

## Information Needs of Female Prisoners: A Study of Mobile Library Services at the Women Detention Center, Class IIB Bengkulu, Indonesia



### Kebutuhan Informasi Narapidana Perempuan: Studi Layanan Perpustakaan Keliling di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Perempuan Kelas IIB Bengkulu

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Access to relevant information is an important aspect of the rehabilitation and social reintegration process for inmates. However, the specific information needs of female prisoners have not been fully identified, while the reading materials provided by the mobile library service remain limited and do not yet align with the preferences of female inmates. **Purpose:** This study aims to identify the information needs of female inmates at the Women's Detention Center Class IIB Bengkulu and to analyze the contribution of mobile library services in supporting the rehabilitation process. **Method:** This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observations involving female inmates, correctional officers, and librarians in charge of the mobile library service. The data analysis followed an interactive process encompassing five stages: data collection, raw data description, data reduction, data categorization, and the construction of inter-category relationships. **Result:** Female inmates showed a high interest in affective information such as fiction novels and language arts books, but the available collection was inadequate. Social and personal integration information was available but underutilized due to a lack of understanding and interest. This indicates a gap between actual needs and the provision of information services. **Conclusion:** The mobile library service plays a significant role in meeting the information needs of female inmates, but improvements are needed through collection diversification, increased procurement frequency, and the implementation of information literacy programs to make the service more relevant to their needs.

**Keywords:** Information needs; Female inmates; Mobile library; Women detention center

**Abstrak**

**Latar Belakang:** Akses terhadap informasi yang relevan merupakan bagian penting dalam proses rehabilitasi dan reintegrasi sosial narapidana. Namun, kebutuhan informasi spesifik narapidana perempuan belum sepenuhnya teridentifikasi, sementara koleksi bahan bacaan dari layanan perpustakaan keliling masih terbatas dan belum sesuai dengan preferensi narapidana perempuan. **Tujuan:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kebutuhan informasi narapidana perempuan di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan Perempuan Kelas IIB Bengkulu serta menganalisis kontribusi layanan perpustakaan keliling dalam mendukung proses rehabilitasi. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi langsung yang melibatkan narapidana perempuan, petugas lembaga pemasyarakatan, serta pustakawan yang bertanggung jawab atas layanan perpustakaan keliling. Analisis data dilakukan dengan proses interaktif yang terdiri atas 5 tahap, yaitu pengumpulan data, deskripsi data mentah, reduksi data, kategorisasi data, dan mengonstruksi hubungan antar kategori. **Hasil:** Narapidana perempuan menunjukkan ketertarikan tinggi terhadap informasi afektif seperti novel fiksi dan buku seni-bahasa, tetapi koleksi yang tersedia belum mencukupi. Informasi integrasi sosial dan integrasi personal tersedia namun kurang dimanfaatkan karena kurangnya pemahaman dan minat. Hal ini menunjukkan adanya kesenjangan antara kebutuhan aktual dan penyediaan layanan informasi. **Kesimpulan:** Layanan perpustakaan keliling memiliki kontribusi penting dalam memenuhi kebutuhan informasi narapidana perempuan, tetapi

perlu perbaikan melalui diversifikasi koleksi, peningkatan frekuensi pengadaan, dan pengembangan literasi informasi agar lebih relevan dengan kebutuhan mereka.

**Kata kunci:** Kebutuhan informasi; Narapidana perempuan; Perpustakaan keliling; Lembaga pemasyarakatan perempuan

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

**Backgorund.** Detention centers constitute the final stage of the criminal justice system in Indonesia, complementing the three other main components: the police, the prosecutor's office, and the courts. These detention centers are responsible for implementing rehabilitation programs for inmates (Puspitasari, 2018). In 1954, Indonesia's correctional system shifted from imprisonment to penal rehabilitation, marking a significant transformation in its history. This shift introduced a more humanistic approach that prioritizes the rehabilitation and social reintegration of inmates (Miladina, 2019). The primary objective of social rehabilitation in detention centers is to transform inmate behavior through programs that emphasize not only punishment but also the development of skills and knowledge.

One notable example of successful rehabilitation in detention centers is former inmate Siti Aida, who has successfully developed a catfish-farming business after participating in a self-reliance development program at the Jakarta Class IIA Women's Detention Center. Her success demonstrates that rehabilitation programs in detention centers can serve as a bridge for inmates to begin a better life after their release. However, public literacy regarding rehabilitation efforts within detention centers remains low, resulting in persistent negative stigma toward former inmates, which often hinders their social reintegration (Maulana, 2023).

