



Fragmented But Not Fractured: Implications For the Resilience Profile of Incarcerated Youth in Indonesia

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A B S T R A C T

As part of a larger action research cycle, this study reflected on the resilience of incarcerated male youths (N=74, aged 14-20) in West Sumatra, Indonesia. Using the “CYRM-R Plus Spirituality and Religiosity” measure, four subscales—Interpersonal, Caregiver, Spirituality, and Religiosity—were assessed using quantitative comparative analysis to create a resilience profile. The population was compared to a national normative sample of Indonesian males (N=3,496) within a similar age range. While Interpersonal and Caregiver support scores were comparable to the normative data, the item-level analysis revealed strong caregiver practical support but emotional distance and limited peer connection within the incarcerated youth despite high behavioral adaptability. In contrast, Spirituality and Religiosity emerged as significant strengths of the population, with notably higher scores and large effect sizes when compared to the national sample, particularly in religious practice and beliefs about divine purpose. These findings demonstrate remarkable inner resources within incarcerated youth, which underscore the value of resilience-informed, spiritually sensitive, and family-engaged transition planning. Incorporating youth voice, culturally sensitive programs, and holistic approaches to reentry programs would strengthen the existing resilience of incarcerated youth.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Youth Resilience

Resilience in youth has been conceptualized as a dynamic and multidimensional process through which individuals adapt positively despite exposure to adversity, trauma, or significant stressors (Masten, 1994; Ungar, 2011). Contemporary frameworks emphasize its intersectional nature—emerging from the interplay between internal assets and external supports such as family, community, access to resources, and cultural belief systems (Luthar et. al, 2000; Ungar, 2006; Ungar, 2012). This perspective was pioneered by Holling’s groundbreaking

research (1973) which emphasized the role of ecological resilience—the capacity of systems to absorb disturbance while maintaining function.

Holling’s work on resilience was inspired by Kurt Lewin’s Field Theory (1946) which first described the scientific impact of environment on behavior, and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner 1977; Bronfenbrenner and Evans, 2000; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2007), which sees personal resilience as embedded within layers of environment, ranging from the microsystem to the chronosystem. The microsystem covers interpersonal relationships, while the mesosystem reflects the interaction between these settings. Bronfenbrenner’s framework

highlights how families, peers, institutions, and broader systems interact to shape a child.

At a time when resilience was seen as an internal trait, Norman Garmezy (1985), pioneered research on psychological resilience. Garmezy's research showed that individuals draw on inner traits along with external supports to adapt to hardship, which later informed systemic approaches to resilience. Rutter (1987) further described psychosocial resilience as a dynamic process shaped by individual traits and social supports. These perspectives were significant in shaping a picture of resilience that was dynamic and holistic, requiring transformation across both personal and environmental dimensions, considering changes in technology and culture as influences within the child's environment.

Michael Ungar's concept of social-ecological resilience builds on the foundations of resilience research, concluding that resiliency in children is tightly linked to resilient families and communities (Ungar, 2006).

Ungar defined "In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways" (2006, p. 225).

Social-ecological resilience involves coping with both psychological and environmental challenges, and depends on access to meaningful resources. An example of such access to resources was highlighted in Werner and Smith's (1992; 2001) longitudinal studies of high-risk children which revealed that many of the children were able to overcome early-life challenges and risk factors due to the presence of stable relationships and community support. The interplay between risk factors and protective factors leads to complex variables within a child's resilience.

Panter-Brick (Southwick et. al, 2014) shares this view of resilience being a process by which individuals situated within specific and unique cultural contexts harness resources which sustain well-being. These resources are necessarily sociocultural, embedded within communities and specific to each environment. James Scott's work reinforces the notion of resilience as embedded within cultures, not a static trait or external reality to individuals. In Scott's words, resilience is moral (1976), social (1985), symbolic (1990), and adaptive (1985; 1990).

