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The relationship between some components of prisoner's psychological well-being and duration in prison: Hosanna, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was designed to address the relationship between and some components of psychological well-being and duration among prisoners in Hosanna town. To meet this objective, the researcher drew 100 out of 2,000 populations who were selected as sample participants of the study by using systematic random sampling techniques. A point Likert-type scale questionnaire was used. The data were analysed through percentage, correlation; *t*-test and analysis of variance. The result revealed that there is no significant relationship between some components of psychological well-being and age among prisoners. The study also revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female prisoners on the components of psychological well-being. The study suggested that it is advisable to create favourable conditions for the prisoner to develop a sense of good interaction among them. Finally, the correctional centre should develop a sense of belongingness and coordination among offenders to minimise stress and conflict in the correctional centre.

Keywords: Components; psychological well-being; duration; prisoners.

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1. Introduction

Human beings are sociable creatures, and we have developed many ways to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with each other. Not all psychological and psychiatric problems and disorders are significantly more prevalent in prisons than the so-called mood disorder (i.e., disorders in the affective spectrum including depression, melancholy and adjustment disorder) that are generally found with comparable or a little higher frequency in prison study than in the general population (Hassan et al., 2011). Although there are striking differences between studies, several studies indicate that a high prevalence of major depression among prisoners (Fazel & Denesh, 2002). A composite of research findings depicts people with low self-awareness as uncertain and confused about themselves. So, they are oriented towards avoiding risk and potential loss, shy, modest and emotionally label (and having tendencies towards depression and anxiety (Baumeister, 1993)).

Empirically, some investigators have sought to find their inner core of self-doubt and reported that they could not do so. Vera (2011) suggests that members of violent gangs not to carry around a load of inner in securities (like stress and stress coping, low self-awareness and social anxiety). Depending on the above concepts, the researcher will be showing the relationship between prisoner's psychological well-being and duration in prison among prisoners of Hosanna town, and the gender difference that exists among the prisoner's level of self-awareness, stress and stress coping.

Psychological well-being problems of prisoners like self-awareness, stress and stress coping are the variables of interest. Self- awareness involves conscious awareness of one's own thoughts, behaviours, feelings and traits (Cherry & Kennedy, 2018). People who lack self-awareness and people who have no idea what is the value of knowing oneself for the sake of their future appear to be at risk for experiencing a number of psychological and social problems. Some evidence suggests that deficits in self-awareness are related to drug abuse, criminal activity and delinquency (Spence, 2003). Zamble and Porporino's (2014) longitudinal study in a Canadian correctional centre shows that there is no reliable relationship between duration of imprisonment and psychological well-being of prisoners. On the other hand, self-awareness has frequently been viewed as an important target of intervention within criminal populations (Heilpern, 1998). Many program designers have assumed that self-awareness is an important outcome and that a side-benefit of their offender programming efforts is an increase in this highly desirable personal state (Berman, 2013). Also, an interesting research project reported by Gallego, Oliva, Castilla & Santiago (2020) suggests that the perception of many correctional program designers regarding offender self-awareness has a crucial role in maintaining the personal states of the prisoners.

Even though the above studies focused on prisoner's self-awareness, stress and stress coping problems related to prisoners psychological and social well-being, they did not show detailed information about the gender difference on self-awareness, stress and stress coping and some components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping) among prisoners in Hosanna town. However, unlike the above research studies, the present study is aimed at studying the relationship between some components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping mechanism) among prisoners of Hosanna town in correction centre. Therefore, assessing the relationship between prison's psychological well-being and duration in prison, in Hosanna town was guided by the following basic research questions.

- What are the relationships between the year of stay in prison and the levels of self-awareness, stress and stress coping among prisoners?
- Is there a gender difference in self-awareness, stress and stress coping among prisoners?
- Is there a relationship between prisoner's psychological well-being and their age?

