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Regret and Fear: The Essence of Guilt Among Recidivists at LPKA Kelas II Tomohon

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Abstract

This research is motivated by the increasing number of recidivism cases among children in the Correctional Institution (LPKA), which indicates the complexity of psychological problems, particularly related to guilt. The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning of guilt among recidivists in the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA). This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. The research subjects consisted of two recidivist children and three supporting informants selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. Data analysis used the Moustakas phenomenological model, which includes transcription, horizontalization, grouping of meanings, textural and structural descriptions, and synthesis of essential meanings. The results show that guilt among recidivists is formed through moral regret towards the victim, family, and oneself, as well as fear that appears in the form of social anxiety, recurring dreams, and aggressive behavior. The conclusion of this study indicates that guilt among recidivists is complex and multidimensional, which is not only a moral reflection but also a psychological burden that influences behavior and self-identity.

Keywords: Adolescent Offender, Guilty Feeling, Phenomenology, Recidivism, Self Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

Children are individuals in a crucial developmental phase marked by significant physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes (Zarina, 2025; Sengkey et al., 2025). At this stage, the family and social environment play a crucial role in shaping a child's character and developmental direction, particularly in fostering healthy social adaptation skills (Siregar & Subiyantoro, 2021; UNICEF, 2023). However, this developmental process is also accompanied by vulnerability to environmental influences, particularly during the period of identity discovery, which can increase the tendency for children to engage in risky behavior (Shulman et al., 2015; Kamasi et al., 2024).

The increasing involvement of children in deviant behavior and crime indicates a serious problem in their psychosocial development. Data shows that children are involved not only in minor cases such as theft, but also in serious cases such as violence and drug use (Talaksoru & Amelia, 2024; Pusiknas Bareskrim Polri, 2025). This condition occurs not only at the national level but also in regional areas, including North Sulawesi, which recorded the presence of children as detainees and prisoners in LPKA (Directorate General of Corrections, 2025; UNODC, 2024). This fact indicates that risky behavior in children has developed into a social problem that requires serious attention from various parties.

A more complex problem arises when some children who have undergone rehab actually commit crimes, a phenomenon known as recidivism. This situation indicates that the ongoing rehab process has not been fully effective in changing children's behavior (Asrullah et al., 2019; Setiawan & Sakti, 2019). Furthermore, the limitations of a strictly structured rehab institution can impact children's emotional well-being and increase psychological stress during the rehab period (Iqbal et al., 2022; Raharjo et al., 2023). This reinforces the hypothesis that internal factors such as emotional regulation and self-control play a significant role in the emergence of relapsed criminal behavior in children.

From a psychological perspective, recidivism is not only related to behavioral aspects, but also to an individual's emotional and moral dynamics, one of which is guilt. Guilt is an emotional response to negative actions that have been committed and can serve as a self-reflection mechanism to prevent the repetition of similar behavior (Xu et al., 2011; Hosser et al., 2008). However, not all recidivists are able to interpret guilt adaptively, as factors such as social support, negative labels, and unmet expectations can influence the emergence of this emotion (Setyonugroho, 2010; Anissa, 2019). This suggests that an in-depth study of the subjective experience of guilt in recidivist children is still urgently needed.

This research is important because there are still limited studies that specifically explore

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the meaning of guilt in recidivist children in correctional institutions, particularly in the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA). Previous studies have focused more on factors of criminal behavior and recidivism in general, while aspects of emotional experiences and subjective meanings of children have received less attention (Cohen et al., 2011; Setiawan & Sakti, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to understand the deeper meaning of guilt in recidivists in the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution through a phenomenological approach. The urgency of this research lies in its contribution to enriching the study of social psychology and child rehabilitation, while also providing novelty in the form of exploring the subjective experience of guilt as a potential factor in supporting behavioral change in recidivist children.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand the meaning of guilt in recidivist children at the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA). The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to explore social phenomena in depth in natural settings without variable manipulation (Sugiyono, 2023; Creswell, 2023). Phenomenology is used to explore subjective experiences and individual awareness in interpreting guilt as a psychological and moral experience (Kuswarno, 2009; Sparkes & Smith, 2009), thus this study emphasizes understanding the essence of the subject's life experience holistically (Emzir, 2022; Sudaryono, 2023).