Risk factors—whether static (e.g., age, ethnicity) or dynamic (e.g., substance use, environment)—increase vulnerability (Mallett, 2023). Protective factors, by contrast, buffer against harm and foster positive outcomes (Herrenkohl, 2011). Protective factors are only effective, however, if they align with an individual's cultural and personal context. Youth must find agency within their environment in order to live out of the increased resilience (Weaver et. al, 2024). Research further shows that developmental competence combined with sustained support helps youth recover from difficult experiences (Hopper and Cosco, 2023). While static risks cannot be changed, dynamic risks can be offset through protective

factors integrated into interventions. Together, these perspectives illustrate that resilience is an interaction between risks and protective factors on both an individual and ecological level, situated within a cultural context.

2. Resilience in Incarcerated Youth

Present day resilience research suggests that interventions can improve intrapersonal resilience (Arnetz et. al, 2009; Gucciardi et. al, 2009; Steinhardt et al, 2008). While Fougere and Daffern (2015) found that resilience does not seem to have a statistical association with recidivism in incarcerated youth, other researchers have posited that providing protective factors may lead to a decreased chance of reoffending (Borduin, 1999; Efta-Breitbach and Freeman, 2004) and lead to successful long-term change (Dewhurst and Nielsen, 1999). However, the relationship between resilience and offending is not well understood (Barnes-Lee, 2020; Fougere and Daffern, 2011). Postcorrection supports have often failed to provide a smooth transition for incarcerated youth since the supports often maintain a high focus on individual accountability while not addressing the necessary ecological supports (Todis et. al, 2001). Interventions for incarcerated children must focus on creating culturally relevant protective factors through participatory approaches (Ungar, 2006).

A stated goal of corrections is that the youths undergo transformative development, with holistic resilience being a core outcome. However, research consistently shows that incarceration globally (Baggio et. al, 2019; Desai, 2019; May et. al, 2014; Nowak, 2019), and more specifically in Indonesia, does not align with principles of restorative justice and creates environments which do not rehabilitate youth (Agustini et. al, 2022; Dewi, 2023; Maxey et. al, 2022; Maxey et. al, 2025; Muzakki and Subroto, 2023; Prayitno et. al, 2023; Rifaad and Hijriani, 2022; Saefudin and Sriwiyanti, 2023; Sisfani and Muhammad, 2023). With youth failing to be developed within correctional centers, transition planning and wraparound approaches take a central role in their future (O'Neill, 2018). Programs and interventions could feature developing transition plans (Cumming et. al, 2018), incorporating strengths perspectives (Barton, 2006), educational opportunities (ahmed Shafi, 2020), job and skills training (Kohler et al, 1994; Kohler et. al, 2018), counseling, and mentoring to provide relational support for incarcerated youth (Duron, 2020). Currently, Indonesia fails to structurally support previously incarcerated youth who have left correctional institutions. Most of these youth only loosely interact with parole officers monthly, while many individuals face social stigma upon returning to school or work environments.

3. Resilience Measurement

The Resilience Scale (RS) was the first measure designed to evaluate resilience by looking at personal competence and acceptance of self and life (Wagnild, 2009; Wagnild and Young, 1993), and is effective at measuring resilience in adolescents (Ahern et. al, 2006). Building off the Resilience Scale, Connor and Davidson created the CD-RISC and validated the measure, concluding that resilience is modifiable as treatment may improve resilience (Connor and Davidson, 2003). Efforts to operationalize youth resilience across cultures have led to the development of

other psychometric tools such as the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM), which evaluates key domains of resilience across diverse sociocultural settings (Liebenberg et. al, 2013). The measure includes dimensions of interpersonal relationships and caregiver support, allowing researchers to capture contextually grounded expressions of adaptive functioning.

In Indonesia, the CYRM-R has been culturally adapted and validated by Borualogo and colleagues (2019, 2023) by incorporating subscales on personal/spiritual beliefs, offering a relevant framework for examining resilience in local populations. In adapting this tool to the Indonesian context, Borualogo and Jefferies (2019, 2023) incorporated collectivist values, Pancasila, and religiosity. The resulting model identifies four components of resilience: individual, caregiver, spirituality, and religiosity. These dimensions, validated in Indonesia, provide the basis for tracking changes in the social-ecological resilience of incarcerated youth in West Sumatra. This study aims to apply a validated measure of adolescent resilience in the context of incarcerated youth to provide a resilience profile underlining the need for a transition model tailored to children's environments, addressing systems beyond the individual while adapting to challenges. By using quantitative comparative analysis between a national normative sample of male youths and a sample of incarcerated youth, the study aims to analyze differences between Interpersonal, Caregiver, Spirituality, and Religiosity scores, providing contextual and cultural rationale.