Society tends to perceive female inmates distinctly because their involvement in crime contradicts cultural expectations that associate women with gentleness, leading to the stigmatization of their actions as particularly destructive (Andriany, 2017). Under the law, female inmates have the same rights and obligations as their male counterparts. However, their psychological conditions, particularly their emotional and health-related states, tend to differ. Moreover, the lack of essential skills needed after release constitutes a significant source of stress for inmates. Female inmates are more vulnerable to stress and depression than male inmates. Physical and psychological pressures may lead to anxiety, frustration, depression, stress, low self-esteem, hopelessness, and an increased risk of suicide. (Lindasari, 2017). Therefore, the provision of rehabilitation services that account for gender-specific needs is crucial. One form of such support is ensuring access to relevant information, whether social, recreational, professional, or educational, as part of efforts to promote recovery and strengthen the self-capacity of female inmates.

Information needs within detention centers are fundamental in the rehabilitation and development process. When inmates gain a deeper understanding of relevant information, it can enhance their critical and rational thinking, ultimately influencing important life

decisions (Walgermo et al., 2018). According to Folorunso & Olayinka (2019), exposure to adequate library and information services can pave the way for character transformation among inmates, as timely access to information is a key determinant of successful reform and rehabilitation. This indicates that library services are not merely providers of reading materials but also strategic instruments that foster self-awareness and prepare inmates for reintegration into society. Furthermore, Sambo et al. (2017) emphasize that meeting inmates' information needs, both during incarceration and in preparation for social reintegration, is essential to helping them adapt and contribute positively to their communities after release.

To fulfill inmates' rights, the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center implements two types of rehabilitation programs: personality development and self-reliance development. The personality development program includes various activities such as sports, religious sessions, arts, education, music, dance, and scouting, all aimed at fostering character growth and enhancing inmates' personal potential. Meanwhile, the self-reliance development program focuses on producing goods and cultivating skills that may serve as sources of income, such as culinary arts, sewing, batik-making, salon skills, laundry services, agriculture, and the creation of congratulatory flower boards. These programs are designed to equip inmates with competencies that can be utilized after they complete their sentences. In addition to these rehabilitation programs, the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center also provides mobile library services. The mobile library serves as an important component of the rehabilitation program, offering reading materials that help expand inmates' knowledge and skills.

According to the Public Correctional Database System, the number of female inmates in Indonesia has reached 9,872, with Bengkulu Province accounting for 81 currently serving their sentences at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center (the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights, 2024). These data indicate that although the number is relatively small, issues concerning female inmates still require special attention in Bengkulu.

**Problems.** The Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center collaborates with the Bengkulu City Archives and Library Office in the area of Library Development and Reading Culture Enhancement. This service addresses physical and logistical barriers by bringing reading materials directly to the detention center, ensuring inmates maintain access to information that supports the rehabilitation process. However, initial findings reveal several emerging issues. First, the collection of fiction books, which is preferred reading material among female inmates, is limited. The procurement pattern, conducted only once a year and not focused on fiction genres, leaves entertainment and recreational needs inadequately met.

Second, there is an emerging indication of a broader mismatch between the available collection and the actual needs of female inmates. Although the mobile library provides educational, professional, and social-oriented materials, its utilization rate remains relatively low. This condition suggests a gap between the types of information provided and the interests, motivations, and psychosocial needs of female inmates on the ground.

Therefore, this study is rooted in the central issue of assessing the extent to which the collection provided by the mobile library service aligns with the real information needs of

female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center, as well as identifying strategies to optimize the service in supporting rehabilitation and social reintegration goals..

**Literature Review.** Research on inmates' information needs remains relatively limited, particularly in the context of mobile library services and those specifically targeting female inmates. One relevant study was conducted by Nuristia and Anwar (2023), titled "Information Needs of Narcotics Inmates in the Social Rehabilitation Process at the Class I Tangerang Detention Center." The study found that narcotics inmates required information on fiction, religion, and general topics; however, the detention center library's collection was limited and relied solely on donations. This indicates the absence of a systematic strategy to align the library's collection with its users' needs.