The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, selected based on specific criteria consistent with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2023; Creswell, 2023). The primary subjects were two recidivist juveniles undergoing rehabilitation at the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA), who were under 18 years of age, had a history of repeated criminal offenses, and were involved in a murder case. Three supporting informants from LPKA staff were also involved to strengthen the data through source triangulation, thus providing more in-depth information and comprehensively describing the subjects' experiences.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself as a human instrument who plays a role in the entire research process from planning to drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2023; Creswell, 2023), with the help of a recording device to document the interviews. The data analysis technique uses Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology model which includes the stages of transcription, horizontalization, grouping of meanings, textural and structural descriptions, and synthesis of essential meanings (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2023), so that an in-depth picture of the meaning of guilt is obtained in the research subjects.

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The research procedure begins with the preparation stage, which includes instrument development, subject selection, and research permit processing. Data collection is then continued through semi-structured interviews and documentation (Sugiyono, 2023; Emzir, 2022). Subsequently, triangulation of sources, methods, and time was conducted to ensure data validity (Wijaya, 2018; Sugiyono, 2023). The final stage includes transcription, data reduction, thematic analysis, and conclusion drawing to obtain a complete and systematic understanding of guilt among recidivist children at the Class II Tomohon LPKA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis between respondents

1. Thematic analysis among SS respondents

A. Social consequences

Several times during the interview, SS explained how the impact of his actions was not only felt by himself but also by his family, who were not involved in the incident. SS said that as a result of his actions, his family had to endure punishment from their surroundings, such as ostracization and hatred from society.

"...Please tape mama and tape kaka with tape sebe stepsi so you can stay there" WII.220

Knowing that his family also felt the negative consequences of his own actions made SS feel like he was the source of the family's suffering, because he felt he could not defend or protect his family from the existing stigma.

".... Mama came when Mama came on a visit. Mama said "Oh, what did you say when Mama got on the motorbike, she's mo kase-kase cilaka said pa tape Mama". That's kong taso guard ba angry le to, mar taso here le to taso nda mo dapa-dapa bekeng apa le. If we're still outside to ta we can still split" WIV.89

According to an informant, the status of a prisoner, especially as a repeat offender, makes it extremely difficult for these children to avoid social stigma. Consequently, the perpetrator's family may also experience social stigma as a result of the child's actions. Rehabilitation programs, such as social reintegration at the LPKA (Coroner's Office), are hampered by the community's desire to impose social punishment on both the perpetrator and their family.

"...But that's also an external challenge. Why is this social reintegration not complete? Because of society's views." WI3.54

"…Yes, yes, he was stigmatized and he thought that the victim's family would take revenge,

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so he was still looking for circle friends who could protect him." WI3.64

This theme demonstrates that the consequences of a crime don't stop with the perpetrator, but extend to social stigma against the family. This experience reinforces SS's guilt, as it can be said that his family is indirectly a victim of SS's actions.

B. Regret

This theme illustrates the respondents' awareness of the mistakes they made and the negative impacts they had on themselves, their families, and the victim. SS expressed regret for the victim and acknowledged that his actions, which resulted in the loss of her life, were wrong.

"…Because he was so wrong..he became so angry like this" WV.184

In addition to remorse for the victim, SS's regret also stemmed from the realization that he had disappointed his family, especially his mother. Feeling that he had wasted the trust and opportunities his parents had given him, SS was unable to escape this regret.

"…I regret that I disappointed my mother so much" WV.64

SS realized that his actions had not only destroyed others, but also destroyed himself. He faced a lengthy sentence. Realizing this reality, SS felt remorse for himself. He regretted his decision, which had cost him the opportunity of his youth.

