Rural Recidivism and Its Influencing Social Environmental Factors

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Abstract

Rural recidivism is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a range of social environmental factors, particularly in the context of stark economic disparities between rural and urban areas. Rural communities often face challenges in the larger social environment, such as limited access to education, employment and social services, which can increase the risk of reoffending. This study aims to identify social environmental variables that encourage recidivism in rural areas. Using quantitative methods with a cross-sectional approach, this study involved 100 former prisoners living in rural areas. Data was collected through a survey measuring various socio-economic aspects, including education level, employment status, income, family relationships, and distance from the city center. The results showed that several social environment variables such as low education, unemployment, low income, negative family and friendship relationships, and living close to urban areas played a significant role in promoting recidivism in rural areas. In conclusion, to reduce recidivism rates in rural areas, comprehensive and targeted interventions are needed. Programs that focus on improving access to education and job training, as well as job creation in rural areas, are essential. In addition, efforts to improve family relationships and provide psychosocial support for ex-offenders should also be increased. These integrated interventions are expected to create a more supportive social environment for ex-detainees, so that they can build stable and productive lives without returning to crime.

Keywords: *Social Environment, Employment, Income, Family Relationships, Rural, Recidivism.*

INTRODUCTION

Crime is one of the significant social problems in Indonesia, affecting both urban and rural areas. Although crime is generally more reported in urban areas, rural areas are not immune to crime either. One region in Indonesia is Banyuasin Regency, which is adjacent to Palembang City. The crime rate in Palembang City is the highest in South Sumatra Province, with 2,750 cases per year. Furthermore, at the regency level, when compared to other regency areas in South Sumatra Province in the 2021 period, the Banyuasin Resort Police area unit is the regency area that has the highest crime incidence rate, namely 517 cases/year, while the Banyuasin Resort Police area has the highest crime incidence rate.

Recidivism, or the repetition of criminal acts by previously convicted individuals, is a complex phenomenon influenced by various social factors (Jacobs, 2021). Understanding the social environment that drives recidivism is necessary to design effective rehabilitation policies and programs (Mennis et al., 2016). The social environment, which includes family, friends, and community, has a significant role in shaping individual behavior. When these environments do not support the social and economic reintegration of ex-offenders, the risk of recidivism increases. Offenders often return to the same area because they feel more familiar and comfortable with the neighborhood, making it easier to plan and execute crimes (Davies & Marchione, 2015). In addition, they may feel the risk of being caught is lower in familiar areas and have networks or contacts that can assist in criminal activity. If society perceives that certain criminal acts are acceptable or even encouraged, then the likelihood of individuals committing such acts will increase (Yasir & Farooq, 2024).

Recidivism is a social phenomenon that often concerns the public and authorities (Li, 2022). Although often considered an urban problem, recidivism also occurs in rural areas, with different characteristics and causes

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compared to those in cities. Recidivism in rural areas reflects the social and economic dynamics that affect people's lives. Various factors contribute to the occurrence of crime, including social and economic factors (Li, 2022; Oruta, 2016). One aspect that is often associated with recidivism rates is the level of education (Baldry, 2007). Research shows a negative relationship between education and crime, where individuals with higher levels of education tend to have a lower likelihood of engaging in criminal activity (Holeksa, 2022).

Criminality is very much related to the environment (Yasir & Farooq, 2024), including characteristics of the geographical environment (Martinez et al., 2011). The social environment in rural areas has unique characteristics that can affect recidivism rates. The close interconnectedness of individuals and communities, homogeneous social structure, and limited access to public services and facilities are factors that have the potential to influence criminal behavior. In addition, economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and income inequality also play a significant role in the dynamics of recidivism in rural areas.

Many previous studies have focused on the urban environment in the context of recidivism analysis, while in-depth studies of the social environment in rural areas are still limited. In fact, social dynamics in rural areas can provide different insights in understanding the root causes and patterns of recidivism. A better understanding of the social environment in rural areas can help design more targeted interventions.

Social and economic changes that occur in rural areas, such as urbanization, modernization and globalization, also have an impact on local social and cultural structures. This can lead to conflict and social disorientation, which in turn can increase the risk of recidivism. This study was conducted to identify these changes and their relationship with the incidence of recidivism.

In addition, a comprehensive approach to analyzing the incidence of recidivism in rural areas also needs to consider cultural factors and local traditions. The values and norms embraced by rural communities can act as effective social controls or vice versa, as factors that trigger criminal behavior. An in-depth analysis of these factors is expected to provide a more holistic understanding.

This study aims to understand the social environmental factors that contribute to recidivism in rural areas. This research is also expected to provide practical contributions for policy makers, law enforcement officials, and the community in efforts to prevent and overcome recidivism in rural areas.