The purpose of the study is to assess the relationship between prisoners' psychological well-being and duration in prison, in Hosannas town correctional centre. The study is important for correction employees to increase their knowledge of self-awareness, stress and stress coping among prisoners to the extent and to take action when necessary on the issue of prisoners. Furthermore, it intends to broaden knowledge for practitioners about psychological well-being of prisoners.

2. Material and methods

The study design was descriptive and an explanatory method was employed. The descriptive type will be used to describe the relationship between some components of psychological well-being among prisoners. While explanatory type was used to explain the behaviour of prisoners in detail.

2.1. Subjects

The study was conducted in Hosanna town, which is located 230 km from the capital, Addis Ababa; the inhabitants of the town are from the southern region. To meet this objective, the researcher drew 100 out of 2,000 populations who were pursuing their life was selected as sample participants of the study by using systematic random sampling technique by making use of random numbers to give equal chance to the targeted population and to avoid research bias.

2.2. Instruments and data collection procedure

The data collection tools were Likert-type questionnaire. Te questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection by including 38 indeed close questions. So, (10) self-awareness questions, (10) stress questions and (10) stress coping questions were used. The instrument has different parts such as: demographic background of respondents (age, sex marital status, year of stay in prison, birth order and educational background/status), Self- awareness (Rosenberg), stress and stress coping questions. The data collection procedure is first of all obtaining a letter from the department of psychology, and then the researcher (student practitioner) forwards it to the concerned bodes and then asks the counsellor for getting assistance and finally approaches the colonel to get permission to conduct a research.

2.3. Study variables

The predictable variables are age, sex, marital status, birth order, year of stay in prison and educational status and the consequences/result base on these variables on the components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping) are used.

2.4. Method of data analysis

Finally, the collected data are processed and analysed concurrently by using different statistical techniques Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20. Specifically, percentage, correlation, *t*-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques were used to analyse those computed data.

3. Results

	Table 1. Demographic characteristic of study participants								
No	Demographic variable		Number	Percentage					
1	Sex	Male	70	70					
		Female	30	30					
2	Age	18–28	33	33					
		29–39	39	39					
		40–50	20	20					
		50 and above	8	8					

3	Religion	Orthodox	40	40
		Muslim	20	20
		Protestant	32	32
		Other	8	8
4	Educational status	0–8	29	29
		9–12	39	39
		Certificate/diploma	12	12
		Degree and above	20	20
5	Number of families	2–3	25	25
		4–6	45	45
		7 and above	30	30
6	Marital status	Single	40	40
		Married	50	50
		Divorced	5	5
		Widow	5	5
7	Year of stay in prison	1 and below	30	30
		2–4	40	40
		4–7	20	20
		7 and above	10	10
8	Birth order	First	30	30
		Middle	40	40
		Last	15	15
		Only one	15	15

As indicated in Table 1, the first variable result shows that out of 100 respondents, 70 (70%) are males whereas 30 (30%) are females. This shows that most of the respondents were males. A second variable result shows that 33 (33%) respondents were in the age group of 18-30, 39 (39%) respondents were in the average age group of 29–39, 20 (20%) respondents were in the age group of 40-50, 8 (8%) respondents were in the average age of 50 and above. This shows that most of the respondents were found in the average age 29–39 years. A third variable result shows that 40 (40%) respondents are orthodox, 20 (20%) respondents are muslims, 32 (32%) respondents are protestants and 8 (8%) respondents are from other religion. This shows that most of the respondent's religion is orthodox. A fourth variable result shows that 29 (29%) respondents were in elementary school level (1-8), 39 (39%) respondents were in high school level (9-12), 12 (12%) respondents were in certificate/diploma level and 20 (20%) respondents were educated in degree level and above. This shows that most of the respondents were high school students. A fifth variable result shows that 25 (25%) respondents have 2–3 family members, 45 (45%) respondents have 4–6 family members and 30 (30%) respondents have 7 or more family members. This shows that most of the respondents have family members in a range of 4-6. A sixth variable result shows that 40 (40%) respondents are unmarried, 50 (50%) respondents are married, 5 (5%) respondents are divorced and 5 (5%) respondents are widows. This shows that most of the respondents were married.