"…Regret. Because my youth was wasted in prison" WII.266

An informant described changes in respondent SS's behavior compared to the first case. In this second case, SS appeared to be more withdrawn than before.

"...So what we mean is, maybe because he regrets it more than he did in the previous case, so he is more pangbadiam" (WI1.49)

Through this theme, the researcher tries to explain how SS's moral regret does not only appear as an admission that his actions were wrong, but also a combination of guilt for the negative impacts that must be felt by the victim, his family and himself.

C. Dynamics of Relationships with Family

The focus of SS's interpretation of guilt lies in the dynamics of his relationship with his family. SS experiences deep regret when he remembers the promise he broke to his mother.

"...That's why you once promised Mama to, Mama said so stop jo. Kong taso ba promise so you can repeat it" WV.74

"...Mama so said noh, if so ba repeats mama somo kase let me say. Kong we ba promise noh"

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According to informant 3, the feeling of regret that SS felt about his mother was reasonable if it was adjusted to the confession of SS's mother who always tried to fulfill SS's needs while he was still outside of prison.

"…We said that because there was an emotional bond, he was angry with Depe, Mama, he kept giving him away, like that. So why would he feel guilty towards Depe, the young man, or why would he feel guilty about anything when in his life he is not… not on the list, dang" WI3.136

Family was one of the topics SS frequently discussed during the interview. SS admitted to frequently thinking about his family while in detention.

"…Take care of your thoughts, Mama, and your family" WIV.16

After SS committed his second crime, a distance emerged between him and his family. This was confirmed by informant 2, who explained that SS's family had not visited him during his detention.

"…He seems to have never been visited by anyone at the moment." WI2.121

This emerging distance is what triggers feelings of guilt in SS. This theme tries to explain how family relationships, especially with the figure of the mother, become the center of meaning for feelings of guilt in SS. In this position, the family becomes a source of emotional support for SS, as well as being the greatest source of guilt for SS.

D. Failure of reconciliation efforts

After the incident, SS admitted to having a strong desire to apologize to the victim's family. Although ultimately rejected by the family, this indicates SS's efforts to repair the relationship.

"...Mama deng actually kwa mo ba tell the story to the victim pe papa or the victim pe mama, mar dong nda kase. Ta mo apologize dong nda kase" WIV.52

SS's failure to obtain forgiveness from the victim's family is undoubtedly one of the factors contributing to persistent guilt. Therefore, through this theme, the researcher attempts to explain how a peace process or reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator can be a factor in reducing the moral burden experienced by the perpetrator.

E. Fear

Connected to the previous theme, SS's emotional experience of not finding a resolution through a peaceful process led to feelings of fear. SS admitted to fearing that the victim's family would one day retaliate against him for what he had done.

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"…Tako jang dong dapa to, dong mo bage" WIII.19

Apart from the fear of retaliation, SS was also fear that his actions would result in his family abandoning him.

"…Come on Mama, please let me go" WIV.36

In addition to the emergence of feelings of fear about future possibilities, this emotional experience was also internalized into a form of mental torture that SSSS continued to experience. He admitted to having dreamed about it several times, and even felt like he was being watched by the victim.

*"…It was in the room, when we were dreaming, we opened our eyes like this, and then he was there, and he was like this."*WIV.113

SS also explained how tormented he was by recurring memories of the victim. In this case, SS admitted that this emotional burden was persistent and difficult to forget.

