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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTS OF DURATION OF TIME IN PRISON ON INMATES' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND RESILIENCE MECHANISMS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is identifying the relationship between duration in prison and common components of psychological well being (i.e. self esteem, social skill and stress) among prisoners in the correction centers and resilience mechanisms. Institution based cross sectional descriptive survey was used. In line with the quantitative design, the systematic random sampling technique was used to select a firm participant. Additionally, qualitative research approach is used purposely to dig out the hidden information. The data collected especially quantitative data was processed and analyzed by using SPSS version-20. In addition, the information needed is obtained based on the consent of the respondents. Finally the finding indicated that duration in prison and common components of psychological well being (i.e. self esteem, social skill and stress) among the prisoners has significant relationship and has insignificant variation observed in gender and age. Inmates' has personal based intelligence resilience and social institution oriented resilience mechanisms. Stretching psychological and social support system in prison center is powerful to secure prisoners wellbeing as whole.

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INTRODUCTION

"Prisoner" is legal term for person who is imprisoned (Rastel, 2002). From the most of history, imprisoning has not been punishment in itself but rather a way to confine criminal until punishment, corporal or capital punishment was administered. The modern prison system was born in London, influenced by the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (Alan, 2001). A composite of research findings depicts people with low self-esteem as uncertain and confused about themselves. And oriented to risk and potential loss, shy, moody and emotionally labile (and having tendencies towards depression and anxiety) as a common experience of inmates' (Baumesister, 1993). Empirically, some investigations have sought to find their inner core of self-doubt and reported that prisoners' have low self-esteem (Olweus, 1994). Stress level may increase at the end of an inmate's sentence due to anticipation and feelings. One uncertainly about one's ability to adjust and cope in the outside world again, after having adjusted to prison life itself increase the level of stress (Barstool and Barstool, 1994). People who lack social skill appear to be at risk for experiencing a number of psychological and social problems. Some evidences suggest that deficits in social skill are related to criminal activity and

delinquency (e.g. Freedman, Rosenthal, Dona hoe, Schwedt, McFaul, 1978; Spence, 1981). In an impressive longitudinal study of inmates' in the Canadian correctional system, Zamble and Porporino, (1988) found no reliable relationship between lengths of imprisoned and any measure of adaptation and prisoners have various approaches to cope with their psychological and social deprivation. In addition, self esteem has frequently been viewed as an important target of intervention with in criminal population (Sennett, 1974). Many program designers have assumed that self esteem is an important outcome and that a side-benefit of their offender programming efforts is an increase in this highly desirable personal state (Field, 1985). The inmates are forced to undergo increasingly harsh policies and conditions of confinement in order to survive in the prison. These prolonged adaptations to the deprivation and frustrations of life inside prison lead to certain psychological changes. The person who suffers the acute pains of imprisonment necessarily manifests. Psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorders or other forms of disability may be in the form of diminished sense of self-worth (Bartol, 1994). As Spence (1981) noted, there is a general assumption that offenders are deficient in social skill deficits may some has be causally related to the law in order to achieve various goals. And he added that people who lack basic social skills appear to be at risk for experiencing number of psychological and social

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problems. Stress is probably the central feature in the experience of inmates (Johnson and Toch, 1982). Using unique approach to cope with traumatic and harsh situation in prison is commonly observed (Johnson and Toch, 1982). Obviously; inmates have to deal with border in order to "survive" their prison term (Barton's, 1982, Toch, 1992). Coping is a cross cultural and across individual phenomena (Field, 1985). This research work promptly needed to look in what inmates' in prison centers face in line with their stay in prison. Studies report that the experience of inmates is different in various cultures, physical and psychological settings. Studies are different in its approach and result.