METHOD

The sample in this study was 100 police detainees in Banyuasin Regency who were taken through incidental sampling technique. Banyuasin Regency is an area bordering the capital of South Sumatra province as well as a buffer zone that is highly affected by urban modernization. Data were collected using a modified Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) questionnaire as a risk assessment including recidivism history, education, occupation, income, family relationship, and geographical location. The model of the influence of social environment on recidivism was analyzed using logistic regression using SPSS 25.0. The mathematical model can be written:

$$Crim = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Job_i + \alpha_2 Inc_i + \alpha_3 Educ_i + \alpha_4 Fam_i + \alpha_5 Geo_i + \varepsilon_1 \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Where is:

Crim = Residivism

$\alpha 0$ = Intercept

Job = Job

Inc = Income

Educ = Education

Fam = Family and Friendship relationships

Geo = Geographical Location

α1, α2   = Estimation Coefficients

i   = Banyuasin Regency

ε1 = error term

RESULT

This study involved 100 prisoners from rural areas to identify social environmental factors that encourage recidivism. The frequency distribution of respondents included variables such as level of education, employment status, income, family relationship, and distance from the city center. Table 1 below presents the frequency distribution of respondents based on these variables, which helps in understanding the social environment characteristics of the population under study. This data provides a preliminary picture of the conditions that contribute to the risk of recidivism in prisoners in rural areas.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents (n=100)

Recidivism History	n	Income	n
First Time	61	High	30
Residivism	39	Low	70
Job	**n**	**Family & Friendship Relationship**	**n**
Employed	75	Positive	69
Not Employed	25	Negative	31
Education	**n**	**Geographical Location**	**n**
High	32	Far from City	73
Low	68	Near Town	27

The results of the data regression estimation calculation are described by the following equation:

Crime = -3.477 + 1.694Job + 1.298Inc + 1.186Educ + 1.233Farm + 1.299Geo……(2)

The above equation can be interpreted as follows:

α0 is -3.477 which means that if employment, income, education, family and friendship relationships, and geographical location are worth zero units, then recidivism is worth -3.477 units. The data is qualitative where code 0 is first time criminality and 1 is recidivism.

The coefficient of occupation is 1.694. The data is qualitative where code 0 is working and 1 is not working, then the ratio of the likelihood of recidivism compared to first-time criminality will increase by 1.694 for individuals who do not work compared to working, assuming other variables remain constant. The p-value of the employment variable of 0.004 is significant to recidivism.

The coefficient of income is 1.298. The data is qualitative where code 0 is high income and 1 is low income, then the ratio of the likelihood of recidivism compared to crimes committed for the first time will increase by 1.298 for individuals with low income compared to individuals with high income assuming other variables remain constant. The p-value of the employment variable of 0.026 is significant to recidivism.

The coefficient of education is 1.186. The data is qualitative where code 0 is high education and 1 is low education, then the ratio of the likelihood of recidivism compared to first-time crimes will increase by 1.186 for individuals with low education compared to individuals with high education assuming other variables remain constant. The p-value of the employment variable of 0.039 is significant to recidivism.

The coefficient of family and friendship relationships is 1.233. The data is qualitative where code 0 is positive family and friendship relationships and 1 is negative family and friendship relationships, then the ratio of the likelihood of recidivism compared to first-time crimes will increase by 1.233 for individuals with negative family and friendship relationships compared to individuals with positive family and friendship relationships assuming other variables remain constant. The p-value of the employment variable of 0.016 is significant to recidivism.

The coefficient of geographical location is 1.299. The data is qualitative where the code 0 is far from urban and 1 is near urban, then the ratio of the likelihood of recidivism compared to the crime committed for the first time will increase by 1.299 for individuals who live near urban areas compared to individuals who live far from

urban areas assuming other variables remain constant. The p-value of the employment variable of 0.020 is significant to recidivism.

DISCUSSION

In order, the largest regression coefficient values in influencing the occurrence of recidivism are variables 1) employment, 2) income, 3) geographical location, 4) family and friendship relationships 5) education.

Recidivism in Banyuasin can be related to the place of residence because Banyuasin Regency is located close to the capital city of South Sumatra province, namely the city of Palembang, which results in increased modernization in the regency, this is related to the socio-cultural environment which will certainly have an impact on communities that experience changes such as advances in facilities and infrastructure. Social environments such as family or friendship environments with negative norms and values consider criminal behavior as something natural or acceptable. If criminal acts are considered normal in their social group, individuals tend to fall into these activities more easily.