*"…Tortured"*WV.94

The manifestation of thematic analysis in SS respondents can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Thematic analysis table of SS respondents

No	Verbatim	Unit then	Theme
WII.210	My friend's house was burned down, only my house was not burned.	social sanctions	Social Consequences
WII.220	My mother, my older sister and my stepfather are no longer allowed to live there.	The family is ostracized	
WIV.85	They hate more. They seemed to hate my parents more than me	Widespread hatred	
WIV.89	When Mom came to visit me, she said, "So, at that time, Mom was on the motorbike, and he wanted to hurt Mom." I was angry, but since I was already here, I couldn't do anything. If I were still outside, I could have defended her.	Threats to the family	

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WV.66	Has made the victim become like this (very slowly)	Regret for the victim's condition	Regret
WV.184	Because it was wrong.. It made him like this.	Realizing mistakes	
WV.194	Already self-destructed	Feeling broken	
WII.266	Regret. Because my youth has been spent in prison.	Cognitive evaluation	
WV.64	Sorry for disappointing Mama	Deep regret	
WV.74	Because I had promised my mother, she told me to stop. Then I promised not to do it again.	Breaking promises	Dynamics of relationships with family
WIV.16	Remembering Mama and other family	Longing for family	
WIV.52	To Mama and actually wanted to talk to the victim's father, or the victim's mother, but was not allowed. I wanted to apologize but was not allowed.	Failure to achieve peace	Failure of reconciliation efforts
WIV.113	I was in my room, and then I had a dream. When I opened my eyes, I saw him (the victim) standing in front of me.	Visual hallucinations	Fear
WV.94	Tortured	Feeling of torture	
WV.96	Because every time I think back to the victims, I keep remembering them.	Recurrent memory	
WIV.111	It likes to come and go like that. So I often get paralyzed.	Somatic manifestations	
WIII.19	Fear that if they meet them (the victim's family), they will take revenge	Fear of retaliation	
WIV.36	Yes, don't let Mama not care anymore	Fear of destroying the relationship	

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		with the mother figure	

a)Textural and Structural Description of SS

SS explained that his experience of guilt began with his awareness that the crime he had committed not only had consequences for himself but also destroyed his family's social life. He recounted how his family experienced hatred, threats, and even ostracization from their community as a result of his actions. This made him feel like a source of suffering for his family.

This experience left SS with a lasting emotional impact and reinforced his guilt. The realization that he was the cause of others' suffering left SS with a lingering regret, even though the incident had long since passed.

For SS, family, especially his mother, became the center of his understanding of guilt. The deep regret he felt once again was not only for the crime he had committed, but also for disappointing his mother and betraying his promise not to repeat the same mistake. Ironically, the presence of family, described as SS's primary source of emotional support, also became his greatest source of guilt.

On the other hand, SS admitted to needing to restore the relationship through an apology to the family. However, the victim's family's rejection undoubtedly left SS's guilt without emotional resolution.

SS's failed reconciliation later developed into a persistent psychological burden. He experienced dreams about the victim, even recurring memories. These experiences were a projection of the fear stemming from SS's failure to find emotional resolution to his guilt. This experience illustrates how guilt, when unable to find a path to healing, becomes internalized and becomes a burden.

The complex emotional experiences SS experienced later influenced how he viewed himself. Beyond the moral burden he felt for the victims and their families, remembering the lengthy detention period made him regret losing hope for his future. The perceived wasted time he had spent as a young man led him to view himself as a damaged individual, especially compared to other children his age. In reality, being in a detention cell was not only a form of punishment, but also a space for constant reflection, forcing SS to remember, regret, and gradually lose his identity.

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2. Thematic analysis of AB respondents

A. Relationship breakdown

AB's relationship breakdown reflects the damage to his interpersonal relationships after the incident. The victim in AB's latest case was not a stranger, but someone very close to him. AB stated that before the incident, he and the victim had been very close friends since childhood.

"…We and the victim usually guard the bed together, friend." WIV.54

As a result of this emotional closeness, AB's guilt became more complex. In addition to destroying his relationship with the victim, AB explained that the incident resulted in his separation from his family.

"… One, because I am far from my parents" WV.50

This theme tells the story of AB's experience, where guilt arises not only from what happened to the victim, but also from who the victim is. When there was a previous friendship between the perpetrator and the victim, the act of violence is interpreted not only as a violation of the law but also as guilt for destroying the existing friendship.

