



Struggle Outside Jails: Scoping Review of Impacts and Resiliency Among Children of Incarcerated Parents

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Abstract

Parental incarceration has a significant impact on children, so resiliency is the essential thing that needs to be owned to minimize this impact. However, studies on this matter are still limited. This scoping review aims to explore the impact and resilience of children with incarcerated parents. PRISMA-ScR and five databases (Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, Semantic Scholar, and Springer) were used in this study. There were ten articles that met the inclusion criteria. The results have shown that parental incarceration leads to mental health problems, behavior problems, decreased academic performance, family dysfunction, and financial hardship. Social support and children's involvement in positive activities will help the resilience process. Future research can focus on the dynamics of resilience by considering the stages of development and cultural context, as well as its relation to preventive, intervention, and rehabilitation efforts for children with incarcerated parents, especially in Indonesia.

Keywords: Children of incarcerated parents, impact, PRISMA ScR, resilience, scoping review.

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Introduction

Parents have an essential role in determining the success of a children's development and are very influential on the psychological condition of the child (Lacey et al., [2020](#)). The absence of parents physically and emotionally will have very significant negative consequences, both in terms of mental health and family dysfunction (Hall et al., [2021](#); Lacey et al., [2022](#); Rampersaud et al., [2022](#)), one of which is caused by parental arrest (Metcalfe et al., [2022](#); Noel & Hoeben, [2022](#); Poehlmann-Tynan et al., [2021](#)) which is felt directly by the child. According to Kusnandar in Databoks (2022), which reported news from the Directorate General of Corrections of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia, in 2022, there were 227,431 inmates in prisons and 48,741 detainees in detention centers.

According to Balu and Rathnasabapathy (2021) children with incarcerated parents are classified into two categories, namely children who live with their parents in prison until the age of six and children who are handed over to the Child Protection Agency while their parents are still in prison. However, living apart from parents for a long time will certainly have severe consequences for children's lives, especially in childhood or adolescence (Waddoups et al., 2019). Children with incarcerated parents will lose parental figures, experience financial difficulties because there is no financial support from their parents (Foster & Hagan, 2015), experience poor quality parenting (Arditti & Johnson, 2020), and there is no parents role in protecting and providing security to children, so that the children's risk becoming victims of crime, violence and neglect increases (Balu & Rathnasabapathy, 2021). Hunger and food insecurity are also problems faced by children with incarcerated parents (Benninger et al., 2023).

Furthermore, children tend to have low self-esteem, excessive anxiety, feelings of isolation, shame, and insecurity, severe sensation of loss (Andrés-Romero et al., 2021), experience developmental delays (Marie-Mitchell et al., 2019), potential for addictive substance use (Morgan et al., 2021), as well as the emergence of antisocial behavior and behavior problems in children, followed by vulnerable health conditions and disturbed well-being (Arditti & Johnson, 2020; Luther, 2015). Trauma also tends to be felt by children (Arditti & Savla, 2015; Morgan et al., 2021). Then, children may receive discriminatory treatment because of the stigma regarding parental incarceration and face academic problems which include degradation of academic performance, suspension, *dropout*, and delays in completing education (Balu & Rathnasabapathy, 2021; Luther, 2015).

In addition, children also have a high level of emotional problems and behavior problems. Boys showed significantly higher levels of externalizing behavior problems than girls, and conversely, girls showed significantly higher levels of internalizing behavior problems than boys. Girls also showed more withdrawn behavior and experience higher anxiety or depression than boys, while boys showed more delinquency and aggressive behavior than women. Girls are known to be negatively affected greater by parental incarceration (Domžalska et al., 2022).

Though in difficult circumstances, many children try to resilience (Benninger et al., [2023](#)). Resilience is a psychological dynamic that involves positive adaptation to survive from difficulties, obstacles, and problems (Walker et al., [2020](#)). Resilience is influenced by individual personal psychological factors, such as temperament and intelligence, as well as external factors which include social support from family, educational institutions, and the community. The more unique finding is involvement in religious activities, athletics, and theater also contributes to increasing the resilience of children of imprisoned parents (Luther, [2015](#)).

However, research on children's experiences of resilience directly due to parental incarceration is still very limited (Benninger et al., [2023](#)), even though it is very important to understand and pay attention to the process of resilience of children with incarcerated parents, considering the difficulties they face, so that research exploring resilience in these children is urgently needed. For this reason, in addition to exploring the impact of parental incarceration, this study also aims to explore the resilience of these children.