Fadhlurrahman (2022) through his study titled "The Role of Libraries in Meeting the Information Needs of Inmates at Sleman Class IIB Detention Center," highlights the library's function in supporting educational, informational, and cultural development. However, its implementation remains suboptimal due to limitations in collections, space, and users' low awareness. Meanwhile Pratiwi (2020) in her research titled "The Role of Libraries in Fulfilling Information Needs at the Class I Juvenile Detention Center in Palembang," demonstrates that library facilities enhance the knowledge and skills of juvenile residents. However, this study does not thoroughly examine their reading preferences, thus failing to address the personalization aspect of their information needs.

Andini & Muhammad (2022) in their study titled "The Role of Libraries in the Social Rehabilitation Process of Inmates at the Class IIB Klaten Detention Center," demonstrated that the library plays a significant role in supporting social rehabilitation through the provision of religious, vocational, and fictional reading materials, as well as literacy activities such as writing competitions and poetry creation. These activities have been shown to influence inmates' mindsets and behaviors positively.

In the international context,, Sharda & Tiwari (2021) found, in a study conducted at the District Jail in Gautam Buddha Nagar, India, that the majority of inmates preferred reading materials on religion, health, and education, while others favored fiction and law-related content. These findings indicate that affective and spiritual readings play a significant role in the rehabilitation process of inmates. Similarly, Faletar et al. (2022) in Croatia reported that most inmates required information on prison life, family matters, and post-release life. However, access to such information remained limited because prison libraries were not yet adequately meeting these needs. Another study by Garner (2024) in Australia identified six primary domains of information needs: legal, educational, spiritual, health-related, prison life, and reintegration. However, most of these needs remained unmet, leading inmates to rely on non-professional sources such as staff, fellow inmates, and family members. Furthermore, Udem et al. (2024) in Nigeria found that prison library collections were not yet meeting the diverse information needs of inmates, including legal and spiritual matters. Similarly, Awofeso & Opesanwo (2024) emphasized that correctional libraries have substantial potential to support rehabilitation and social reintegration; however, they continue to face challenges, including limited infrastructure, a shortage of trained librarians, and an insufficient supply of relevant materials.

A growing body of research, both in Indonesia and abroad, demonstrates that libraries within detention centers play a crucial role in supporting inmate rehabilitation. However, their functions have not yet been fully optimized due to limitations in collections, facilities, and trained librarians, as well as the lack of strategies tailored to inmates' actual needs. Specifically for female inmates, assessments of reading preferences remain limited, even though this group possesses distinct backgrounds and vulnerabilities. International studies similarly reveal gaps in meeting information needs related to legal matters, health, spirituality, education, and reintegration, resulting in inmates' greater reliance on non-formal information sources. Therefore, a more adaptive and needs-oriented approach is required for library services to support rehabilitation and reintegration efforts effectively.

**State of The Art.** Research on inmates' information needs has been conducted in several contexts, such as among drug-related offenders or juveniles in correctional education settings. However, studies that specifically address the information needs of female inmates through mobile library services remain highly limited. Prior research has primarily focused on general information needs or on fixed library services without examining the psychosocial conditions of female inmates or their specific preferences for various types of reading materials.

The novelty of this study lies in its focused examination of female inmates at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center and its assessment of the Effectiveness of mobile library services in meeting four categories of information needs: social, recreational, professional, and educational. Furthermore, this study offers new insights by proposing the integration of reading collections into inmate development programs through an approach responsive to gender-specific and psychosocial needs.

**Purpose.** This study aims to identify the specific information needs of female inmates at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center, analyze the contribution of mobile library services in meeting those needs, and formulate strategic recommendations to enhance the Effectiveness and relevance of the available information services. The study also seeks to evaluate the extent to which reading materials are utilized across different categories of information needs and to provide suggestions for collection development and female inmates' reading preferences as part of broader rehabilitation and social reintegration efforts.

## II. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine and analyze the information needs of female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, as well as the role of the mobile library service in meeting those needs. Qualitative research is a method that uses narrative or verbal descriptions to explain and understand the meaning of various phenomena, symptoms, and specific social situations. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument responsible for interpreting and making sense of these phenomena (Waruwu, 2023). This method was selected because it provides a deeper understanding of the experiences and information needs of female inmates.

The study was conducted at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, in collaboration with the Bengkulu City Archives and Library Office. The research informants consisted of three female inmates, one detention officer, and one librarian responsible for managing the mobile library service. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives. The selected inmates

were those who frequently utilized the mobile library service and were willing to share their experiences. The detention officer was included due to their direct involvement in mobile library operations, while the librarian was chosen for their role as the service's technical manager and administrator.