B. METHODS

1. Design

This study was the first phase taken within an action research cycle, reflecting on the state of resilience among incarcerated youth in West Sumatra. The research cycle was divided into four phases based on the action research cycle founded by Kurt Lewin and expounded on by subsequent researchers: reflect, plan, act, and observe (Bradbury, 2015; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis et. al, 2014). The initial findings of the reflect phase form the data for this study, comprised of a quantitative comparative design further strengthened by qualitative data taken from 20 in-person interviews. The purpose of reflection was to discover strengths and weaknesses within the resilience profile of incarcerated youth leading to the creation, implementation, and evaluation of a community-based transition program provided to the incarcerated youth. Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections (WP.3-HK.01.04-35) and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

2. Participants

To test the resilience of incarcerated youth in Indonesia, this study focused on a sample of incarcerated youth (N=74) residing in a juvenile correctional center (*Lembaga Pembinaan Khusus Anak, LPKA*) in West Sumatra, Indonesia. The youths were recruited in person by the primary author, and out of the total participants (N=76), there were a few who chose to remove themselves from the study (N=2). All participants save one were male, reflecting the facility's

gender composition, and ages ranged from 14 to 20 years old. The convenience sample was selected between 20 January, 2025–16 July, 2025. During this timeframe, there were a total of 80 incarcerated youth within the correctional center, with 76 being recruited to provide a high level of representativeness (95%) due to the small population size within the singular case study. Table 1 presents characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Variable (N=74)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	73	98.7
Female	1	1.4
Age (M=17.08, SD=1.23)		
14	3	4.1
15	4	5.4
16	11	14.9
17	29	39.2
18	17	23.0
19	7	9.5
20	1	1.4
NA	2	2.7
Education		
SD (year 1-6)	13	17.6
SMP (year 7-9)	31	41.9
SMA (year 10-12)	25	33.8
Finished High School	4	5.4
NA	1	1.4
Length of Incarceration		
0-6 months	9	12.2
6-12 months	16	21.6
1-2 years	24	32.4
2-3 years	15	20.3
3+ years	10	13.5
Offense		
Statutory rape/rape	41	55.4
Drug possession/dealing	16	21.6
Robbery	16	21.6
Assault	1	1.4
Previous Incarceration		
First-time	69	93.2
Repeat offender	5	6.8

3. Measures

Resilience of the incarcerated youth was assessed using the "CYRM-R Plus Spirituality and Religiosity" measure based off the CYRM-R that was translated into the Indonesian language and demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha=.902$) (Borualogo and Jefferies, 2019). The 29-item tool covers four dimensions:

- Interpersonal (e.g., peer and school connection, intrapersonal perspective)
- Caregiver (e.g., parent/family support)
- Spirituality (e.g., meaning making and faith in adversity)

- Religiosity (e.g., prayer and scripture engagement from a particular religious system)

Individuals answered how much the item represents them on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = "Not at all" and 5 = "A lot". Higher scores indicate higher levels of resilience and items were grouped by subscale to see overall subscale scores.

4. Procedure

The survey was administered in person during facilitated group sessions as part of routine assessments for reentry preparation. The primary researcher explained the purpose of the research and participants were given an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. After signing consent forms, participants completed the printed assessment using a personally chosen pseudonym, with the primary researcher overseeing the assessment administration to ensure understanding of each item. Care was taken to ensure that data provided by the youth would not be used by the institution against them as information is a form of power (Waldram, 2009), and the protection of incarcerated youth as a subaltern group within a hegemonic institution (Gramsci, 2012) was paramount.

A total of seven sessions over the 6-month instrumentation period were conducted to involve as many participants as possible and to engage the constantly changing population of incarcerated youth as youth were both admitted to and left the center during the instrumentation period.