Research Questions

We consider two principal questions:

1. What are the impacts of parental incarceration on children?
2. What are the factors that affect the resilience of children with incarcerated parents?

Method

Study Design

This scoping review was conducted to explore the impact and dynamics of resilience on children of incarcerated parents. PRISMA Extension for Scoping Review (PRISMA-ScR) was used as research guideline. PRISMA-ScR is an enhancement of PRISMA which is specifically used to report scoping reviews (Tricco et al., [2018](#)).



Search Strategy

We conducted a literature search published in the last ten years, between 2014 and 2023 through Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, Semantic Scholar, and SpringerLink databases with a combination of keywords and Boolean logic. The keyword combination used in Scopus, EBSCOhost, and Semantic Scholar is ("parental incarceration" OR "parental imprisonment" OR "incarcerated parent") AND "children" AND ("impact" OR "risk" OR "effect") AND ("resilien*" OR "children resilien*"). The keywords combination "parental incarceration OR parental imprisonment OR incarcerated parent OR imprisoned parent AND children AND impact OR risk OR effect AND resilience OR children resilience" is used in SpringerLink. Whereas in ScienceDirect, the keywords combination ("parental incarceration" OR "incarcerated parent") AND "children" AND ("impact" OR "risk") AND ("resilience") is used. A literature search was conducted from February to March 2023.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria are the parameters for selecting the literature to be reviewed. The literature inclusion criteria specified in this study were: a) original research articles examining the impact of parental incarceration and resilience on children with incarcerated parents; b) written in English; c) published between 2014 to 2023; d) fully accessible with full-text availability. Articles from research involving child caregivers are also considered to be included if they meet the inclusion criteria. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include the opposite criteria of the inclusion criteria.

Selection

Literature was selected based on the title, abstract, and research topic according to the inclusion criteria.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through discussion by the authors (GS and DVSK). The findings from this study are presented in the form of a descriptive synthesis.



Results

Data Selection

Based on Figure 1, it is known that the total number of articles obtained through Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, Semantic Scholar, and SpringerLink is 464 articles. 28 articles were found as duplicates and were subsequently eliminated. The remaining 436 articles were then processed. Through this selection process, 28 articles were screened as original research articles, written in English, fully accessible with full-text availability, and published in the last ten years. These 28 articles were further filtered and 10 articles could be identified as examining the impact of parental incarceration and resilience on children with incarcerated parents, while the remaining 18 articles excluded. Therefore, these 10 articles can be claimed as articles that meet the inclusion criteria.