B. The desire to apologize

AB expressed his desire to apologize to the victim for his actions. When linked to his relationship with the victim, this desire to apologize to AB can be understood as AB's attempt to repair the interpersonal relationship that had been damaged by his own actions.

"…I apologize for being so careless." WIV.68

AB's efforts to improve relations of course started with efforts to improve himself, this was explained by informant 2, how AB experienced a gradual change in behavior towards something better than before.

"…If we look at him, he has changed a lot, but this is only because he was acting as he pleased inside yesterday." WI2.30

"…Yes, that delinquency has gone down. You are also very good right away, you" WI2.85

Although AB realized his apology couldn't reach the victim directly, he still felt the need to receive an apology, even if only from the victim's family. This apology was not only an acknowledgement of his mistake, but also reflected his need for moral and emotional healing.

C. Regret

In this theme, the researcher found that the moral regret experienced by AB emerged

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along with the awareness that he had carried out actions that were contrary to his existing values.

"…It's sad, because he regrets it because he killed a woman." WIV.60

The awareness of this violation ultimately gives rise to emotional experiences in the form of feelings of destruction over what has happened, and also because of being separated from family.

"…I feel so regretful because my parents gave me a good school, but I don't have much taste. Even though we are so... so useful, it's not that useful." WIV.157

Through this theme, we can see how this incident led AB to a moral evaluation of his actions. This evaluation gave rise to feelings of regret. Interestingly, AB's regret arose not because of the punishment he received, but because his actions harmed and disappointed others.

D. Fear

AB's description of the emotional experience was quite intense. AB herself experienced prolonged emotional burden and admitted to having difficulty managing it. AB experienced dreams of the victim.

"…Ta da, ta dream that he was angry with us, we were angry with him" WIV.185

Furthermore, according to his account, AB explained that when memories of the victims and their families surfaced, the guilt he felt grew even greater and heavier. He had been involved in trouble at the LPKA several times due to his aggressive behavior. According to AB, this behavior emerged as a form of uncontrolled guilt, which he took out on others.

"...You know, every time there's a new prisoner, we'll take care of it," WIV.163,

AB's experience demonstrates that guilt doesn't just stop at moral remorse, but develops into feelings of anxiety and fear that can even influence AB's emotional state and how he responds to his surroundings. This is confirmed by several informants who reported how AB exhibited aggressive behavior, possibly triggered by memories of his family.

"…Only what we get is that, what is he like? Maybe it's the thoughts of his family outside. Even though he's the person we pay attention to, he can't be wrong, he has high blood pressure." WI1.23

"…It's just that we see it's probably because of his family, maybe when he calls his family, he can find out what's going on with his family, so he's like this, yeah, maybe he's stressed or something." WI1.35

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E. Existential Crisis

After seeing and realizing the impact of his actions, AB developed a negative view of himself. He viewed himself as an imperfect individual after the incident.

"...The taste of so is perfect noh. So bekeng.. because so bekeng is a crime" WV.120

The realization that his actions were wrong and violated legal norms made AB hate himself. AB explained how this feeling of guilt tormented him to the point of wanting to end his own life.

"…So we feel.. we feel like we are being treated like this" WIV.1331

"…Mo said torture there is torture, that's it!" WV.60

"..Mo… ba gantong begitu (slow)" WV.110

The following is a thematic analysis table from respondent AB

Table 2. AB Thematic Analysis Table

No	Verbatim	Unit of meaning	Theme
WIV.54	The victim and I usually sleep together. We are friends.	The victim is a friend	Relationship breakdown
WV.50	One, because he is far from his parents.	Sad to be separated from family	
WIV.60	Yes, it's sad, because I regret that just because of a woman's problem, I have to kill him.	Deep regret	Regret
WV.145	Feeling sorry for making him lose his life	Regret for the victim's condition	
WIV.157	I felt regretful because my parents had given me the opportunity to go to school, but I ended up being a bad kid. And I felt... like, useless.	Feelings of uselessness	
WIV.129	Ee my feelings are so broken	Feeling devastated	
WV.54	Then I made a big mistake	Violating values	
WIV.68	Sorry for making such a mistake.	Intention to apologize	Desire to Apologize