Responses were aggregated, and descriptive statistics were calculated per item and subscale. Means and standard deviations were compared to normative values from Borualogo's male sample ($n = 3,496$) to evaluate statistical and practical significance using t-value, p-value and Cohen's d effect size metrics. The quantitative comparative analysis was undertaken to observe trends among the incarcerated individuals, and analyze the similarities and differences with the normative sample.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion addresses the research question by interpreting how each resilience domain manifests within the context of incarcerated youth in Indonesia. The study examines resilience levels among 74 incarcerated male youths (*Anak Binaan*), using Borualogo et al.'s "CYRM-R Plus Spirituality and Religiosity" measure, comparing them against a large normative sample ($N=3,496$ males) from Borualogo et al.'s previous research (2023) to identify meaningful differences across four core subscales: Interpersonal, Caregiver, Spirituality, and Religiosity. The aim was to explore how incarceration shapes resilience and whether unique protective factors are evident in this population. In addition, the aim was to get a baseline value for resilience of incarcerated youth in West Sumatra to track changes of resilience through interventions seeking to provide protective factors during reentry. Results reveal a mixed but meaningful portrait: one where spiritual and religious strength is notably high, while relational and emotional domains show internal tension.

Table 2. Mean Scores Per Subscale

<i>Subscale</i>	<i>n items</i>	<i>Item mean</i>
Interpersonal	10	3.859
Caregiver	7	4.037
Spirituality	9	4.464
Religiosity	3	4.635

Table 3. Participant Scores Per Item

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Item</i>
29	2.89	Caregiver	I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel...
28	3.26	Interpersonal	My friends care about me when times are hard...
27	3.34	Interpersonal	I feel that I belong/belonged at my school
26	3.38	Interpersonal	I feel supported by my friends
25	3.51	Caregiver	If I am hungry, there is enough to eat
24	3.52	Interpersonal	I am treated fairly in my community
23	3.80	Interpersonal	People like to spend time with me
22	3.86	Interpersonal	I have chances to show others that I am growing up...
21	3.95	Interpersonal	I get along with people around me
20	4.08	Caregiver	I like the way my family/caregiver(s) celebrates things...
19	4.10	Caregiver	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me...
18	4.21	Spirituality	I believe God does not give me problems unless I am able...
17	4.24	Spirituality	Having difficulties make me realize that God is...
16	4.27	Spirituality	God does miraculous things in my life
15	4.32	Religiosity	I regularly read the scriptures / holy book(s)
14	4.42	Spirituality	Having problems/difficulties

Table 3. Participant Scores Per Item

Rank	Mean	Subscale	Item
			makes me feel closer to God
13	4.46	Interpersonal	I know how to behave/act in different situations...
12	4.50	Interpersonal	I have chances to learn things that will be useful...
11	4.51	Spirituality	I feel that God is teaching me something...
10	4.53	Interpersonal	Getting an education is important to me
9	4.55	Caregiver	My family/caregiver(s) care about me when times are hard...
8	4.57	Caregiver	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) really look out for me
7	4.57	Caregiver	I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s)
6	4.58	Spirituality	I believe that God gives me the capabilities to resolve...
5	4.62	Spirituality	When facing a stressful situation, remembering God ...
4	4.65	Spirituality	I am grateful that God helps me resolve my difficulties
3	4.68	Spirituality	I know that God cares for me and watches over me
2	4.73	Religiosity	I enjoy reading my religion's scriptures/holy book(s)
1	4.85	Religiosity	Praying makes me feel close to God

1. Interpersonal and Caregiver Support: Comparable Averages, Mixed Signals

The mean score for the Interpersonal subscale ($M=38.32$, $SD=6.36$) did not significantly differ from the normative male sample ($M=39.12$, $SD=7.22$), nor did the Caregiver subscale ($M=28.16$, $SD=4.34$ vs. $M=27.36$, $SD=5.79$). This suggests that, despite their incarceration and histories of marginalization, these youth perceive a relatively stable level of connection to peers and caregivers.

¹ Pseudonym. Male, 18 years old.