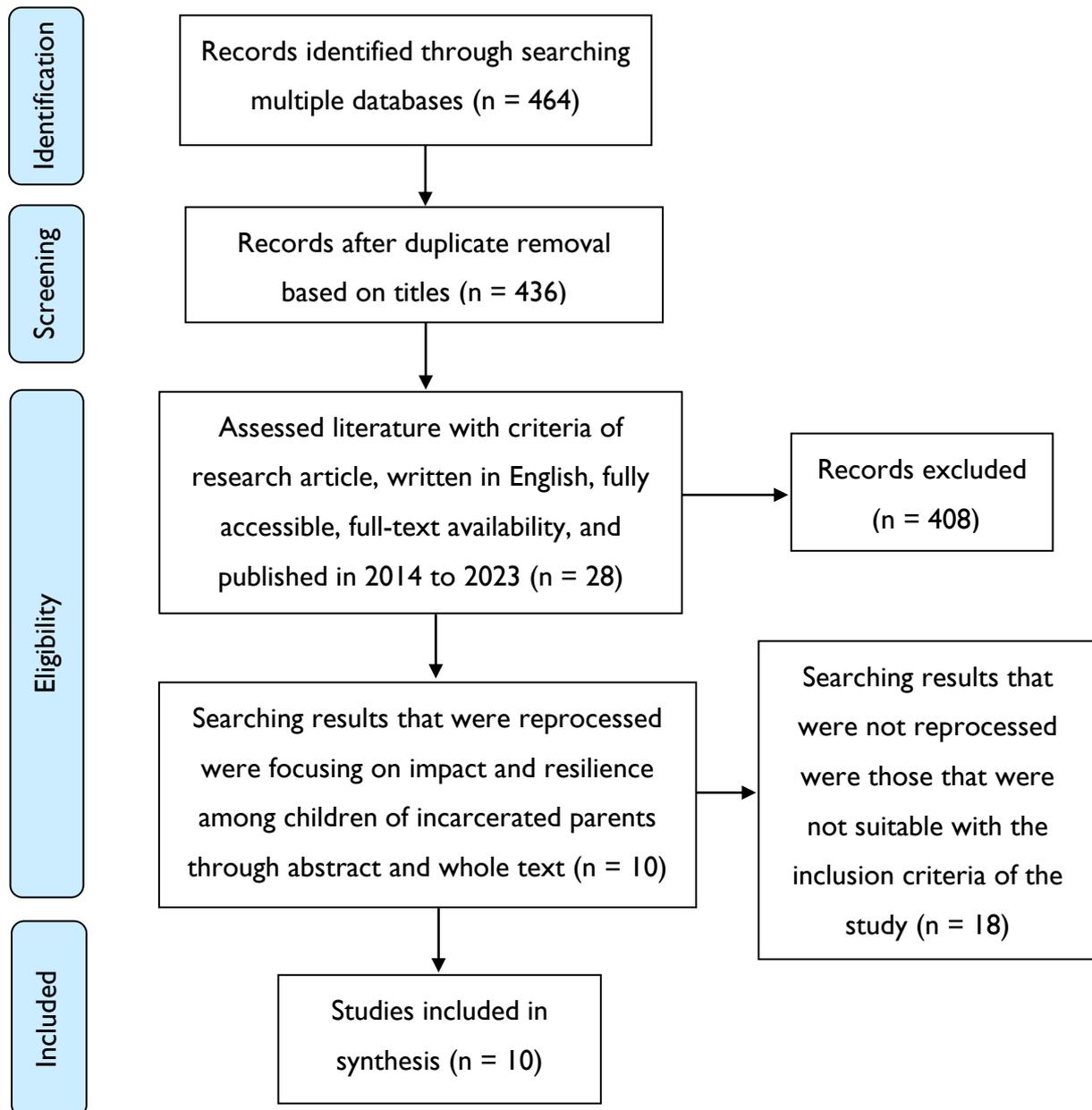


Figure 1. Literature Search Process Based on PRISMA-ScR

Study Characteristics Review

From Table I, it can be seen that these ten articles elaborate on the impacts of parental incarceration. Some articles mentioned mental health problems (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2018](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Li & Ang, [2019](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#); Pfluger et al., [2023](#)), effects on school connectedness and academic outcomes (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Nichols et al., [2016](#)), behavior problems and juvenile delinquency (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2022](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Li & Ang, [2019](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#); Pfluger et al., [2023](#)), financial hardship (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2018](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#)), stigmatization and discriminatory social treatment (Johnson et al., [2018](#); Li & Ang, [2019](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#)), and family dysfunction (Johnson et al., [2018](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Nichols et al., [2016](#)).

Table I
Findings Summary

Authors (Year)	Country	Sample	Data Collection	Results That Fit the Current Study Objectives	
				Impacts of parental incarceration	Resilience of children with incarcerated parents
Nichols et al. (2016)	United States	9063 high school students aged 12-18 years.	Mix method, using survey and interviews.	1) Effects on school connectedness and academic outcomes. 2) Family dysfunction.	1) Resilience is needed by children with incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop. 2) Protective factor of resilience: social support.
Johnson et al. (2018)	United States	26 youth aged 7 to 16 years and 26 caregivers aged 30 to 65 years.	Mix-method, using interviews, checklist, and scales.	1) Mental health problems. 2) Financial hardship. 3) Stigmatization and discrimination. 4) Family dysfunction.	Resilience is needed by children with incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop.
Li & Ang (2019)	Singapore	1027 students aged 12 to 19 years.	Quantitative, using scale	1) Mental health problems. 2) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 3) Stigmatization and discrimination.	-
Kjellstrand, et al. (2020)	United States	655 youth from 10 to	Quantitative, using checklist,	1) Mental health problems.	1) Resilience is needed by children with