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WIV.185	I dream of him. He was angry at me, I was angry at him	Subconscious projection	Fear
WIV.163	I don't know why, but every time a new prisoner comes in, I always beat him up.	The emergence of maladaptive behavior	
WIV.131	So it feels... I feel hate for my behavior	Self-hate	Existential Crisis
WV.120	I feel like I'm not perfect anymore. Because I've committed crimes.	Feeling imperfect	
WV.110	Want to… hang myself like that (slowly)	Suicidal ideation	
WV.60	If you say torture, yes there is torture, that's what it is	Feeling of torture	

a) Textural and Structural Description of AB

AB's guilt stemmed from the fact that the victim of his crime was not a stranger, but rather a childhood friend. The close relationship between the two deepened the meaning of this incident, not just as a violation of the law, but also as a betrayal of a long-standing relationship. In addition to destroying the friendship, this incident also resulted in AB being separated from his family due to his detention.

Furthermore, AB's experience of guilt is also related to regret over his failure to meet his family's expectations. AB regrets his own actions, which he considers to have wasted the opportunity to get a good education, instead he fell into social circles and delinquency that ultimately led him to this point. The realization that he had done something contrary to moral values made AB experience deep moral regret. AB views his actions as a major mistake, which not only impacted the victim, but also destroyed him and hurt his family. The feelings of devastation that emerged in AB show that guilt is experienced as intense and painful emotional regret.

In addition to moral remorse, AB's persistent guilt developed into a serious fear. For AB, this experience was quite extreme. AB had a dream about the victim, in which the two were involved in a fight. This can be described as a form of unresolved issues between the two. AB explained how he felt that the memory of the incident tormented him. He was

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unable to bear the burden of guilt he felt towards the victim or his regret towards his family. Therefore, AB explained that at certain times when he was unable to bear this emotional burden, he would behave aggressively. AB described this aggressive behavior as a way of releasing the emotions or burden in his mind when he had to remember the victim and his family. This experience can be seen as a form of fear of the repercussions of his actions.

The LPKA environment also served as a space that strengthened AB's self-reflection process. In his isolation from the outside world, AB had ample time to reflect on his actions and the impact they had caused. This situation heightened AB's awareness and guilt, affecting how he viewed himself. Not only did the guilt cause emotional burdens, but it also destroyed his identity and self-confidence. Even more seriously, AB harbored thoughts of suicide as a form of punishment for his actions.

This intense emotional awareness and experience gave rise to AB's desire to apologize for his actions. AB felt he needed it as a way to repair his relationship and gain moral acceptance. Although AB realized the victim could not be brought back, he still needed forgiveness to at least ease the emotional and psychological burden he was experiencing.

3. Thematic analysis across respondents

After conducting a cross-thematic analysis on both respondents, SS and AB, the researchers identified several themes that were deemed to have shared meanings. These themes emerged consistently across both respondents and were deemed to represent the structure of their guilt experiences in depth and comprehensively.

A. Regret

One theme that emerged consistently across the two respondents was regret. Regret refers not only to the actions taken, but also to the impact felt by the victim, their family, and themselves. A cross-respondent analysis revealed two forms of regret: personal regret, where respondents felt remorse for their own experiences.

"…Regret. Because my youth was wasted in prison" R1.WII.266

"...So please correct the violations that are allowed to be corrected" R2.WV.58

Then, there is the form of social regret where the regret felt comes from outside oneself, such as the impact received by the victim or the innocent family.