Table 4. Participant Scores Compared to National Scores (Borualogo et. al, 2023)

Subscale	Mean	National Mean	t-value	p-value	Significance
Interpersonal	38.32	39.12	-1.06	0.29	Not significant
Caregiver	28.16	27.36	1.55	0.12	Not significant
Spirituality	40.11	37.78	3.19	0.002	Very Significant
Religiosity	14.05	11.62	14.45	1.305E-24	Extremely significant
Total	120.5	115.88	2.69	0.008	Highly significant

However, item-level analysis reveals important nuance. Some interpersonal items—such as “*I feel that I belong/belonged at my school*” and “*I feel supported by my friends*”—scored notably low (means of 3.34 and 3.38), suggesting disconnection from conventional support networks. Qualitative data supported the tension with friends in school. Rahul Afandi¹ expressed having friends, however, most of them were older as Rahul did not fit in with those his age. When asked about the support he received from his circle of friends, he replied, “*They support in some ways, but not fully,*” “*Ado dukungan tapi tidak sapanuahnyo.*”

There is a strong correlation between social support and psychological well-being in incarcerated youth (Ardiani and Febrieta, 2024), leading to a likely low psychological well-being of the participants in the study. This data correlates strongly with the qualitative data collected by the research team that showed lack of engagement with educational opportunities within the correctional center. When asked about his experience with the schooling provided, Maecel² responded with, “*It’s just no fun sir, it’s not like out there. The learning’s confusing, it’s no fun. Out there you know in school you’ve got teachers, curriculum, you’re taught and I get it. I actually get knowledge. It’s not like that here. Everyone’s just chaos here.*” “*Enggak asyik Mister, enggak kayak di luar. Belajar tu membingungkan, enggak asyik. Kalau di luar kan sekolah dikasih guru, mata pelajaran, diajarin langsung ngerti saya. Ada ilmu yang masuk. Kalau di sini enggak mister. Ribut-ribut semuanya di sini.*”

Sriwiyanti & Saefudin’s (2022) case study on Lombok Island, Indonesia, shows an alternate perspective with high engagement in education among youth in corrections, concluding with a strong support for continuing to pursue educational opportunities for youth post-release. However, our assessment of the youth in West Sumatra seems to show educational challenges stemming from drop-out at an early age and learning challenges. Providing good educational opportunities within the center and tracking continued learning post-release would take collaboration among several stakeholders, a strategy that has proven to be effective in supporting the

² Pseudonym. Male, 14 years old.

rehabilitation and reentry of incarcerated youth (Simanjuntak, 2024).

While the youth scored low on belonging in school and support by friends, in contrast, they scored highly on *"I know how to behave/act in different situations"* ($M=4.46$), reflecting strong adaptive behavior, possibly a survival mechanism in institutional environments. Item-level analysis showed that the third highest deviation among the 29-item assessment was *"My friends care about me when times are hard"* ($SD=1.31$), suggesting that peer group support is not consistent, and resilience in this area must be assessed on an individual level instead of assuming peer support towards incarcerated youth. The results suggest a resilience profile marked by behavioral regulation over true social belonging. While it has been shown that resilience affects subjective well-being in Indonesian incarcerated youth (Septiani et. al, 2021), it is unclear whether social support prior to incarceration affects the well-being of youth currently held in corrections.

Similarly, the Caregiver subscale also exhibited internal tension. Youth overwhelmingly expressed feeling safe with and supported by caregivers (e.g., *"My family/caregiver(s) care about me when times are hard"*, $M=4.55$; *"I feel safe when I am with my family/caregiver(s)"*, $M=4.57$; and *"My parent(s)/caregiver(s) really look out for me"*, $M=4.57$), yet reported very low engagement in emotional communication (e.g., *"I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel"*, $M = 2.89$). Expressing emotions to family/caregiver was the lowest-scoring item on the assessment. This suggests the presence of emotionally distant but practically supportive caregiving relationships – possibly shaped by cultural norms or family survival strategies under stress. In qualitative interviews, this distance was clearly apparent. Ryhn³ expressed that though he felt close to his family, he still bottled his emotions up. *"I'm not good at expressing emotions."* *"Indak pandai bacarito."* Seeing his family slowly begin to visit less and less often, Uwok⁴ stated, *"I'm not interested in talking to my family. Maleh mancecek ka keluarga."* When pressed on how he feels about family support, Jery⁵ responded, *"My family is a broken home, it's all broken...I was never loved by my dad"* *"di keluarga saya ibarat broken home, berantakan semua...gak pernah di kasih sayang sama ayah."*