Authors (Year)	Country	Sample	Data Collection	Results That Fit the Current Study Objectives
Kremer et al. (2020)	United States	16 years of age. 1088 children whose average age was 11.25.	scale, and self-report. Quantitative, using survey.	2) Effects on school connectedness and academic outcomes. 3) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 4) Family dysfunction. 1) Mental health problems. 2) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 3) Family dysfunction. incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop. 2) Protective factor of resilience: social support. 1) Resilience is needed by children with incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop. 2) Protective factor of resilience: social support.
Morgan, et al. (2021)	Denmark	727 adolescents.	Quantitative design using survey.	1) Mental health problems. 2) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 3) Financial hardship. 4) Stigmatization and discrimination. Protective factor of resilience: social support.
Bomysoad & Francis (2022)	United States	29,617 teenagers aged 12 to 17 years old.	Quantitative, using survey.	1) Mental health problems. 2) Effects on school connectedness and academic outcomes. 3) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 4) Financial hardship. Distraction coping strategy helps children with incarcerated parents to increase resilience.
Long et al. (2022)	Glasgow City, Scotland	14 young people.	Qualitative study using interviews.	1) Effects on school connectedness and academic outcomes 2) stigmatization and discrimination. 3) Family dysfunction. 1) Resilience is needed by children with incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop. 2) Protective factor of resilience: social support.
Johnson et al. (2022)	United States	11,875 children aged 9 to 10 years.	Mixed-method using interview, checklist, and survey	Behavior problems and juvenile delinquency. -
Pfluger et al. (2023)	Minnesota, United States	113,281 junior high school students with average age was 14.8 years.	Quantitative, using survey and questionnaire.	1) Mental health problems. 2) Behavior problems, juvenile delinquency. 1) Resilience is needed by children with incarcerated parents to survive, adapt, and develop. 2) Protective factors of resilience: developmental assets.

Additionally, inclusion articles also describe the resilience of children with incarcerated parents (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2018](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#); Nichols et al., 2016; Pfluger et al., [2023](#)) and factors that affect the resilience of children with incarcerated parents (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Nichols et al., [2016](#); Pfluger et al., [2023](#)).

Impact on Mental Health

The main impact for children with incarcerated parents mentioned by many articles is mental health problems. The mental health problems they face are psychological stress and trauma (Morgan et al., [2021](#)), depression (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2018](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#)), anxiety (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#)), hyperactivity (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#)), self-withdrawal (Kremer et al., [2020](#)), narcissism (Li & Ang, [2019](#)), callous-unemotional traits (Li & Ang, [2019](#)), low self-esteem (Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#)) feelings of isolation (Morgan et al., [2021](#)); and suicidal tendencies (Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Pfluger et al., [2023](#)).

Impact on Academic Outcomes

The results of the study by Nichols et al. ([2016](#)) showed that incarcerated parents can be a threat to children's school connectedness. The connection between children and schools is related to increasing student motivation, achievement, and preventing delinquent behavior, where schools can positively become a place for children to develop self-identities, aspirations, hopes, and motivations. Things that are associated with school connectedness in children with incarcerated parents are truancy, decrease in academic achievement, and low level of education. Nichols et al. ([2016](#)) revealed that parental incarceration cannot be said as a cause of children's academic problems at school, but a factor that can affect decreased academic performance and achievement. However, not all children with incarcerated parents show poor academic performance or are unable to proceed at school (Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#)). In fact, for adolescents, if they can survive in their academic process because of the various protective effects provided by the school, such as the proactive support from teachers, facilities that support children to achieve, trusted peers, and counseling programs, the risk of these



potential academic challenges will decline towards the early adult stage (Long et al., [2022](#); Nichols et al., [2016](#)). School connectedness will be a protective factor for children from loneliness and isolation, poor academic performance, and delinquency (Kremer et al., [2020](#)). However, even though having good performance in school and feeling accepted and supported by the school environment, parental incarceration is a factor that restrains children's hopes of receiving a higher level of education (Nichols et al., [2016](#)).

Impact on Behavior Problems and Delinquency

Parental incarceration triggers behavior problems and delinquency in adolescents (Johnson et al., [2022](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Li & Ang, 2019; Morgan et al., [2021](#)). The results of study by Li and Ang (2019) reveal that behavior problems and delinquency in adolescents can be caused by witnessing criminal acts committed by parents, so these actions are internalized and children imitate them, especially in form of aggressive behavior, overactive behavior, anti-social behavior, and violations. A tendency of addictive substances use is also found in adolescents with incarcerated parents (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#); Pfluger et al., [2023](#)).

Impact on Financial Sustainability

The next impact faced by children with incarcerated parents is financial difficulties (Bomysoad & Francis, [2022](#); Johnson et al., [2018](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#)). This financial difficulty is caused by the absence of parental figures whose role is to meet the child's needs financially by working. This financial difficulty can also have an effect on food insecurity.