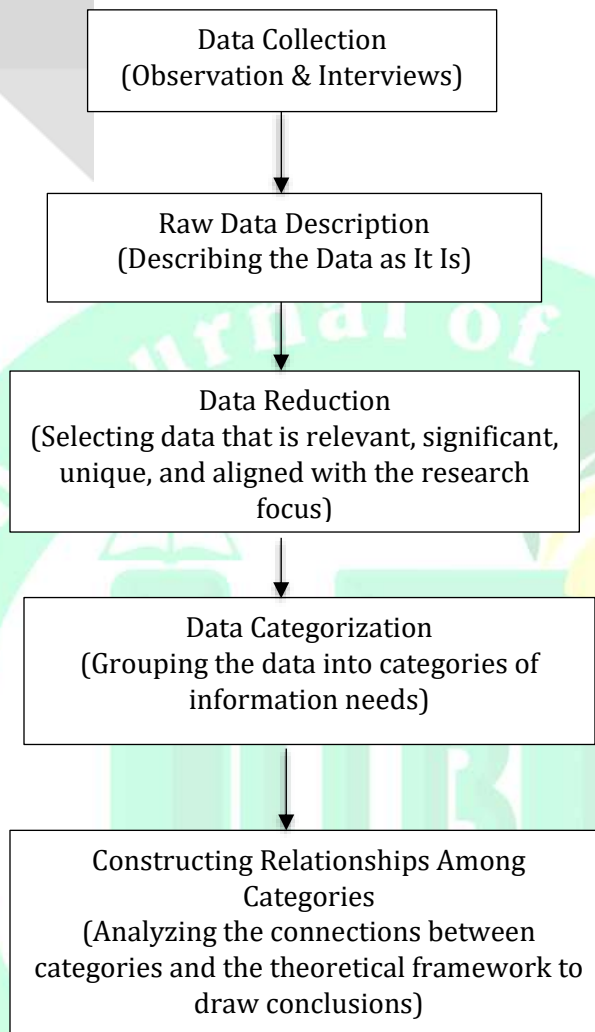
Data collection in this study employed observation and interview techniques. Ensuring data validity is crucial, as data play a fundamental role in the research process. These data serve as the basis for analysis, which subsequently underpins the formulation of conclusions (Sa'adah dkk., 2022). Data collection was conducted through direct interviews with relevant parties, including female inmates, detention officers, and the librarian responsible for managing the mobile library service at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu. Following data collection, the next stage was data analysis. Data analysis is a series of procedures used to organize and categorize data, identify emerging patterns and themes, and interpret the information obtained. According to Sugiyono (2022), qualitative data analysis is conducted through five stages: data collection, description of raw data, data reduction, data categorization, and the construction of relationships among categories.

The initial stage of the analysis began with data collection activities conducted through observation and in-depth interviews. In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly engaging in the process of eliciting information from female inmates, Detention Center staff, and librarians responsible for managing mobile library services. All raw data obtained were then described in their original form as a preliminary step to understand the context of the collected information. At this stage, the data were still scattered and unorganized; therefore, the researcher sought to document all interview and observation results in descriptive form before proceeding to the filtering and grouping stages.

Subsequently, data reduction was carried out, involving selecting and filtering information to retain only data that were relevant, significant, distinctive, and directly aligned with the research focus. The next stage was data categorization, in which the reduced data were sorted and grouped into categories based on the information needs of female inmates, including cognitive, affective, social integration, and personal integration. The final stage involved constructing relationships among categories, namely, analyzing the interconnections between the various categories of information needs and the role of mobile library services in fulfilling them. At this stage, the theoretical framework served as the foundation for understanding the patterns of relationships among categories, enabling more comprehensive conclusions about the phenomenon under investigation.

**Figure 1.**

Qualitative Data Analysis Process Based on Sugiyono's Model

*Source: Research Data, 2025*

The Figure above illustrates the qualitative data analysis process used in this study, beginning with data collection through observations and interviews with female inmates, correctional officers, and the mobile library librarian. All raw data were then described in their original form before entering the data reduction stage, which involved selecting and filtering information to retain only data relevant to the research focus. The reduced data were subsequently categorized into four types of information needs: cognitive, affective, personal integration, and social integration. The final stage involved constructing relationships among these categories by analyzing the linkages between each type of information need and the role of the mobile library services, using a theoretical framework to draw comprehensive conclusions.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The correctional guidance system in Indonesia, as stipulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 1995, is implemented based on the principle of respect for human

dignity, which underscores the importance of treating inmates with respect and acknowledging their fundamental rights, including the right to information. In accordance with this principle, inmates' information needs must be fulfilled as part of the efforts to support rehabilitation and uphold their rights as individuals. Providing relevant information serves not only as an educational resource but also as a psychosocial element that can enhance inmate motivation. Understanding this information needs constitutes an essential first step in supporting the rehabilitation process. As noted by Budi Rachman et al. (2019), providing appropriate information resources for a specific community can improve productivity and well-being. In correctional institutions, meeting the information needs of female inmates can help them develop skills, strengthen self-confidence, and better prepare for reintegration into society after release.