A seventh variable result shows that 30 (30%) respondents stayed in prison for 1 or less than a year, 40 (40%) respondents stayed in prison for a period of 2 to 4 years, 20 (20%) respondents stayed in prison for 5 to 7 years and 10 (10%) respondents stayed in prison for 8 or more than 8 years. This shows that most of the respondents stayed in prison on average for 2 to 4 years. The last variable result shows that 30 (30%) respondents are the first child in their family, 40 (40%) respondents are middle child in their family, 15 (15%) respondents are the last child in their family and 15 (15%) respondents are the only child in their family, this shows that most of the respondents are middle child in their family birth order.

No	Decision alternative	Strong agree				Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F = frequency	F	Р	F	Р	F	Р	F	Р
	P = percentage								
1	I feel that I am a person of worth at least on an equal plane with others	58	58%	20	20%	10	10%	12	12%
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	74	74%	15	15%	5	5%	6	6%
3	I feel that I am a failure	25	25%	20	20%	30	30%	25	25%
4	I am able to do many things	30	30%	40	40%	20	20%	10	10%
5	I feel that I do not have much to be proud of	24	24%	27	27%	24	24%	23	23%
6	I have positive attitude for my self	65	65%	20	20%	5	5%	10	10%
7	Generally, I am satisfied with my self	52	52%	25	25%	10	10%	13	13%
8	I wish I could have more respect for my self	40	40%	30	30%	20	20%	10	10%
9	Sometimes I certainly feel useless	20	20%	20	20%	21	21%	39	39%
10	Sometimes I think I am not good at all	19	19%	21	21%	26	26%	34	34%

Table 2. Self-awareness scale evaluation for study participants

As shown in Table 2, the feeling of being a person of worth at least on an equal plane with others: 58 (58%) respondents strongly agree, 20 (20%) respondents agree, but 10 (10%) and the other 12 (12%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. Based on the feeling of having a number of good qualities, 74 (74%) respondents strongly agree, and 15 (15%) respondents also agree. On the other hand, 5 (5%) and the rest 5 (5%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that they have respectively. On the feeling of being a failure 25 (25%) respondents strongly agree and 20 (20%) respondents also agree. On the other hand, 30 (30%) and 25 (25%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. On the ability of doing many things, 30 (30%) respondents strongly agree and 40 (40%) respondents agree, but 20 (20%) and 10 (10%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. Based on the feeling of not having much to be proud of 24 (24%) respondents strongly agree and 27 (27%) respondents agree, but 24 (24%) and 23 (23%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. On taking the positive attitude towards myself 65 (65%) respondents strongly agree and 20 (20%) respondents agree, but 5 (5%) and 10 (10%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. Based on the feeling of being useless 52 (52%) respondents strongly agree and 25 (25%) respondents agree, but 10 (10%) and 13 (13%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively.

On the feeling of being not good at all 40 (40%) respondents strongly agree and 30 (30%) respondents agree, but 20 (20%) and 10 (10%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. Based on the feeling of being satisfied with him/ herself 20 (20%) respondents strongly agree and 20 (20%) respondents agree, but 21 (21%) and 39 (39%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. On the wish to have more respect for him/herself 19 (19%) respondents strongly agree and 21 (21%) respondents agree, but 26 (26%) and 34 (34%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively.

Table 3 indicated that being upset because of something happened unexpectedly, 20 (20%) respondents say never, 5 (5%) say almost never, 50 (50%) say sometimes, 14 (14%) say fairly often and the rest 11 (11%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say they sometimes feel upset because something that happened unexpectedly.