Impact on Social Environment

Stigmatization in the social environment regarding parental incarceration tends to be borne by children (Johnson et al., [2018](#); Li & Ang, 2019; Long et al., 2022; Morgan et al., [2021](#)). The stigma that is often accompanied by discriminatory social treatment that children receive makes children feel insecure in their environment, and experience feelings of isolation and isolation.

Impact on Family Functioning

Parental incarceration causes unequal family conditions (Kremer et al., [2020](#); Long et al., 2022). This is due to the separation between parents and children, both physically and emotionally. When one of the parents is imprisoned, whether the father or the mother, the other will experience pressure in raising children. The absence of a partner makes the dynamics of parenting even more difficult, which results in parenting distress and mental health problems for parents who receive custody. Various other impacts caused by the spousal incarceration, such as financial uncertainty and residence instability, potentially increase depressive parenting stress experienced by caregivers (Morgan et al., [2021](#)).

This parenting stress affects children's mental health and resilience, school connectedness, academic performance, and behavior problems. The results of the study by Morgan et al. ([2021](#)) showed that positive parenting can predict children's academic success and affect children's psychological well-being. In addition, Nichols et al. ([2016](#)) and Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) consistently showed a positive correlation between the parent-children relationship with the various effects it causes. Children who have strong relationships with their parents, even when their parents are in prison, have lower levels of behavior problems, lower levels of stress, lower tendencies to use substances, and good academic performance. On the contrary, the study results showed that the weaker the relationship between children and their parents, the child tends to have high levels of stress, has the potential to experience behavior problems and commit juvenile delinquency, and produce low academic performance.

For children with incarcerated parents who live with other family members, in some cases, there is a problem that makes children think that there is no one they can trust, like illustrated

in the results of a qualitative study by Long et al. (2022), where the participant's family members did not want to tell the truth about their incarcerated parents. If the child does not know that the parent is in prison, the family member states that the child's parent is currently working. However, even when the child knows about it, the family members are still evasive. This is done under the pretext of protecting them. Even so, there are also family members who do the opposite, by being open and honest with the children. Another interesting thing from study conducted by Long et al. (2022) is that these children are not given enough time to visit their parents in prison by the prison guards. Even their distance is so limited, that makes parents and children feel even further apart.

Pathways to Resiliency and Protective Factors

Nichols et al. (2016), Johnson et al. (2018), Kjellstrand et al. (2020), Kremer et al. (2020), Morgan et al. (2021), Bomysoad and Francis (2022), Long et al. (2022), and Pfluger et al. (2023) in their studies explained the concept of resilience in children with parental incarceration. Children with incarcerated parents face more detrimental hardships and vulnerabilities than children without parental arrest history. However, this situation drives children to resilience in order to survive, adapt, and develop. Resilience can prevent the triggering of psychopathology in the future. In order to be resilient, several studies stated the protective factors that children need to have, consisting of protective factors are developmental assets and social support. Moreover, one of the reviewed studies also found a strategy named distraction coping strategy to helps children with incarcerated parents to increase resilience.

Resiliency and Developmental Assets

Pfluger et al. (2023), through their research results, provided the latest insights regarding developmental assets as a protective factor for increasing the resilience of adolescents with incarcerated parents. These developmental assets consist of empowerment, positive identity, and social competency. Even so, these developmental assets do not fully reduce the negative effects of parental incarceration, but rather play a role in maintaining protection against the adolescents' resilience process. Empowerment refers to adolescents' feelings of self-worth that lead to opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways. Positive identity refers to adolescents' positive feelings about their own identity, future, and purpose in life. Meanwhile,



social competency refers to healthy interactions between adolescents and other people and their coping strategies.

Adolescents without parental arrest history or with prior parental arrest history (where the adolescents' parents have been released at this time) tend to be easier to improve developmental assets compared to children with parents who are still currently incarcerated, due to the presence of acute trauma and the consequences encountered. Nonetheless, according to Pfluger et al. ([2023](#)), these adolescents can still improve developmental assets with other additional protective factors, such as connectedness to the school and support from the surrounding environment, involvement of parents who though imprisoned in the care process through visits and quality communication, and participation in religious activities.