"…I regret that I disappointed my mother so much" R1.WV.64

"…I feel so regretful because my parents gave me a good school, but I don't have much taste. Even though we look... it's not that useful." R2.WIV.157

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Although divided into two forms, personal and social regret, the regret felt by both respondents emerged as a reflection on the aftermath of the event. This theme indicates that the respondents possess a moral awareness of the negative impact of their actions.

B. Fear

Besides regret, fear was another theme that emerged and occurred in both respondents. Fear, in this case, reflects the psychological burden experienced by respondents after committing a crime. Similar to regret, fear here can be seen in two main forms. Fear of retaliation from the victim's family, fear of abandonment, and aggressive behavior are manifestations of changes in self-response to the environment, which are then interpreted as social fear.

"…Tako jang dong dapa to, dong mo bage" R1.WIII.19

"...You know, every time there is a new prisoner, we will beat them" R2.WIV.163

This behavior indicates a defense mechanism and hypervigilance of the surrounding environment. In addition to fear of future possibilities and the social environment, both respondents described recurring memories of the event and the victim. Over time, these memories caused them to experience psychological burdens that emerged through dreams about the victim, which were then interpreted as personal fears.

"…It was in the room, when we had a dream, we opened our eyes like this, and then there he was, and he was like this" R1.WIV.113

"…Ta da, ta dream that he was angry with us, we were angry with him" R2.WIV.185

Table 3. Cross-respondent thematic analysis table

No	Verbatim	Unit of meaning	Theme
R1.WII.266	Regret. Because my youth has been spent in prison.	Cognitive evaluation	Regret
R2.WV.58	Have committed violations that should not be committed	Regret having violated personal values	
R1.WV. 64	Sorry for disappointing Mama	Regret disappointing parents	
R2. WIV.60	Yes, it's sad, because I regret that just because of	Deep regret	

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	a woman's problem, I have to kill him.		
R2. WV.145	Feeling sorry for making him lose his life	Regret for the victim's condition	
R2 WIV.157	I felt regretful because my parents had given me the opportunity to go to school, but I ended up being a bad kid. And I felt... like, useless.	Feelings of uselessness	
R1.WIII.19	Fear that if they meet them (the victim's family), they will take revenge	Fear of retaliation	Fear
R1.WIV.36	Yes, don't let Mama not care anymore	Fear of destroying the relationship with the mother figure	
R2. WIV.163	I don't know why, but every time a new prisoner comes in, I always beat him up.	Aggressive behavior appears	
R1.WIV.113	I was in my room, and then I had a dream. When I opened my eyes, I saw him (the victim) standing in front of me.	Visual Hallucinations	
R2. WIV.185	I dream of him. He was angry at me, I was angry at him	Subconscious projection	

a) Composite description

Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the two respondents, it was found that the experiences in interpreting the guilt experienced by both of them had a similar experiential structure even though they appeared in different life contexts.

Guilt among recidivists in the LPKA is interpreted as a complex and profound

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emotional experience. This emotional experience is interpreted by both as a combination of moral reflection and the psychological burden resulting from the guilt itself. Texturally, both SS and AB experience moral remorse as a form of awareness of the negative impact of their actions. This remorse extends beyond regret for their actions and the punishment they received, but also to the suffering experienced by the victim, their family, and themselves.

In both respondents, regret emerged in two forms: personal regret and social regret. Personal regret stems from the realization that their actions harmed themselves and destroyed their future. Meanwhile, social regret emerged as a realization that their actions had disappointed their families and harmed the victims.

In addition to moral remorse, both respondents experienced fear, which emerged as a form of prolonged emotional burden after the incident. Their fear stemmed from uncertainty about the future and their relationships with their social environment. In SS's case, this fear manifested itself as fear of possible retaliation from the victim's family and the destruction of their relationships. Meanwhile, in AB's case, this fear manifested itself as aggressive behavior toward other inmates as a way of venting uncontrollable emotional burden.