Family support has been shown to be the single highest contributor in determining resilience of incarcerated youth in Indonesia (Aditaracman and Hamzah, 2023). Incarcerated youth have expressed gratitude upon recognizing the ongoing parental support they receive during confinement (Septiani et. al, 2019). Increasing emotional connection could strengthen youth perceptions of family support. The item reporting emotional communication with family/caregivers (e.g., *"I talk to my family/caregiver(s) about how I feel"*) had the second highest standard deviation of the 29-item assessment ($SD=1.38$), suggesting that though overall the incarcerated youth scored low in emotional connection, there were outliers who experienced high emotional connection with family and caregivers. Strengths-based strategies must be added

to assessments and interventions with incarcerated youth (Barnes-Lee, 2020), and the presence of supportive families is one strength to harness for many incarcerated youth in Indonesia.

In their study using the *Depression Anxiety Stress Scale* (DASS-21) within a juvenile correctional center in Jakarta, Indonesia, Wijaya and colleagues (2024) found that the youths exhibited a normal level of anxiety compared to national norms, and that parenting styles did not seem to affect anxiety levels. Wijaya et al. conclude that family support may not be as significant while youth are held in detention, and the correctional environment must provide necessary social support. These findings highlight the partial presence of relational resilience. While youth perceive caregivers and peers as present, deeper emotional needs may go unmet. This opens space for interventions focused on emotional literacy, trust-building, and communication skills with both family and peers.

2. Spirituality and Religiosity: Significant Strengths

The most striking results appeared in the Spirituality and Religiosity domains. Youth in this sample scored significantly higher than their national peers. The Spirituality subscale yielded a mean of 40.11 ($SD=6.22$) compared to the normative 37.78 ($p<.01$), and the Religiosity subscale was even more pronounced, with a mean of 14.05 versus 11.62 ($p<.0001$).

Items such as *"I enjoy reading my religion's scriptures/holy book(s)"* ($M=4.73$) and *"Praying makes me feel close to God"* ($M=4.85$) received the highest scores of the entire instrument. The top six highest scores all fell within either the spirituality or religiosity subscale. These findings suggest that faith is central to the resilience of Indonesian incarcerated youth, providing structure, identity, and a narrative of meaning through adversity. This corresponds with Saefudin & Sriwiyanti's (2023) multi-site study of 7 juvenile correctional centers in Indonesia that found 83% of the youth in corrections had moderate to high levels of spirituality. When asked about his dreams post-release, Tuan⁶ responded, *"I want to fix my name, which has been written off in my hometown," "nio mamparancakkan namo karano namo tercoret di kampung."* Highly aware of the stigma from neighbors in his hometown, Tuan hoped to fix his name by becoming an *imam* at a well-known, iconic floating mosque. Religious acceptance was seen as an effective method of dealing with stigma, providing the societal, familial, and internal acceptance that Tuan longed for.

The youth also strongly endorsed beliefs around divine purpose and justice – *"I believe God does not give me problems unless I am able to solve them"* ($M=4.21$) – indicating an internalized spiritual narrative of growth-through-suffering, which may reduce hopelessness and sustain motivation for change. Saputra & Priyatmono (2025) suggest that juvenile correctional centers need to incorporate more programs for moral development as low morals are the primary reason for youth offending in

³ Pseudonym. Male, 15 years old.

⁴ Pseudonym. Male, 17 years old.

⁵ Pseudonym. Male, 18 years old.

⁶ Pseudonym. Male, 18 years old.

Indonesia. Though this is not a well-proven assertion, it does suggest that spiritual practices and religious frameworks play a crucial role in the psychological resilience of these youth, but there is a potential disconnect between religious framework and the lived out practices of the youth.

3. Effect Sizes and Implications

Cohen's *d* statistics clarify the magnitude of these differences when comparing the sample of incarcerated youth to that of the national sample, showing significant effects on the religious and spiritual level, with small and negligible effects on the Caregiver and Interpersonal subscales (see Table 6). These results confirm that faith-based domains are not only statistically but practically significant sources of resilience. These findings confirm other Indonesian researchers who maintain spirituality and religiosity play a large role in the resilience of Muslims across Indonesia as a predictor of resilience (Oktavia and Muhopilah, 2021) and by providing meaning through the notion of destiny (Taufik et al, 2022). The particularly large effect size for religiosity positions it as a key distinguishing feature of the incarcerated youth population. In contrast, effect sizes for Interpersonal ($d=0.11$) and Caregiver ($d=0.16$) domains were small and not statistically significant.