The mobile library service of the Bengkulu City Archives and Library Office collaborates with the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu to meet the information needs of incarcerated women. This service operates twice a month to address limited access to information within the facility and to support rehabilitation by providing mobile library collections. Through this program, inmates are afforded continued opportunities to broaden their knowledge, develop skills, and enhance their intellectual capacities. The initiative underscores the essential role of libraries in inmate rehabilitation, in line with the principle of respect for human dignity, as mandated by Law Number 12 of 1995 of the Republic of Indonesia.

In the context of the information needs of female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, this study maps their information needs into four principal categories as proposed by Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas, as cited in Yusup (2016) in his book *Ilmu Informasi, Komunikasi, dan Kepustakaan*. These categories consist of cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, and social integrative needs.

**Cognitive Needs.** Cognitive needs are closely related to an individual's drive to strengthen or expand information, knowledge, and understanding of their environment. From a cognitive perspective, humans have a natural inclination to comprehend and master their surroundings. For female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, these needs are particularly significant, as they help inmates make sense of their circumstances, discover new pathways for self-development, and prepare for life after release. The interview findings demonstrate that the inmates' cognitive needs are reflected in their interest in reading materials that enhance knowledge and foster new skills. Several inmates expressed specific interest in music, dance, and learning foreign languages. These interests indicate a desire to broaden their horizons while channeling creative potential despite the limitations of confinement. However, the mobile library's collection that supports these interests remains limited, resulting in the suboptimal fulfillment of the inmates' cognitive needs.

Although the mobile library has provided a range of reading materials, including general-interest books and basic knowledge resources, its use remains low. This is mainly due to the mismatch between the available collection and the inmates' actual information needs. As expressed by one inmate:

"I am interested in learning music and dance, but most of the books in the mobile library are about general subjects or basic knowledge. Sometimes I feel unsatisfied because there are not many options that match my interests." (Inmate "M")

These limitations were also acknowledged by the mobile library librarian, who stated that despite the availability of educational materials, collections that specifically align with the interests of female inmates, such as arts and languages, are still very limited:

"We have provided educational collections that include general subject books, but we are aware that some female inmates are interested in fields such as arts and languages. Unfortunately, our collection in these areas is still very limited." (Librarian "N").

This condition illustrates a clear gap between inmates' internal motivation to learn and the facilities available to support it. When cognitive needs are adequately met, inmates are better prepared for social reintegration. Reading materials that align with personal interests serve not only as tools for intellectual enrichment but also as sources of psychological satisfaction, helping reduce stress and enhance self-confidence. This phenomenon is consistent with international research by Awofeso & Opesanwo (2024), which emphasizes that detention-center libraries play a central role in supporting inmates' access to education and skill development. Relevant and needs-based collections have been shown to enhance academic capacity, strengthen practical skills, and reduce the risk of recidivism. However, barriers such as limited infrastructure, the shortage of trained librarians, and the lack of collections aligned with inmates' actual needs often hinder the fulfillment of their cognitive information needs. These findings are also supported by studies conducted in Indonesia, such as Pratiwi (2020) at the Special Detention Center for Children (LPKA) in Palembang. The study demonstrated that library facilities contribute to improving the knowledge and skills of juvenile residents, yet they still fall short in fully accommodating their reading preferences.

Thus, the cognitive information needs of female inmates at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center remain insufficiently fulfilled. A more adaptive strategy is required in developing the library collection, one that takes into account personal interests and relevant skill areas. Such efforts would not only strengthen inmates' intellectual capacities but also foster a more positive self-identity, enhance their self-confidence, and increase their prospects for successful social reintegration upon release.

