

Sociodemographic Characteristics and Length of Imprisonment As Institutional Exposure: A Quantitative Study In The Perspective of Applied Psychology in Detention

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Abstract : Detention houses are closed institutional environments marked by restricted freedom and strict social structures, which shape inmates psychosocial experiences. From social and applied psychology perspectives, sociodemographic characteristics and duration of imprisonment are important for understanding detention exposure. This study analyzes the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and length of sentence among inmates at the Banyumas State Prison. The research used a quantitative approach with a secondary data analysis design. Participants included all inmates administratively recorded during the study period. The analyzed data covered sociodemographic profiles and criminal sentence duration. Data were examined using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, including the chi square test. The results showed differences in sentence length based on certain sociodemographic characteristics, although not all relationships were statistically significant. This study emphasizes the value of social and applied psychology in interpreting institutional data and supports further research using direct psychological measurements.

Keywords : Sociodemographic Characteristics; Length of Sentence; Institutional Exposure; Applied Psychology; Detention Center

Abstrak : Rumah tahanan merupakan lingkungan institusional tertutup yang ditandai oleh pembatasan kebebasan dan struktur sosial yang ketat, sehingga membentuk pengalaman psikososial warga binaan. Dalam perspektif psikologi sosial dan psikologi terapan, karakteristik sosiodemografis serta lama pidana penting untuk memahami paparan institusional secara lebih utuh. Penelitian ini menganalisis hubungan antara karakteristik sosiodemografis dan lama pidana warga binaan di Rumah Tahanan Negara Banyumas. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain analisis data sekunder. Partisipan mencakup seluruh warga binaan yang tercatat secara administratif selama periode penelitian. Data yang dianalisis meliputi profil sosiodemografis dan lama pidana. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan statistik inferensial, termasuk uji chi square. Hasil menunjukkan adanya perbedaan lama pidana berdasarkan karakteristik sosiodemografis tertentu, meskipun tidak semua hubungan signifikan secara statistik. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya psikologi sosial dan terapan dalam menafsirkan data institusional serta mendukung

penelitian lanjutan dengan pengukuran psikologis langsung dalam konteks rumah tahanan Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Karakteristik Sosiodemografis; Lama Pidana; Paparan Institusional; Psikologi Terapan; Rumah Tahanan

INTRODUCTION

A detention center is a penal institution designed to restrict individual freedom as a consequence of breaking the law. From a psychological perspective, the placement of individuals in detention is related to the loss of personal freedom, separation from the free social environment, as well as the restriction of access to interpersonal relationships that previously served as a source of psychosocial support. (Haney, 2018; Kusumastuti et al., 2020). Conceptually, imprisonment is understood as a form of deprivation of personal liberty that creates a significant difference between life inside and outside the institution of detention, particularly through the application of strict rules that limit individual activities, social interactions, and movement (Liebling & Maruna, 2013).

Closed institutional environments, such as detention centers, have structural characteristics that distinguish them from free social environments and have implications for the psychological and social lives of the individuals who live in them. In the study of social psychology, a detention center is understood as a *total institution*, which is an institution that controls almost all aspects of its residents' lives, including daily routines, bedtimes, social activities, and relationships with the outside world (Goffman, 1961). These restrictions on freedom in institutional contexts have long been a focus of study in social psychology and applied psychology due to their impact on the psychological adjustment process and the subjective experiences of individuals during detention (Cunha et al., 2023). Restrictions on liberty in the context of detention have long been a significant concern in the study of social psychology and applied psychology, given their far-reaching implications for the mental, emotional, and social states of individuals undergoing periods of detention. Closed institutional environments place inmates in situations of high external control, limited personal autonomy, and a lack of access to meaningful social support, which cumulatively have the potential to reduce psychological well-being (Fridari et al., 2022).