	Table 3. Stress scale evaluation for study participants											
No	Decision alternative		Never		Almost		Sometim		Fairly		Very often	
				never		es		often				
	F = frequency	F	Р	F	Р	F	Р	F	Р	F	Р	
	P = percentage											
1	I have been upset because of	20	20%	5	5%	50	50%	14	14%	11	11%	
	something happened unexpectedly											
2	I felt that I was unable to control	30	30%	10	10%	25	25%	12	12%	23	23%	
	important things in my life											
3	I felt nervous and stressed	25	25%	10	10%	35	35%	15	15%	15	15%	
4	I feel confident about my ability to	15	15%	15	15%	13	13%	37	37%	20	20%	
	handle my personal problems											
5	I felt that things were going my way	21	21%	17	17%	26	26%	25	25%	11	11%	
6	I couldn't cope things that I had to do	40	40%	15	15%	17	17%	16	16%	12	12%	
7	I have been able to control	15	15%	5	5%	15	15%	43	43%	22	22%	
	relationships in my life											
8	In the last month I felt that I was on	8	8%	8	8%	24	24%	40	40%	20	20%	
	top of things											
9	I have been upset because of things	35	35%	15	15%	23	23%	10	10%	17	17%	
	that happened outside of my control											
10	I felt difficulties were pulling up so	36	36%	23	23%	19	19%	6	6%	16	16%	
	high that I could not overcome them											

Table 3. Stress scale evaluation for study participants

Based on the feeling of being unable to control important things in their life, 30 (30%) respondents say never, 10 (10%) say almost never, 25 (25%) say sometimes, 12 (12%) say fairly often and the rest 23 (23%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say they never feel being unable to control important things in their life. Based on feeling nervous and stressed, 25 (25%) respondents say never, 5 (10%) say almost never, 35 (35%) say sometimes, 15 (15%) say fairly often and the rest 15 (15%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say they sometimes feel nervous and stressed. On feeling confident about their ability to handle personal problems, 15 (15%) respondents say never, 15 (15%) say almost never, 13 (13%) say sometimes, 37 (37%) say fairly often and the rest 20 (20%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents. Based on the feeling that things were going their way, 21 (21%) respondents say never, 17 (17%) say almost never, 26 (26%) say sometimes, 25 (25%) say fairly often and the rest 11 (11%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents may never.

Based on the feeling of not able to cope with all things that they had to do, 40 (40%) respondents say never, 15 (15%) say almost never, 17 (17%) say sometimes, 16 (16%) say fairly often and the rest 12 (12%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents said that never feel not able to cope with all things that they had to do. On being able to control relationships in their life, 15 (15%) respondents say never, 5 (5%) say almost never, 15 (15%) say sometimes, 43 (43%) say fairly often and the rest 22 (22%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say they fairly often feel able to control relationships in their life. Based on the feeling that they were on top of things in the last month, 8 (8%) respondents say never, 8 (8%) say almost never, 24 (24%) say sometimes, 40 (40%) say fairly often and the rest 20 (20%) say very often. This result shows that most of the result shows that most of the respondents say they fairly often feel that they were on top of things in the respondents say they fairly often feel that they were on top of things in the respondents say they fairly often feel that they were on top of things in the last month.

Based on being upset because of things that happened outside of their control, 35 (35%) respondents say never, 15 (15%) say almost never, 23 (23%) say sometimes, 10 (10%) say fairly often and the rest 17 (17%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say they never feel upset because of things that happened outside of their control.

Based on the feeling that difficulties were pulling up so high that they could not overcome them, 36 (36%) respondents say never, 23 (23%) say almost never, 19 (19%) say sometimes, 6 (6%) say fairly often and the rest 16 (16%) say very often. This result shows that most of the respondents say never feel that difficulties were pulling up so high that they could not overcome them.