**Affective Needs.** Affective needs relate to an individual's pursuit of emotional satisfaction, aesthetic experience, and enjoyable forms of entertainment. In the context of female inmates at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center, these needs appear to be exceptionally prominent, as the restrictive conditions of incarceration often generate feelings of boredom, psychological strain, and social isolation. The mobile library service helps address these challenges by providing entertainment-oriented reading materials, thereby serving as an important psychological resource for reducing stress and offering recreational space for the inmates. The findings indicate that female inmates show a relatively high interest in entertainment collections. They show a strong preference for popular literature genres, particularly Korean novels and romance fiction. These preferences reflect the inmates' need for positive emotional stimulation and a psychological

escape from the monotony of daily routines. This condition was also expressed by one of the inmates:

"I prefer reading Korean novels or romance fiction for entertainment. Those books help me momentarily forget my daily routine and make me feel better. However, the collection is limited, so we have to wait patiently for new books to arrive. If more new books could be made available, especially during our free time, it would be very helpful." (Inmate "M")

However, despite the availability of entertainment materials, a gap persists between the high demand and the limited supply of reading resources. This limitation is driven by irregular collection procurement patterns and the prioritization of general or educational reading materials, resulting in insufficient representation of popular fiction.

This phenomenon is consistent with the findings of Nuristia & Anwar (2023), who reported that narcotics inmates at the Class I Tangerang Detention Center have a substantial need for fiction reading materials as a source of entertainment and psychological escape. However, as in Bengkulu, the library collection remains highly limited due to its reliance solely on donated materials. These conditions are further corroborated by the study of Udem et al. (2024) in Nigeria, which revealed that inmates' informational needs related to entertainment and spirituality are inadequately met because prison library collections are severely insufficient.

Thus, the affective needs of female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu highlight the strategic role of entertainment-oriented collections in maintaining emotional stability, reducing psychological distress, and supporting mental well-being during incarceration. To ensure these needs are met more effectively, a more responsive collection development policy is required, one that aligns with the reading preferences of female inmates so that the mobile library can fully function as a recreational space that supports rehabilitation and social reintegration.

**Personal integration needs.** Personal integration needs are often associated with individuals' efforts to strengthen credibility, self-confidence, stability, and social status. These needs emerge from the desire to attain self-worth and prepare for future roles. In the context of female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, personal integration needs are particularly relevant, as they relate to their readiness to navigate life after incarceration. The findings indicate that the mobile library has attempted to address these needs by providing collections oriented toward self-development and practical skill-building. These collections include materials on motivation, entrepreneurship, business development, and practical skills such as culinary arts, sewing, batik-making, salon work, and handicrafts. These resources align with the detention center's rehabilitation programs to enhance inmates' self-reliance.

However, despite the availability of such collections, their utilization remains low. Female inmates tend to prefer recreational reading materials rather than resources that support self-development or professional skill-building. The mobile library librarian also expressed this condition:

"Although we have provided a diverse collection, including self-development and professional skills materials, their use remains limited. Many female inmates are more

interested in recreational materials than in professional collections that could support their future." (librarian "N")

This situation is further reinforced by the detention center officer, who stated:

"If female inmates made greater use of these professional collections, they would be better prepared to participate in rehabilitation programs and ready themselves for life after release." (Officer "Y")

These findings are consistent with Garner (2024) research in Australia, which shows that although inmates have a high need for educational, skills-based, and reintegration information, fulfilling these needs is often hindered by limited facilities and the predominance of informal sources. Similarly, the study by (Udem et al., 2024) in Nigeria found that inmates have extensive needs for professional, financial, and life skills information. However, formal access through detention center libraries remains highly inadequate.

Thus, the fulfillment of personal integration needs through the mobile library collection functions not only as a rehabilitative instrument but also as a long-term strategy to strengthen the preparedness of female inmates for post-release life. In settings with limited access, such as detention centers, a gradual approach becomes essential, beginning with the provision of printed reading materials aligned with inmates' interests, followed by literacy-guidance activities to help them assess the relevance and utility of the information provided (Aisyah & Fauziah, 2018). This stepwise strategy can reinforce the role of the mobile library as a contextual learning medium that cultivates reading interest while simultaneously preparing inmates for life after release.