Thus, this study will narrow the gap in the areas of

- Findings
- Methodology
- Assumptions

Objectives of the study

The study is aimed to address the following specific objectives:

- To identify the relationship between year of stay in prison and level of self-esteem, stress social skill among inmates. To describe the existed gender difference on experience of self-esteem, stress and social skill in prison center.
- To explore the resilience mechanisms in prisoner center
- Significance of the study
- Provide information and knowledge for counselors and correction center administrators to moderate prisoners' psychological wellbeing.
- Furthermore, the research may also initiate other researcher to make detail study on the issue highlighted in this research.
- Moreover, it is important for correction center employee's to increase their knowledge on inmates' current condition to extent their system to rise inmates' self-esteem, social-skill and stress during their stay in prison center.

Delimitation of the study: Although assessing the components of psychological well-being (i.e. self-esteem, stress and social skill) is vital among inmates in different cities, due to time and budget constraint the scope of this study is lonely delimited on psychological wellbeing in Chench prison center.

Operational definition

Self-esteem: refers the extent to which inmates evaluate themselves on the bases of "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others, I feel that I have a number of good qualities etc"

Social-skill: refers to the inmate's ability in communication and interaction skill on the base of "I feel related even in unfamiliar social situations. I try to avoid situations which force me to be very sociable etc."

Stress: in this study it refers to feeling of the different situations and the physiological, behavioral and subjective response about their feelings among inmates of prison; for the

last month on the bases of "been upset because of something that unexpectedly? Would do you were unable to control the important things in your life etc?"

Psychological well-being: level and experience of self esteem, social skill and stress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- 1) **Study design:** In this study the researchers were used institution based cross sectional descriptive survey.
- 2) **Study Area:** The study was conducted in Chench town which is located in the Gam Gofa zone of South Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region, 37, kms, north of Arba Minch. It has the total population of 127. Chench is bordered on the south by Arba Minch zuria, on the west by Dita, on the north by Kucha and Boreda, on the east by Mirab Abaya. According to central statistical agency in 2005, estimated total population of Chench district is 127,193. The town is well known in apple fruits and milk and milk products to different parts of Arba Minch.
- 3) **Population of the study:** All prisoners in correction centers
- 4) **Target populations:** Some selected inmates in Chench correction center.
- 5) **Sample and sampling techniques:** From the total number of inmates, the male and female inmates are 65 and 45 respectively. From total population, the researcher was selected 35 participants from male and 35 participants from female. Totally 70 participants were selected by using simple and stratified random sampling because it helped to reduce research sampling bias.
- 6) **Data collection Instrument:** To collect the quantitative data likert scale questionnaires, which were translated from English to Amharic language were used.

Study variables

- 1) **Independent variables:** age, sex, educational background, marital status and birth order
- 2) **Dependant variables:** year of stay in prison, self esteem, social skill, and stress.

Data analysis techniques: Data collected using quantitative method would be processed and analyzed concurrently. To analyze the data, different statistical techniques were computed using SPSS, version-20, specifically, correlation, T-test and ANOVA techniques were used. Thematic analysis and simple narration has made to analyze qualitative data that was obtained through interview and focus group discussion. Procedures of data collection: the prior action was getting a letter from the responsible of research coordination office, Arba Minch University and Chench Correction center. As a plan approval of application obtained from the responsible bodies that data collection process was started. When researcher met participant, they introduced themselves and explained that the response they would give in the questionnaires would keep secret and never transfer for the third party. And they were informed that the response is only for the purpose of this research. The data collection is done by distributing questionnaires which contain both open ended and

close ended questions beside interview and focus group discussion.

Ethical consideration: The researcher has avoided any things that tend to harm physical, social and psychological conditions of the participants. It is only based on the consent of the respondent and the participants were signed the informed consent before the actual process of data collection. The participants were well informed that they have right to terminate filling in questionnaires if they found anything that is inconvenient for them. Finally, the names of participants (respondents) were not recorded (written) in the questionnaires.