Resiliency and Social Support

The next protective factor that can shape and increase resilience in children with incarcerated parents is proactive support from their incarcerated parents, caregivers, family members, teachers, peers, community members, and others (Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#); Kremer et al., [2020](#); Long et al., [2022](#); Morgan et al., [2021](#); Nichols et al., [2016](#)). Great support from family and teachers can help children adjust well to their role and environment, and this good adjustment prevents children from the negative effects that tend to occur due to parental incarceration ([Kremer et al., 2020](#)). Low self-adjustment ability will make children prone to have overactive, aggressive, and isolative behavior. Children with incarcerated parents need more social support. The influence and attitudes of other people around them will determine the strength of resilience they have (Kjellstrand et al., [2020](#)).

Resiliency and Distraction Coping Strategy

Bomysoad & Francis ([2022](#)) stated that there are four activities that are a form of distraction coping strategy, namely screen time, sleep, participation in activities, and physical activity. Screen time comprises watching television, playing video games, and using gadgets, computers, or other electronic devices, as measured by the amount of time children spend on these activities. Then, participation in activities refers to children's involvement in school extracurricular activities, while physical activity is sports. Distraction coping has been

successfully proven to be a protective factor to reduce the negative effects of parental imprisonment and increase child resilience, however, the results of this distraction coping strategy are temporary and need to be carried out within a certain timeframe to gain effectiveness.

Discussion

This scoping review identified 10 articles that examined the impact of parental incarcerated and resilience on children with incarcerated parents. The results of this study show that children with incarcerated parents have the potential to be exposed to various adverse impacts, namely mental health problems, problems at school and poor academic performance, behavior problems and juvenile delinquency, financial difficulties, experiencing stigmatization and discriminatory social treatment, and family dysfunction.

Parental incarceration, according to Morgan-Mullane ([2018](#)) became the source of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in children which include depression, anger, aggression, self-isolation, and self-injury. What is interesting, according to Jones et al., ([2022](#)), father imprisonment is associated with behavior problems in children, while maternal imprisonment is associated with depression and drug use. In addition, Fry-Geier and Hellman ([2017](#)) stated that parental incarceration has the potential to be connected to the offspring imprisonment cycle in the future. In other words, child or youth legal cases are related to parental involvement in crime, where this statement is supported by Aaron and Dallaire ([2010](#)), Hannon and DeFina ([2012](#)), and Woo and Kowalski ([2020](#)).

Then Alemineh et al., ([2022](#)) showed that financial difficulty is another impact of parental imprisonment, even Ceciliano-Navarro and Golash-Boza ([2021](#)) revealed that this financial difficulty is not only felt by nuclear family, but can also affect the extended family. Furthermore, Ceciliano-Navarro and Golash-Boza ([2021](#)), through interviews with 111 adults whose incarcerated family, gave the result that when an imprisoned family member returns home, financial and emotional tension in the family can continue, especially if the incarcerated family member is unemployed and not working. Moreover, the results of interviews with female prisoners in Dessie and Woldia, Ethiopia, by Alemineh et al. ([2022](#)) revealed that

access to healthcare facilities, healthy food, and sanitation in prisons is very limited which creates vulnerability to disease, especially the prisoners who live with children in prison. Thus it can be concluded that the lack of acceptable accommodations in prisons causes detrimental consequences for the development of children who live with their parents in prison.

Furthermore, parental incarceration was found as the most dominant variable causing children to repeat grades at school (Webb et al., [2022](#)). In addition, many children with incarcerated parents are threatened with dropping out of school (Anker, [2023](#)). Basic needs such as food or decent housing that are difficult to obtain due to parental arrest can predict whether a child will do schoolwork and learning well at school (Webb et al., [2022](#)). The statement regarding the association between parental incarceration and children's academic performance supports the research result by Fox et al., ([2023](#)), that showed parental arrest predicts poorer academic performance for their children, both in the short and long term, and these children may even experience a high probability of dropping out of school.

Special education may be needed for children with incarcerated parents (Anker, [2023](#)). The results of this research supported Turney and Haskins ([2014](#)), where it was also found that there was an association between parental incarceration—in this case the father—with non-cognitive skills, classroom retention, and need for special education. Furthermore, Anker ([2023](#)) explains that low academic performance potency in children with incarcerated father is not due to poor cognitive ability, but due to a lack of non-cognitive skills. In that study and several previous studies, a zero effect was found in the correlation between father's imprisonment and children's cognitive ability. Father's imprisonment that results separation between father and child, tension in the family, as well as stigmatization and exclusion at school disrupts children's well-being and affects academic performance at school. There is also research which reveals that children was dropped out of because they have to do household chores and care for siblings.