**Social integration needs.** Social integration needs are associated with strengthening relationships with family, friends, and others in the broader social environment. These needs stem from an individual's desire to affiliate with others and to obtain emotional and social support from their surroundings. In the context of female inmates at the Class IIB Women's Detention Center in Bengkulu, these needs become increasingly significant due to the social isolation experienced during incarceration. The findings indicate that the mobile library has provided reading materials to support inmates' social interaction. These collections are considered strategic because they contribute to three key dimensions: reinforcing relationships among inmates, fostering communication with detention center staff, and facilitating preparation for post-release social reintegration. However, field observations reveal that female inmates' interest in socially oriented reading materials remains relatively low. They tend to prefer entertainment-oriented literature over materials designed to support social interaction skills. As expressed by one informant:

"I occasionally look at those books, but I rarely make use of them. Many books could help with relationships among fellow inmates or guidance on how to communicate with officers, but I am more interested in entertaining books." (inmate "R")

This phenomenon is consistent with findings by Faletar et al. (2022) in Croatia, which revealed that most inmates require information about life in prison, family relationships, and post-release living. These findings underscore that inmates' information needs are primarily shaped by social and emotional aspects, particularly in maintaining connections with the outside world and preparing for the post-release period. Garner's (2024) study

demonstrates a similar pattern, showing that inmates tend to seek information concerning personal and social aspects of life, including efforts toward reintegration after release. This indicates that access to socially oriented information not only helps inmates better understand themselves and their environment, but also strengthens their adaptability and readiness to return to society.

Thus, the social integration needs of women inmates at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center have not been fully met through the mobile library service. To enhance its Effectiveness, information delivery formats must be more interactive and aligned with the inmates' psychosocial conditions. Outreach activities, group-based programs, or community-oriented approaches can serve as alternative strategies to strengthen social relationships while ensuring that information becomes truly functional in supporting rehabilitation and social reintegration.

**Research findings Discussions.** The findings of this study indicate a misalignment between the information collections provided by the mobile library service and the actual needs of women inmates. This is reflected in the low utilization of materials related to social integration, cognitive development, and personal integration, despite their availability. In contrast, affective collections, such as fictional novels, particularly those in the romance genre, show a significantly higher rate of use. This condition is consistent with the findings of Nuristia & Anwar (2023), who reported that inmates tend to prefer reading materials themed around entertainment and religion as a form of psychological escape and a means of seeking emotional comfort during incarceration. This is also consistent with Fadhlurrahman (2022), findings which reported that the low utilization of educational collections at the Sleman Detention Center was due to limited literacy awareness and insufficient facility support. These findings reinforce that merely providing collections is not adequate. Instead, educational and participatory approaches are required for library services to function effectively. A contrast is evident in the study by Pratiwi (2020) at the Palembang Special Detention Center for Children (LPKA), where juvenile inmates demonstrated high enthusiasm for textbooks and religious materials. In contrast, adult female inmates were more in need of affective reading materials. This difference reflects the influence of age-related factors and affective needs on patterns of information consumption.

When compared with international studies, the patterns identified in this research show notable similarities. Garner (2024) identified six domains of inmates' information needs in Australia, including legal matters, education, spirituality, health, prison life, and reintegration. However, most of these needs remain unmet because inmates tend to rely more on fellow inmates or family members than on the library. This aligns with the findings of Udem et al. (2024) in Nigeria, which highlight the limitations of library collections and facilities in meeting diverse information needs. Similarly, the study by Sharda & Tiwari (2021) in India found that the majority of inmates preferred reading materials related to religion, health, and education, and viewed the library as a means of moral development and psychological rehabilitation. The researchers emphasized that access to library services helps inmates cope with the pressures of prison life and enhances their self-confidence. In a similar context, Faletar et al. (2022) in Croatia found that most inmates require information on prison life, family relationships, and post-release living. Nonetheless, some reported that

these needs remain unmet due to limited library facilities, leading inmates to rely more heavily on family and friends as their primary sources of information. These findings reinforce the conclusion that female inmates are more interested in reading materials with social and emotional content, as such materials provide a sense of connection to the outside world and support their adaptation during incarceration. In line with this, Awofeso & Opesanwo (2024) underscore the importance of correctional libraries as instruments for education and social reintegration. However, they also encounter similar barriers, such as limited facilities and collections that do not align with inmates' actual needs. Overall, this evidence indicates that both in Indonesia and globally, correctional libraries continue to face a significant gap between the services available and the real needs of their users.

Considering these similarities and differences, it can be concluded that inmates' information needs are not uniform. Instead, they are shaped by factors such as age, gender, case background, and psychological condition. The availability of formal collections does not necessarily guarantee that information needs will be met, as inmates often seek reading materials that provide entertainment and emotional comfort. Therefore, the management of information services in correctional institutions must be designed in a participatory and contextual manner so that they function not only as information providers but also as instruments of rehabilitation and personal development for inmates.