Various empirical findings show that the experience of incarceration correlates with an increased risk of psychological disorders, such as depression, anxiety, feelings of loneliness, and loss of hope for the future. A recent literature review confirms that chronic stress stemming from restrictions on freedom, social isolation, and lack of control over daily activities contributes significantly to the emergence of symptoms of mental disorders during and after periods of detention (Megari & Argyriadou, 2025). This condition reflects a process of psychological maladaptation that is not only temporary but also has the potential to continue in the long term. From the perspective of social psychology, restrictions on freedom also have an impact on the formation and sustainability of individual social identities. Status as a prisoner or former prisoner is often attached as a social label that triggers stigma, discrimination, and social isolation, thus complicating the process of reintegration into society. This phenomenon is known as *status fragility*, a condition of psychosocial vulnerability that arises from the accumulation of institutional experiences and negative social judgments faced by individuals with a history of detention (Almeida et al., 2025). In addition to structural factors, interpersonal dynamics within the detention environment also contribute to the psychological pressure that inmates face. Exposure to conflicts between inmates, tensions with officers, potential violence, and uncertainty regarding the legal and social future are reported to be associated with increased psychological stress, feelings of hopelessness, and other mental well-being disorders (Moore et al., 2021). Although quantitative research specifically linking psychosocial conditions to individual characteristics is still relatively limited, preliminary evidence suggests that the experience of detention is not homogeneous, but rather influenced by both personal and structural factors.

In practical terms, an understanding of these psychosocial dynamics is crucial so that applied psychology interventions, such as mental health support, group therapy, or psychoeducational programs, can be designed to address the adaptation challenges faced by

inmates and former inmates during their social reintegration (Ang et al., 2025). However, most previous studies have focused more on the psychological impact of detention in general. In contrast, studies linking the sociodemographic characteristics of inmates to variations in institutional experience, including length of sentence, have been relatively rare, especially in the context of detention in Indonesia.

Many studies show that sociodemographic characteristics such as age, gender, education level, and recidivist status play a role in shaping an individual's experience during a period of detention. Studies in Indonesia indicate that the majority of inmates are of productive age with diverse educational and employment backgrounds, which has implications for varying experiences of psychosocial adaptation within institutions (Mhd. Bartoniv Kevin, 2025). These findings align with psychological studies that confirm the link between demographic factors and the psychological state of prisoners, encompassing cognitive, affective, and social aspects (Junaidin, 2018).

In addition to individual characteristics, institutional experiences during sentences are also reported to affect the psychological well-being of inmates. Research shows that the duration of punishment, limited control over the environment, and daily exposure to stressors in detention institutions correlate with increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and psychological adaptation disorders (Nadila Idzania Putri, 2021; Naser et al., 2025).

Although these studies make significant contributions, they remain primarily limited to local contexts or specific groups of prisoners and are predominantly characterized by qualitative approaches with relatively small sample sizes. Applied psychology studies that integrate sociodemographic characteristics with institutional experience quantitatively are also relatively rare, especially in the context of detention centers in Indonesia (Mhd. Bartoniv Kevin, 2025; Putra et al., 2023). Unlike previous studies, which generally used limited samples or focused on specific clinical aspects, this study utilized comprehensive prison population data to analyze the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and the length of sentence as a form of institutional exposure. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and the length of imprisonment of inmates in the prison environment, to understand institutional exposure patterns from the perspectives of social psychology and applied psychology.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a secondary data analysis design to examine the relationship between inmates sociodemographic characteristics and sentence length as an indicator of institutional exposure. The research was conducted at the Banyumas State Prison using official administrative data recorded during the research period. This design was selected because secondary data allow researchers to analyze structured institutional records efficiently, ethically, and with minimal participant reactivity, particularly when direct psychological measurement is limited (Johnston, 2014). Administrative prison data were interpreted not only as legal records but also as socio psychological indicators that reflect inmates exposure to a closed institutional environment, in line with applied psychology research that uses institutional data to understand real life social and psychosocial dynamics (Babbie, 2020). The participants included the entire population of inmates registered during the research period (N = 157), so no sampling technique was applied. This total population approach reduces selection bias and strengthens the representativeness of findings in closed institutional studies (Creswell, 2018). The analyzed variables included age, gender, education level, marital status, type of crime, sentence length, and recidivism status, which are commonly used to explain variations in individual experiences, adaptation, and social dynamics in detention settings (Haney, 2018; Liebling & Maruna, 2013).