With this stressful situation, children with imprisoned parents struggle to survive and live a better life. One way to survive is to divert from negative thoughts. The study by Bomysoad and Francis ([2022](#)) that stated physical activity and involvement in meaningful activities can

distract negative thoughts in line with the research result by Dawson et al., ([2012](#)) which revealed that sports, focusing on school, developing skills, theater, and religious activities can divert children to more positive thoughts. One of these popular sports is boxing, because boxing helps vent their anger by healthy sublimation. In addition, children's dreams and imaginations of the day when their parents are released and fully present in their lives are also able to calm children from negative thoughts (Dawson et al., [2012](#)).

Besides distracting activities, social support is also very necessary to build resilience in children, both when the child is in the childhood stage, or has moved into the adolescent phase. Dawson et al. ([2012](#)) explained that communication and visiting parents in prison can have a positive effect to reduce behavior problems in girls. In addition, healthy friendships are also known to support children's resilience, especially when children have entered the adolescent phase. Healthy peer relationships contribute to positive behavior and motivate adolescents to academic success (Bryan, [2017](#)). The involvement of adolescents in a supportive social environment accompanied by focus on self-development will lead them to move forward, build self-efficacy and positive attitudes (Dawson et al., [2012](#)).

From this explanation, it is quite possible to assume that there are differences in the children's resilience in terms of their development, especially children and adolescents, bearing in mind that a person has certain developmental tasks in each developmental segment. There is not much previous literature that examined the resilience in children with incarcerated parents by comparing their developmental stages. We also have not found significant literature that explicitly discusses this matter, but in ten inclusion articles, we highlight explanations that can be said to define resilience in children, distinguished from childhood and adolescent stage, from Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)).

Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) conducted a study of four categories of children with incarcerated parents, which were based on the form of parenting and its effects on academic performance, behavior problems, juvenile delinquency, tendencies to deviant peer associations, and substance use. Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) found that positive parenting that is given consistently to children can strengthen emotional closeness between parents and children, makes children

receive warm support from parents, which encourages children to achieve good results in the academic field and has a low possibility of committing delinquency, trapped in deviant social groups, and experience detention as a result of legal cases. Conversely, parenting distress, inconsistent parenting styles, even tending to be authoritarian, and the low mental health of parents who become caregivers of children have the opposite effect on children, even continuing to increase internalizing behavior problems where in the study, one-third of all participants have this problem. However, in the small minority of adolescents who were given this kind of care and experienced a high increase in internalizing behavior problems by age 10 or 12 years, the behavior problems decreased gradually during adolescence.

An interesting finding from the study of Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) is how the participants who were divided into these four groups performed themselves as adults. The group of participants who experienced poor-quality parenting and experienced increased internalizing behavior problems were predicted to have lower self-esteem in adulthood. They are also more likely to have suicidal thoughts and attempt suicide. However, this is actually something to worry about, considering that almost a third of the total participants with imprisoned parents belong to this group, which indicates that children with imprisoned parents outside the research sample are very likely to experience a similar potency.

However, it has not been found what factors reduce internalizing behavior problems in a handful of other participants during their teenage years. Nonetheless, Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) succeeded in proving that the process of children's resilience, especially those who have experienced parental imprisonment, depends on the influences they receive from the surrounding environment, especially family support in the form of positive and consistent parenting. Parenting like this can build a strong attachment between parents and children, so that children can build strong character within themselves, which will help children face challenges in life and manage stress. Parents' mental health also determines the type of care that will be given to children. Healthy parenting comes from mentally healthy parents. From the form of parental care in the participant group above, the group with quality care, low internal behavioral problems, and low tendency to commit deviations showed good resilience results. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parenting role has also been shown to have a

significant influence on the resilience of children with incarcerated parents.

As a side note, Kjellstrand et al. ([2020](#)) revealed that as they get older, children will learn to build coping strategies and resilience within themselves with the presence of social support from those around them, although indeed, adverse childhoods will always leave scars, whether physically, mentally, and emotionally and follow them as they grow up (Bunting et al., [2023](#)). This gives the meaning that social support will always make children with incarcerated parents feel meaningful and encourage them to lead a meaningful life.