Table 4. Cohen's *d* Statistics on Subscale Comparison

Domain	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Effect Size Interpretation
Religiosity	1.02	Large effect
Spirituality	0.33	Small-to-moderate effect
Caregiver	0.16	Small effect
Interpersonal	-0.11	Negligible effect

These patterns resonate with prior observations: religious structures in Indonesian society often become more salient in times of crisis or confinement, offering both moral scaffolding and communal identity (Saefudin & Sriwiyanti, 2023; Saputra & Priyatmono, 2025; Septiani, Maslihah, & Musthofa, 2019; 2021; Sriwiyanti & Saefudin, 2022). Furthermore, the high reports of spirituality in self-reported resilience suggest potential areas for programming, such as faith-based counseling, guided reflection, or integrating religious leaders into reentry planning.

This suggests promising directions for faith-sensitive rehabilitation and transition planning. Programs may benefit from incorporating spiritual practices, religious mentorship, or partnerships with community religious institutions. However, care should be taken not to conflate spiritual engagement with holistic wellbeing. High spiritual scores may coexist with unresolved trauma, emotional suppression, or social alienation as evidenced by low mean scores on the item-levels pertaining to emotional connection and peer support (e.g. *"I talk to my*

family/caregiver(s) about how I feel", *"I feel that I belong/belonged at my school"*, *"I feel supported by my friends"* and *"My friends care about me when times are hard"*). Emotional issues are likely going unmet as research has shown that lack of professional counseling within juvenile youth centers is common (Andriati et. al, 2022; Maxey et. al, 2025). When asked about his experience as a professional counselor within the correctional center, Mr. Zayn⁷ remarked that, on average, each incarcerated youth gets one or two sessions with a qualified psychologist. While one youth attended six counseling sessions with Mr. Zayn, in contrast, a few of the incarcerated youth never receive professional counseling while at the correctional center, usually those serving sentences of six months or less. This reality shapes the environment of trauma surrounding these incarcerated youth. Traumatized individuals, further traumatized during their incarceration, need significant care yet are overlooked structurally due to funding shortages and a lack of personnel. Future mixed-methods research could unpack this tension between inner faith, outer relational vulnerability, and unmet emotional trauma.

4. An Emerging Resilience Profile

Taken together, the data suggest a distinctive, layered resilience profile among the sample of incarcerated youth in West Sumatra, where faith (spirituality and religiosity) serves as a core internal strength, providing hope, structure, and moral coherence. Peer relationships and behavioral adaptability offer situational resilience but may mask deeper relational wounds. Aggressive behavior leading to loneliness has been shown in a case study of incarcerated youth in Sumatra, and perhaps more of the youth in West Sumatra suffer a loneliness they themselves have trouble understanding (Robinson et. al, 2020). Lastly, caregiver connections exist, but emotional access remains limited, indicating a gap in secure attachment and self-expression. To strengthen the overall resilience of incarcerated youth, interventions looking at caregiver support would be significant as CYRM studies across countries have shown caregiver support to be the central resource for resilience (Höltge et. al, 2021).

This profile challenges deficit-based models of justice-involved youth. It reveals not brokenness but fragmented resilience—resilience that is contextually shaped, uneven, and often rooted in spiritual conviction rather than emotional connection.

In collectivist contexts such as Indonesia, resilience and moral agency are inseparable from relationality. Markus and Kitayama's theory of interdependent selfhood (1991) provides a psychological complement to Scott's moral economy, showing that self-concept and coping are rooted in maintaining social harmony rather than asserting autonomy. Though structural violence and personal disruption is experienced amongst individuals, the incarcerated youth show acts of solidarity (e.g., group prayers and sharing food amongst roommates), and emotional restraint (e.g., "patient endurance" *"sabar"*, "spiritual surrender" *"ikhlas,"* and

⁷ Pseudonym. Male, 38 years old.