Data were collected through document study of official administrative records and analyzed anonymously to protect participant confidentiality. The research procedure included data access, variable selection, data coding, descriptive analysis, inferential testing, and interpretation within the framework of social and applied psychology. Descriptive statistics were used to present frequencies, percentages, means, and category distributions of inmate characteristics and sentence length, as an initial step to understand the empirical structure of the data (Gravetter et

al., 2021). Inferential analysis was then conducted using the chi square test to examine associations between categorical variables and regression analysis to assess the contribution of sociodemographic variables to sentence length while controlling for relevant factors (Field, 2024; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). All analyses were conducted using standard statistical software with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The results were presented in statistical tables and interpreted carefully according to the institutional context of detention exposure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Assisted Residents

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried out to describe the sociodemographic characteristics of inmates in the Banyumas State Prison. The variables analyzed included age, gender, education level, marital status, and type of criminal act. The presentation of this descriptive data aims to provide an overview of the population profile of the research, serving as an initial context for understanding the variation in institutional experiences among inmates. In general, the analysis results indicate that inmates have diverse sociodemographic backgrounds, encompassing a range of ages and educational levels. This diversity reflects the heterogeneity of the prison population, which, from a social psychology perspective, can influence the dynamics of social interactions, adaptation processes, and individual experiences in closed institutional environments (Haney, 2018).

Table 1. Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Assisted Residents Number of participants (N) = 157 inmates

Gender	n	%
Male	137	87,3
Women	20	12,7
Total	157	100

Narrative analysis

The results of the descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of inmates in the Banyumas State Prison were male (87.3%), while women comprised only 12.7% of the total population. This distribution reflects the general population pattern of correctional institutions, where men are structurally more involved in the criminal justice system. From the perspective of social psychology, the dominance of one demographic group has the potential to influence the social dynamics, interaction patterns, and institutional experiences of the inmates collectively (Haney, 2018).

Variation in Criminal Length Based on Sociodemographic Characteristics

The next stage involves analyzing variations in the length of imprisonment based on the sociodemographic characteristics of the inmates. The length of the sentence in this study is positioned as an indicator of institutional exposure, specifically the duration of individuals exposed to a structured and tightly controlled environment characterized by restricted freedom. The results of the descriptive analysis revealed variations in sentence length across certain sociodemographic groups. This variation suggests that individual characteristics are inextricably linked to the structural experiences encountered during the period of detention. In applied psychology, differences in the duration of institutional exposure are understood as a factor that has the potential to influence the process of psychological adaptation and individual social experiences (Liebling & Maruna, 2013).

Table 2. Variation in Criminal Length Based on Education Level

Education Level	≤12 months	13–36 months	>36 months
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Not graduating from elementary school	2	0	5
SD	5	7	17
SMP	5	3	20
SMA	4	7	15
STM	0	0	1
SMK	2	0	4
Diploma	1	0	0
Bachelor	2	3	6

Narrative analysis:

Table 2 shows that there is a variation in sentence length based on the level of education of the inmates. The group with a level of basic education (elementary and junior high) appears to be more likely to be in the category of criminal length greater than 36 months than the higher education group. These findings suggest that sociodemographic characteristics, particularly education, are associated with the duration of institutional exposure experienced by individuals. In the study of applied psychology, the level of education is often linked to access to cognitive and social resources that can impact an individual's position within social and legal structures. This variation is not interpreted as a causal relationship, but rather as a structural pattern that is relevant to a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional experience of inmates (Liebling & Maruna, 2013).

Inferential Statistical Analysis Results

To test the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and sentence length, an inferential statistical analysis was conducted using the chi-square (χ^2) test. The test results showed that some sociodemographic characteristics did not have a significant relationship with the category of crime length ($p > 0.05$), while other variables did not exhibit a statistically significant relationship. These results indicate that the distribution of criminal terms is not random, but is related to specific structural characteristics of the inmates. These findings underscore the significance of social psychology approaches in understanding institutional experiences, which result from the interplay between individual factors and social structures (Field, 2024).