Recurrent memories of the actions and their negative impacts internalized the guilt experienced by both respondents, influencing their lives and how they responded to their surroundings. Thus, this cross-respondent analysis shows that the essence of the guilt experience in both respondents was formed through a combination of moral reflection that gave rise to regret and also the psychological burden of fear arising from awareness of the consequences of the criminal act they committed.

Research Discussion

1. Regret

Regret was the first theme that emerged consistently and quite strongly in respondents SS and AB. The moral regret experienced showed an awareness of the negative impacts caused to the victim, family, and oneself.Cohen et al., (2011),explains that the dynamics of guilt can arise in individuals as a form of moral evaluation that the individual has carried out behavior that is not in accordance with values, and has resulted in harm to others.

Other literature sources also explain that guilt is a form of reflective emotion that arises through a person's introspection after causing a negative event.(Xu et al., 2011). This theory aligns with the findings of the study, particularly on the theme of regret. Respondents'

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statements about "I feel so regretful because my parents gave me a good school, but I don't have much taste. With our appearance... appearance, I'm so useful" and "I regret being so disappointed in my mother" illustrate that the guilt in both respondents was formed through the awareness that their actions were self-destructive and detrimental, as well as hurting and damaging relationships with others. This finding is also supported by the results of research conducted on foster children at the Class II Tomohon LPKA, which stated that foster children showed feelings of guilt for their actions due to developments in self-control and moral evaluation.(Kamasi et al., 2024)

In this context, guilt can function as a social regulatory mechanism that encourages the perpetrator's awareness and remorse that their actions not only violate the law but also harm previously established bonds or relationships. Guilt plays a crucial role in leading criminals to self-evaluate their actions for harming others and demonstrating positive behavioral changes. (Baumeister et al., 1994)

2. Fear

Besides regret, another theme that emerged among both respondents was fear. Both respondents recognized that their actions had violated societal values and norms, leading them to attempt to apologize. However, this was unsuccessful and met with rejection. These failed attempts at reconciliation fueled feelings of guilt that became increasingly heavy and difficult to control. Instead of acceptance, the respondents experienced fear. This experience manifested itself through fear of future retaliation, abandonment, dreams of the victim, and the emergence of aggressive behavior.

The emergence of aggressive behavior in respondents when memories of the victim and family arise is interpreted as a form of venting negative emotions that are felt, then cannot be managed well. "You know, every time we have a new prisoner, we will guard and beat them," this phenomenon is in line with and can be explained through Freud's psychoanalytic theory.(Sinurat et al., 2025)regarding the self-defense mechanism known as displacement, which is one way to reduce pressure originating from the superego and ego, with the aim of reducing the anxiety experienced by the individual.

These findings suggest that guilt is not only experienced as a moral conscience, but is also internalized into a tormenting emotional experience.Baumeister et al., (1994),explains that the presence of guilt raises the possibility of post-crime emotional distress being redistributed from the victim to the perpetrator. Guilt, in this case, can be interpreted as a form of emotional justice between the victim and the perpetrator.

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CONCLUSION

This study found that the experience of guilt among juvenile recidivists at the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA) is formed through two main dimensions: moral regret and fear. Regret emerges as an awareness of the impact of actions on the victim, their family, and themselves, both personally and socially. Meanwhile, fear manifests itself in the form of anxiety about retaliation, fear of losing family relationships, and psychological manifestations such as recurring dreams and aggressive behavior. These findings indicate that guilt is not only a form of moral evaluation but also develops into a complex emotional burden that influences the self-identity and social behavior of juvenile recidivists.

The limitations of this study lie in the limited number of subjects, which cannot be broadly generalized, and the limited exploration of the context of institutions other than the Class II Tomohon Correctional Institution (LPKA). Furthermore, the data relies heavily on the respondents' subjective ability to express their emotional experiences. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the number of participants, use a mixed-method approach, and compare different correctional institutions. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a basis for LPKA in developing psychological rehabilitation programs that focus not only on behavioral aspects but also on emotional recovery, such as guilt, so that the process of children's social reintegration can be more effective and adaptive.

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