Parenting has a major contribution to the formation of children's character. Recording to Johnson et al. ([2018](#)), positive parenting will form optimism and empathy in children, establish closeness and trust between parents and children, and teach children independence and the value of struggle. The character that is formed from family will be brought out by the child, in meeting new people, which may strengthen his resilience. Supportive relationships between children and peers, teachers, community members, or society, in many studies, are said to be able to strengthen children's resilience and help children to develop into the best versions of themselves. Especially when children become adolescents, they will spend more time at school than at home, interacting with peers and enthusiastically participating in many activities to hone personal skills. Peers or positive social environment will be very beneficial for adolescent self-development. Additional activities or activities outside of study hours that can support hobbies and interests as well as forge and nurture children to increase value and self-esteem, make them feel empowered, then achieve self-actualization. Therefore, these kind activities, which include sports, extracurriculars, religious activities, and participation in the community are recommended by many previous studies.

This research is very important to examine the very potential impacts faced by children with incarcerated parents and how the resilience process they might go through in terms of the developmental phases of children and adolescents. However, there are some limitations in this research. Previous studies have explored a lot of potential impacts of parental incarceration, both at their age when the research was conducted and the effects they are predicted to experience in the future, so it is easy for us to analyze this in this review. However, there is



still very little research that examines the dynamics of resilience among children with incarcerated parents, in terms of grouping and comparison according to developmental age. It would be a very interesting finding if the resilience process of children with incarcerated parents was explored from a developmental psychology perspective.

In addition, as far as the search was conducted, we have not found scoping review that explored resilience among children with incarcerated parents. This study contains novelty, so that many people pay attention to the resilience of these children who belong to vulnerable group, because in truth, they need help to survive and become empowered. Maybe some children are lucky because they have supportive caregiver and environment, but what about other children, who maybe don't have anyone to be there by their side, to accompany them in facing sadness, fear, and hardship?

The next limitation is the research on children with imprisoned parents in Asia is still very rare. We found China as a country in Asia that dominates research on children with imprisoned parents. Outside of Asia, the United States and other Western countries have conducted and published a great deal of related research. In fact, it is important to know whether there are differences in the factors that influence the potential impact of parental incarceration and resilience on children from a particular cultural perspective and how it compares with the opposite cultural background, especially in Asia which is attached to collective values. Of course this will be a very interesting finding, as well as being able to answer unknown scientific questions. In this study, there was only one article extracted from Asia by Li and Ang (2019). Li and Ang (2019) also agreed that more related studies in Asia are needed to expand the findings.

Next, the research on resilience dynamics that we discussed above only intersects with a few factors, such as behavior problems, substance use, academic performance, juvenile delinquency, participation in beneficial activities, parenting, or social support. However, we have not found a study that examines the association between resilience and other factors among children with incarcerated parents, for example, with the stigmatization that children receive, anti-social behavior, multiple roles in the family, or career development. The

condition of one child with another child certainly cannot be equated. This inequality forms 'unique paths' in the process towards resilience, which is interesting to explore. Further research that links the child's resilience process with other factors is needed, which may encourage or hinder resilience.

Realizing how many needs are still needed, but conditions make it difficult to limit children with imprisoned parents to obtain these needs, we suggest the government to pay better attention to the needs and survival of children with incarcerated parents from their development aspects. In addition, providing supportive social programs to increase their resilience can also be the right first step to 'returning' children to a meaningful life, to become meaningful people too. It is also recommended to carry out regular activities that support the interests, hobbies, and talents of children with incarcerated parents, because through these activities children can understand their own worth, develop skills and focus on their own qualities. Thus, children can actualize themselves and spend time on useful things. This activity is also expected to help children, especially adolescents, to be better prepared for careers in adulthood. If possible, the creation of a social community from a government agency that concentrates on children with incarcerated parents is also suggested.

Conclusion

This scoping review explores the impacts faced by children with incarcerated parents and the dynamics of resilience they experience. It was found that children tend to experience mental health problems, delinquency and lawlessness, low academic performance, family dysfunction, and financial difficulties. Meanwhile, great social support, especially positive parenting, as well as positive activities are needed for children to be resilient. Substantial further research on resilience in children with incarcerated parents and the factors that can encourage and hinder this resilience, especially in Asia, is highly recommended. Special social programs and communities from government agencies that aim to assist and facilitate the process of children with incarcerated parents' resilience are also highly recommended.

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