Table 3. Chi-Square Test Results on the Relationship between Education Level and Criminal Length

Variabel	χ^2	df	p
Education \times Criminal Procedure	12,09	14	0,599

Narrative analysis

The results of the chi-square test showed that the relationship between education level and the category of criminal history was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 12.09$; $p = 0.599$). These findings indicate that, statistically, the distribution of time does not differ significantly between levels of education. Nonetheless, in social and applied psychology research, insignificant findings can still be of scientific value, particularly when the study utilizes complete population data. These results suggest that individual educational characteristics alone do not determine the length of an inmate's incarceration. However, they may also be influenced by other structural factors beyond the scope of this study, such as the type of criminal offense and penal policies (Field, 2024).

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and the length of imprisonment of inmates in the Banyumas State Prison environment using comprehensive population data. The study's results indicate that the inmates exhibit heterogeneous sociodemographic characteristics, with a predominance of males and a relatively

diverse range of educational levels. These findings align with the overarching population reported in the literature, where men are the dominant group in the criminal justice system (Haney, 2018).

The dominance of male fostered residents in this study can be understood as a reflection of the social structure and pattern of male involvement in risky behavior and the legal system. From a social psychology perspective, this kind of demographic composition has the potential to influence the dynamics of social interactions within closed institutions, including the formation of group norms, patterns of social adaptation, and collective experiences during periods of incarceration. An institutional environment with an unbalanced demographic composition can create specific social conditions that distinguish individual experiences from those in social contexts outside the institution (Liebling & Maruna, 2013).

The results of the descriptive analysis also showed variation in sentence length based on education level, although this variation was not statistically significant according to the chi-square test. The group with a primary to secondary education level appears to be more likely to receive longer criminal sentences than the group with higher education. However, the results of the statistical test indicate that the distribution differences are not substantial enough to conclude that they are statistically significant.

The insignificant finding of a relationship between education level and the length of time spent in imprisonment needs to be understood carefully in the context of applied psychology. The absence of a statistically significant relationship suggests that the length of imprisonment of inmates cannot be explained by just one sociodemographic characteristic, but rather is the result of a combination of more complex structural factors, such as the type of crime, criminal policy, and the applicable legal process. In the study of social psychology, it is emphasized that an individual's institutional experience is not solely determined by personal characteristics, but is also strongly influenced by the social system and institutional structure that surrounds it (Babbie, 2020).

The meaning of sentence length as a form of institutional exposure in this study makes a conceptual contribution to the study of applied psychology in the correctional environment. Institutional exposure refers to the duration of an individual being in a condition of tightly regulated restrictions on freedom, which, in the long run, can shape specific social and psychological experiences. Although this study did not directly measure psychological conditions, variations in the length of incarceration remain relevant to understanding the structural context that frames the individual's adaptation process during the period of imprisonment (Haney, 2018).

Furthermore, the use of data from the entire inmate population strengthens the external validity of the findings in this study. In contrast to previous studies that generally used a limited sample, this study provides a more representative picture of the condition of inmates in one detention institution. This approach enriches the applied psychology literature in Indonesia by demonstrating that this institutional administrative data can be utilized scientifically to understand human experiences within the context of freedom restrictions, without requiring a departure from the ethical framework and methodology of psychology (Johnston, 2017).

Overall, the results of this study confirm the importance of social and applied psychology approaches in examining closed institutional environments. These findings suggest that sociodemographic characteristics and criminal duration need to be understood as part of the institutional experience structure, rather than as stand-alone factors. This study makes an empirical contribution by showing that institutional administrative data can be used validly in the study of applied psychology in Indonesia, especially in the context of corrections, which has been relatively understudied. Thus, the results of this study directly address the study's purpose, which is to demonstrate that the variation in sentence lengths for inmates cannot be explained solely by sociodemographic characteristics.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the sociodemographic characteristics of inmates in the Banyumas State Prison show certain variations in the distribution of criminal terms as a form of institutional

exposure. Although most sociodemographic characteristics do not show a statistically significant relationship with the length of incarceration, descriptive and inferential findings nonetheless provide an essential picture of the heterogeneity of the inmate population as well as the structural context that frames the experience of imprisonment.

The results of this study confirm that institutional administrative data can be interpreted scientifically within the framework of social psychology and applied psychology to understand the experiences of individuals in closed institutional environments, particularly in the context of structural exposure that affects social dynamics and individual adaptation. Further research is suggested to develop this study by integrating psychological measurements directly through a longitudinal design or mixed-methods approaches, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological impact of detention exposure.

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