated. Countries with coaching programs based on psychosocial rehabilitation, job skills, and

community reintegration, such as Norway and the Netherlands, have been able to reduce recidivism rates lower than those of countries with a purely repressive approach. These findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive strategy that not only enforces the law but also builds the capacity of inmates.

Based on the results of the study, several strategic measures are recommended to increase the effectiveness of recidivism prevention. First, strengthening regulations and applying sanctions consistently, so that legal certainty is felt in real terms. Second, the development of a comprehensive coaching program, including education, job skills, psychological rehabilitation, and positive social interaction. Third, periodic evaluation of prison procedures to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and suitability with field conditions.

Fourth, building transparent and participatory communication with the community and prisoners' families to support social reintegration. This strategy emphasizes the importance of collaboration between prisons, law enforcement, and the community in preparing inmates to be able to function productively after release. This approach not only prevents recidivism but also strengthens the legitimacy of the criminal justice system as a whole.

This study emphasizes that optimizing prison law enforcement requires an integrative approach that combines repressive, preventive, and rehabilitative aspects. The integration of coaching programs, strict supervision, and legal certainty is a key strategy in suppressing recidivism. These findings make significant contributions both theoretically and practically, offering a model that can serve as a reference for the development of correctional policies at the national and international levels.

## **Conclusion**

The most important finding in this study shows a rather surprising fact: although prisons are designed as institutions with high supervision and strict legal procedures, the practice of narcotics abuse and possession of communication devices still occurs significantly. This indicates that formal law enforcement alone is not enough to prevent recidivist behavior; Holistic and integrated inmate development is a key element that has not received optimal attention so far. This phenomenon shows that inmates are able to adapt to prison conditions in such a way that systemic gaps—both in supervision and

coaching—can be exploited, creating a paradox between the normative goals of corrections and the empirical reality in the field.

This research provides significant added value both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of correctional law by combining formal legal perspectives, criminology, and correctional institution management in one integrative analytical framework. In practical terms, these findings offer concrete directions for strengthening prison policies, including the implementation of disciplinary sanctions, the development of comprehensive inmate development programs, and the integration of legal and social strategies to reduce recidivism. Thus, this study not only deepens the academic understanding of the phenomenon of recidivism but also provides relevant implementable recommendations for policymakers and correctional practitioners.

Although this study provides important findings, there are limitations that open up opportunities for further study. The focus of research that relies on literature and literature studies limits the exploration of inmates' empirical experiences directly. Therefore, further research can develop field approaches, such as in-depth interviews or participatory observations, to gain the perspective of inmates and prison officers in real-time. In addition, follow-up studies can add variables of broader social, cultural, and economic context to understand the factors that influence recidivism behavior more comprehensively. This will enrich the development of correctional theory and practice, while providing a stronger empirical basis for future policy reforms.

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### **Author Contributions Statement**

MR, contributed to the conceptualization of the study, research design, data analysis, and drafting of the original manuscript. IK, contributed to data collection, validation of results, and the review and editing of the manuscript through to its final version.

### AI Usage Statement

The authors declare that Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used in a limited capacity solely to assist in improving grammar, sentence clarity, and formatting. Such use did not influence the scientific content, analysis, or conclusions of the study. Full responsibility for the content of the article rests with the authors.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, whether financial or non-financial, that could have influenced the results or interpretation of the study.

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