**Unexpected Finding.** One unexpected finding is the high level of interest among female inmates in information related to the arts and languages, particularly music and dance, which has not been a primary focus in collection development. This indicates that inmates possess needs that are not always reflected in conventional information categories, such as formal education or technical skills. Within the existing literature, such findings are rarely discussed explicitly. Previous studies have tended to emphasize religious reading materials, vocational skills, or formal education. Thus, this finding opens new avenues, suggesting that rehabilitation programs grounded in artistic interests may serve as a practical alternative approach for female inmates.

In addition, there is a growing tendency for inmates to access information not solely for knowledge, but also for emotional fulfillment. These findings indicate that the affective dimension plays a significant role in information-seeking behavior, particularly among female inmates who experience psychological pressure during incarceration. This distinction underscores that information needs within correctional settings are not only rational and cognitive, but also emotional and therapeutic. Therefore, libraries must consider emotional factors as an integral part of their strategies for meeting inmates' information needs.

**Limitations of the Study Disclaimer.** This study has several limitations that must be acknowledged to allow readers to interpret the findings appropriately. First, the scope of the study is limited to a single site, namely the Class IIB Bengkulu Detention Center, which means that generalizing the results to female inmates in other regions or types of detention centers should be approached with caution. Second, the number of informants is relatively small and selected purposively, which may introduce selection bias and may not fully represent the diversity of inmates' backgrounds. Third, time and security restrictions within the detention center limited the frequency of observations and the duration of interviews, potentially leaving certain aspects of behavior and information-needs dynamics unexplored in depth. Considering these limitations, the findings of this study should be understood as an in-depth illustration specific to the study context rather than a comprehensive representation. Future research employing comparative designs across multiple detention centers, larger sample sizes, and mixed quantitative–qualitative methods is recommended to strengthen external validity and generate more generalizable recommendations.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

This study was conducted to identify the information needs of female inmates and to analyze the role of mobile library services at the Class IIB Bengkulu Women's Detention Center in supporting the rehabilitation process. The findings explicitly show that the information needs of female inmates encompass cognitive, affective, personal integration, and social integration domains. However, a gap exists between the availability of collections and actual needs. Affective information materials, particularly fiction novels, art books, and language-related materials, are the most preferred, as they serve as sources of entertainment and psychological comfort. In contrast, cognitive, personal, and social integration materials are underutilized because inmates lack a clear understanding of their long-term relevance.

A key novelty of this study is the identification of a dominant need for recreational and artistic information as a coping strategy for female inmates in dealing with psychological stress during incarceration. This finding introduces a new perspective to the study of information needs in detention settings, which has traditionally emphasized educational, legal, or religious aspects. Thus, this research broadens understanding of the role of information in correctional contexts, showing that it functions not only as a learning instrument but also as a significant medium for psychosocial recovery. The contribution of this study is demonstrated in two forms. First, the theoretical contribution strengthens the understanding that information needs are contextual and influenced by gender, psychological conditions, and inmates' social backgrounds. Second, the practical contribution offers strategic recommendations for optimizing mobile library services, including diversifying collections to better match inmates' preferences, increasing the rotation of reading materials, integrating collections with skills development programs, and implementing more interactive delivery methods.

In conclusion, this study affirms that mobile library services should not be positioned merely as providers of formal collections, but must be directed toward becoming multidimensional rehabilitation instruments capable of addressing the actual needs of female inmates. These findings provide a foundation for developing correctional library services that are more adaptive, participatory, and contextually grounded, while also opening opportunities for future research with broader scopes to strengthen the generalizability of the results.

**Future Research Directions.** The results of this study open avenues for further research to deepen the understanding of female inmates' information needs. Future studies may focus on comparative analyses across Women's Detention Centers in different regions to examine variations in needs and the information service strategies implemented. In addition, quantitative or mixed-methods approaches are recommended to statistically assess the Effectiveness of reading materials in supporting inmates' rehabilitation. Subsequent research may also explore more adaptive, technology-based methods of information delivery, such as digital libraries or audiobooks, for inmates with low literacy levels. Moreover, the primary contribution of this study to the field of library and information science lies in its emphasis on the importance of gender-sensitive and psychosocial approaches in the design of information services within detention environments. In practice, this research also contributes to improving policies for mobile library services, making them more responsive to users' actual needs, particularly those of female inmates, within the broader framework of social reintegration and the restoration of human dignity.

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