“suppression” *“dipendam”*), which operate as culturally grounded forms of moral resilience under domination.

Table 5. Analysis of Item-Level Answers

Score	Question	Mean	Analysis
Low	Q8: Talking to caregivers about feelings	2.89	Lowest score; reflects emotional expression barriers
Low	Q6: Food availability	3.51	Material insecurity within correctional issue may be exacerbating problems
Low	Q12/Q10/Q9: Peer/social support	3.26–3.38	Interpersonal connection weaker outside family
High	Q27/Q28: Enjoy reading scripture and Praying brings closeness	4.73, 4.85	Two highest scores; strong habit and identity link
High	Q25: God cares for me	4.68	Deep personal spiritual belief in care from a higher power
High	Q2: Education importance	4.53	Encouraging considering the emphasis on education within reentry goals

D. IMPLICATIONS

The findings have significant implications for transition planning and community reintegration programming for incarcerated youth in Indonesia.

1. Spiritual and Religious Strengths as Entry Points

The elevated scores in Spirituality and Religiosity confirm their centrality in the youths’ coping strategies. Transition programs could enhance outcomes by integrating spiritual resources—such as visits by spiritual mentors from their respective faiths, guided prayer/reflection spaces, mentorship based on the holy books, and sessions on forgiveness and releasing burdens—into case management and reentry plans.

2. Relational Gaps Require Support

Despite normative scores on Interpersonal and Caregiver scales, specific items highlight relational vulnerabilities. Programming should intentionally build peer trust, communication skills, and emotional expression, particularly with family members.

3. Narratives of Growth Through Faith

Youth overwhelmingly endorsed statements like *“God does miraculous things in my life”* and *“I believe God does not give me problems unless I am able to solve them.”* Reentry specialists can use these spiritual narratives to foster a growth mindset and encourage goal setting, moral agency, and responsibility.

4. Data-Driven Casework

Incorporating this assessment into individual case plans can help reentry teams pinpoint which youth would benefit from spiritual mentorship, job and skills training, peer group support, or family mediation sessions based on their item-level resilience profiles.

E. LIMITATIONS

While this study provides meaningful insights into the resilience profile of Indonesian incarcerated youth, several limitations must be acknowledged, including the non-random sampling of participants. Participants were drawn from a specific juvenile correctional center in West Sumatra and may not represent the general population of incarcerated youth across Indonesia. Future research could compare this study with a multi-site study of resilience across the other juvenile correctional centers (*LPKA*) in Indonesia ($N=33$). In addition, cultural expectations around religiosity may have influenced responses toward social desirability, especially in institutional settings, leading to a self-report bias. The cross-sectional design of the study captures a snapshot in time and cannot speak to how resilience evolves during or after incarceration. Further research should incorporate a youth-based resilience framework for transition and track changes in resilience over the six months post-reentry. The last limitation is the lack of inclusion of female incarcerated youth within the study. Aside from one female participant, only male participants were included due to the lack of female incarcerated youth in West Sumatra. Future work should explore gendered experiences of resilience.

F. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the resilience profile of incarcerated youth in West Sumatra challenges prevailing stereotypes that portray them as disengaged or deficient in resilience. Instead, their responses reveal profound inner resources rooted in spirituality, faith, and a sense of divine purpose, which serve as essential foundations for reintegration and reentry. Despite significant structural and personal adversities, these youth exhibit adaptive strengths that reflect both individual agency and cultural context. However, the emotional and relational dimensions of their resilience appear fragmented, indicating areas that require intentional and sustained support. Since resilience is socially embedded, incarcerated youth require genuine agency within programs and interventions aimed at enhancing resilience. As Weaver et al. (2024) note, justice programs for criminalized youth may inadvertently reinforce stigmatization when implemented through a top-down approach that overlooks the transformative impact of participation in addressing the needs of marginalized groups. Conceptualizing resilience as socially and relationally constructed underscores the necessity of participatory, strength-based, and contextually sensitive approaches in policy and program design. Ultimately, incarcerated youth should not be regarded as broken subjects in need of rescue, but as capable individuals whose inherent assets can be cultivated through inclusive,

resilience-informed, and socially empowering interventions.

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