Recidivism in Banyuasin can be related to low education levels, precarious employment, and low income. Low education limits an individual's access to decent work, which can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration. Offenders have low knowledge of the legal implications of crime (Dahle, 2006; Nurmala et al., 2021). Individuals with low education may be more vulnerable to engaging in criminal activities as a way to earn income (Decker et al., 2019; Hjalmarsson & Lochner, 2012). Improving education can reduce crime (Jonck et al., 2015). A good education can significantly improve the quality of life (Erlyn et al., 2022). Education opens up access to better jobs and higher incomes, which in turn improves economic stability and individual well-being (Jonck et al., 2015; Sunardi, 2022). The government has allocated funds for infrastructure, including building new schools (Hidayat et al., 2024). Job instability or unemployment can cause significant financial stress, which can push individuals to commit crimes to defend themselves or their families (Schick et al., 2020). Low income makes an individual more vulnerable to poverty, which is a major risk factor for recidivism. Individuals living in poverty may feel they have no choice but to commit crimes to fulfill basic needs.

Low education levels prevent ex-detainees from securing decent employment, while difficulties in securing employment increase their economic and social instability (Rahman et al., 2024; West, 2000). Insufficient income makes it difficult for ex-detainees to meet basic needs, which can lead them to return to criminal activity as a means of survival (Šileika & Bekerytė, 2013). In addition, family relationships that are disharmonious or damaged by incarceration contribute to feelings of isolation and lack of social support, which are risk factors for recidivism. Geographical proximity to the city also plays a role, as easier access to urban centers often leads former prisoners back to their old neighborhoods or criminal networks.

Factors influencing recidivism in Banyuasin that are part of social environmental factors are irregular employment, negative family and friendship relationships. Precarious employment and low income are part of poverty in influencing recidivism rates. Lack of access to quality education makes it difficult for individuals to find decent employment, which in turn results in inadequate income to meet basic needs (Nirmalasary et al., 2024). Economic distress and frustration due to job instability and low wages can drive individuals to seek illegal alternatives as a means of survival. These pressures are exacerbated by mental health issues and social isolation, which are often experienced by those living in poverty, making them more vulnerable to negative influences and recidivism.

One of the main factors is the social exclusion and stigma faced by ex-prisoners. Upon release, they often experience discrimination in finding employment, housing and access to social services. This hinders their ability to build a stable and meaningful life outside of prison. Without adequate social support, ex-prisoners are more vulnerable to returning to the same environment that led them to commit their previous criminal acts (Drawve & McNeeley, 2021).

In addition, families also play an important role in the reintegration process. Emotional and financial support from family can help ex-offenders to adjust back into society. However, in many cases, family relationships may have been damaged as a result of the criminal act committed, or the family may not have sufficient resources

to provide the necessary support. This instability in family relationships often exacerbates the situation, leaving ex-offenders feeling isolated and losing motivation to change. peer selection can also prevent criminal acts (Kawabata & Crick, 2015).

Neighborhoods and communities also exert a significant influence (Jacobs, 2021). If an ex-offender returns to a community where crime is considered the norm or where criminal support networks are still strong, the likelihood of re-engaging in illegal activities is greater. Conversely, communities that offer rehabilitation programs, job training, and psychosocial support can help reduce recidivism rates by providing positive and constructive alternatives for ex-offenders. Neighborhoods and levels of economic disadvantage do not directly increase the frequency of violent crime (Klinger et al., 2016).

Finally, the justice system and government policies play a role in facilitating or hindering the reintegration of ex-offenders. Programs that focus on rehabilitation and reintegration rather than pure punishment show better results in reducing recidivism. Policies that ensure access to education, job training, and mental health services during and after incarceration are important steps in creating a social environment that supports positive transformation.

Overall, the analysis of the social environment that drives recidivism highlights a holistic approach involving family, friends and community. Collaborative efforts from these various parties are needed to overcome the barriers faced by ex-offenders and support them in building a better, crime-free life.

CONCLUSION

Low education levels limit decent employment opportunities for former detainees, worsening their economic conditions. Difficulty finding employment exacerbates economic and social instability, often forcing former detainees to return to criminal activity in order to survive. Insufficient income makes it difficult for them to meet basic needs, adding to the economic pressure that can drive criminal behavior. In addition, family relationships that are disharmonious or damaged by incarceration add to feelings of isolation and lack of social support, which are significant risk factors for recidivism. Proximity to the city also plays a role as easier access to urban centers often leads former prisoners back to old neighborhoods or criminal networks. Comprehensive and targeted interventions are urgently needed to reduce recidivism rates in rural areas, Programs that focus on improving access to education and job training, as well as job creation in rural areas, are essential. Efforts to improve family relationships and provide psychosocial support for ex-prisoners should also be enhanced. These integrated interventions are expected to create a more supportive social environment for ex-prisoners, allowing them to build stable and productive lives without returning to crime. These measures are expected to reduce the risk of recidivism and help ex-detainees reintegrate into society in a more positive and constructive way.

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