RESULTS

As indicated in Table 1. t-value is about (0.074, 0.394, and 0.291) for self-esteem, social skill and stress respectively. Therefore, it shows that there is no significance difference has observed between male and female in their level of self-esteem, social skill and stress among the prisoners because $p < 0.05$. As shown in the table 2. $P < 0.05$, r (0.204, and -0.252), thus there is statistically significance relationship between duration in prison and some components of psychological well-being (i.e. self-esteem and stress). While there is statistically insignificant relationship has observed in social skills among the prisoners (respondents) because $p > 0.05$, r (0.221). Table 3. Show that there is no statically significance differences has observed between some components of psychological well-being (i.e. self esteem, and stress) and various prisoners age categories because $p < 0.05$, F (0.259, and 0.758). While there is statically significant difference has observed among various age categories and social skill because $P < 0.05$ F (0.057).

Prison and Resilience Mechanisms: As long as you stay in prison, you may experience various forms of resilience. Conditioning and habituation in the terrible traumatic prison environment are the best way to secure inmates psychological and mental wellbeing. Psychological, emotional and social distresses are common in prison compound since there is a bad climate in prison environment. In prison center, there is a wide chance to interact different offenders and criminals though some of them have a shocking and terrible crime experience and history. Praying and fasting as an essential tool to cope up with psychological and social crisis in prison because you may be departed from family and social life. A good thing is commonly you can found mosque and churches in prison centers. "I am regularly attending the church programs that makes me strong in emotionally and spiritually. I am a leader in church today though I had a bad behavior yesterday" as one of inmate shared his lived experience in prison. The prison compound is really harsh for physical, social and psychological wellbeing of an individual as a person. Forcefully, learning acceptance, less sensation, simple forgetting and ignorance are good strategies' to increase once mental strength and wellness though the environment and events are the worst. "I was sad and feeling helplessness at the moment but through the time I learnt that our planet is full of foolishness. Thus, I thought that accepting the constructed reality as a timely option" as a 10 year sentenced adult inmate shared his thought. Sometimes inmates develop ignorant behavior. Just they try to keep silent about their previous behavior and mood. For instance: - denying the fact, forgetting what happen and try to mold their perception with the existing

reality. "It was really irritating me. I continuously face a nightmare in my first instance in prison but I am already adjusted myself with existing environment through experiencing a free discussion with friends, reading fictions and engaging in various vocational works" as one of inmate who stayed 13 years in prison mentioning his experience.

Table 1. Independent –t-test Analysis to determine Gender Differences regarding to Self-esteem, Social and Stress

No.	Variables	t-value	df	sign
	self-esteem	1.813	68	0.074
	social-skill	0.859	68	0.394
	stress	-1.064	68	0.291

Table 2. The Correlation Analysis to Determine the Relationship between Year of Stay in Prison with Self-esteem, Social-skill and Stress

Variables	Self-esteem	Social skill	Stress
Duration	0.204	0.198	-0.252*
sign (2 tail)	0.083	0.221	0.035

Table 3. ANOVA Analysis to Determine Age Variation and the Experience to have Self-esteem, Social and Stress

		df	Mean square	F
Self esteem	Between group	3	4.468	.259
	Within Groups	66	17.266	
Social skill	Between groups	3	19.520	.057
	Within Groups	66	340.142	
Stress	between Group	3		0.758
	With group	66		

The traumatic conditions are never forgettable even persons may have their strength to cope or getting additional training and support by professional groups/religious leaders. "I always have experience to consult psychologists or other health professionals whenever I felt any anonymous feelings and pain" as a woman shared her experience. Naturally, resilience is depends on the quality of person's personality or personality traits and level of intelligence beside the external influences. "I take things easily although a tremendous factors exert pressure on mind. I believe that warring so much reduces once life expectancy. Thus, I should be a doctor for myself" a 2 years sentenced young shared his lived experience.

DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Duration in Prison and Social- Skill, Self-Esteem and Stress Studies have found that psychological reactions to imprisonment have strong emotional stress occurring at the beginning of the sentence, and at the end of their sentence, or the time to be released approaches. During the middle of the sentence, anxiety is usually quite low and some acceptance of prison life is generally gained (Bartol and Bartol, 1994). Similarly, the current study confirmed that there is a significance relationship between duration in prison and some components of psychological well-being (i.e. Self-esteem, social-skill and stress) among the prisoners. From the rest two components (self-esteem and social-skill) stress negatively correlated with duration in prison. Some evidences suggest that defects in social-skill are related to life in prison (Freedman, Rosenthan, donahae, Schiundt and Mc Fall, 1978; Spence 1981). Correlation analysis in the current work revealed that there is no significant relationship between any of the social-skill variables and length of the imprisonment. In an impressive longitudinal study of prisoners in the Canadian correctional system, (Zambel and Porprino, 1988) also found

the reliable relationship between imprisoned length and any measure of adaptation. However, generally there have been inconsistent findings in studies which have been examined the relationship between self-esteem and life in prison. In their major review of predictors, Roos and Fabiano, (1985) identified only a small number of studies reporting lower self-esteem in offender samples prior to 1980. Since many prisoners are externally oriented in their ability to affect change or have control in tier environment (i.e. internal control). Studies on stress said that prisoners are uncomfortable and stressful environment (Buster and Lilman, 1980; Derosia, 1998; Johnson and Tosh, 1998; j; kulpers, 1996; Libeling, 1999) leads person to get stress. The person who suffers the acute pain of imprisonment necessarily manifests psychological discomforts such as post-traumatic stress or other forms of disability may be in the form of diminished sense of self-worth and personal value. These psychological problems effects of life in prison vary from individual to individual (Haney, 2001). The current finding also confirms the result obtained in the previous findings. Gender Difference on Prisoners Level of Stress, Self-Esteem and Social-Skill According to Tolin and Fao, (2006), females are more likely to develop PTSD after experiencing trauma than men. PTSD is prevalent, among the female prisoners than males. Furthermore, a review of the literature by Maloney, Van Deh Burgh and Mover (2009), found that trauma experienced by female in prison strongly in fluencies offending behavior. In contrary to the previous studies, the current study shows that there is no as such difference observed among male and female in experiencing stress and the other components of psychological well-being (i.e. self-esteem and social-skill) during their stay in prison. The Relationship between Age and the level Stress, Self-Esteem and Social-Skill The age of inmate also approach to determine the psychological effect of imprisonment. That is younger prisoners aged twenty Five or below are initially more resistant to the prison structure which makes them more likely to be stress than older inmates who assume passive avoidance roles in prison. Hence, increasingly psychological effects occurred due to imprisonment. However, it has been suggested that after the initial shock of imprisonment, younger inmates tend to demonstrate increasingly level of conformity over time (Bartol and Bartol 1994). Inverse to that the current study show that there is no significant relationship between psychological components of wellbeing (self-esteem, social skill and stress) and age of the prisoners.

Inmates' Resilience Mechanisms

In an impressive longitudinal study of prisoners in the Canadian correctional system, Zambel and Porprino (1988) also found similar with the present finding that inmates in prison use personal intelligence and external support from psychotherapists and social workers to cope up with the most traumatic phenomena in prison centers. What uniquely indicated in the current study is social networking and the support systems from social institutions are the other important options help to cope with psychological and social stress.

Conclusion

Duration in prison has adverse effect on the life experiences of the prisoners. It critically affects the psychosocial wellbeing of the prisoners. On the other hand, stress has inverse relationship with duration in prison (i.e. as the length of imprisonment increases the prisoners adaptation to stress increases and the level of stress decreases. Individual and group based skills are critical

to cope up with the stressful prison environment and traumatic criminal tragedy.

Recommendations

As the finding in this research indicate that the relationship between length in prison and the prisoners psychological well-being (i.e. self-esteem, social-skill and stress) concerns should be given to prisoners who join the prison for the first time and help to those study in the prison to:

- 1) Cope with this psychological well-being by providing coping strategies by the prison counselor to improve their self-esteem and social-skill.

Finally, the researchers / like to recommend that because this is an interesting issue to study today, hence the senior researcher should give due emphasis up for mentioned issue.

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