No	Decision alternative		Agree		Strongly Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F = frequency	F	Р	F	Ρ	F	Р	F	Ρ	
	P = percentage									
1	I try to avoid situations which force me to be worried	34	34%	48	48%	11	11%	7	7%	
2	I feel free condition in worried conditions	38	38%	23	23%	24	24%	15	15%	
3	It is easy for me to relax when I am with worried situations	16	16%	13	13%	51	51%	20	20%	
4	I usually feel comfortable when nervous conditions occurred	21	21%	7	7%	51	51%	31	31%	
5	I usually ease when stressful situations happened	51	51%	29	29%	14	14%	6	6%	
6	I try to avoid things that will make up my mind	34	34%	26	26%	19	19%	21	21%	
7	l often went to get away from stressful circumstance	43	43%	21	21%	18	18%	18	18%	
8	I usually feel relaxed when I am still with stressful circumstances	40	40%	19	19%	24	24%	17	17%	
9	I usually feel comfortable when I am living in uncomfortable environment	30	30%	9	9%	47	47%	8	8%	
10	I often feel nervous stressed with psychological behaviour which causes stress	49	49%	18	18%	19	19%	14	14%	

Table 4 shows that based on trying to avoid situations which force them to be worried 34 (34%) respondents agree, 48 (48%) respondents strongly agree, but 11 (11%) and the other 7 (7%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents strongly agree. Based on feeling free condition in worried situations, 38 (38%) respondents agree, and 23 (23%) strongly agree. On the other hand, 24 (24%) and 15 (15%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that they have, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agree. Based on being easy for them to relax when they are in worried situations16 (16%) respondents agree and 13 (13%) respondents strongly agree. On the other hand, 51 (51%) and 20 (20%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents disagree. On the feeling comfortable when nervous conditions happened 11 (11%) respondents agree that they are and 7 (7%) respondents strongly agree, but 51 (51%) and 31 (31%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents disagree. Based on making ease when stressful situations happened usually, 51 (51%) respondents agree and 29 (29%) respondents strongly agree, but 14 (14%) and 6 (6%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agree. Based on trying to avoid things that will make up their minds, 34 (34%) respondents agree and 26 (26%) respondents strongly agree, but 19 (19%) and 21 (21%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agree. Based on getting away from stressful circumstances, 43 (43%) respondents agree and 21 (21%) respondents strongly agree, but 18 (18%) and 18 (18%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agree.

Based on the feeling of getting relaxed when they are still with stressful circumstances, 40 (40%) respondents strongly agree and 19 (19%) respondent are agree, but 24 (24%) and 17 (17%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents

agree. On the feeling of comfortability when they are living in uncomfortable environment, 30 (30%) respondents agree and 9 (9%) respondents strongly agree, but 47 (47%) and 8 (8%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents disagree. Based on the feeling of being nervous with psychological behaviour which causes stress 49 (49%) respondents agree and 18 (18%) respondents strongly agree, but 19 (19%) and 14 (14%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agree.

4. Discussions

4.1. The relationship between duration in prison and self-awareness, stress and stress coping

One of the objectives of the present study was to assess the relationship between duration in prison and psychological reactions to imprisonment, within the strongest emotional stress reactions. To do this, percentage, correlation, *t*-test and ANOVA techniques were used to analyse the relationship between duration in prison and psychological reactions to imprisonment. Therefore, the result indicated that there is a significant relationship between duration in prison and some components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping) among the prisoners. From the rest two components (self-awareness and stress coping) stress has a negatively correlated with duration in prison. Similarly, previous studies indicated that defects in self-awareness skill are related to life in prison (Spence, 2003). So, emotional stress can be expressed or practiced in many ways, Anxiety is one of them. Anxiety is usually quite low and some acceptance of prison life is generally gained (Bartol & Bartol, 2018).

The findings of the present study manifested that the relationship between the duration of imprisonment and inmates stress coping. The results of the correlation analyses revealed that there is no significant relationship between any of the stress coping mechanism and the length of imprisonment. In the contrary, the previous studies indicate that there is a reliable relationship between imprisoned length and any measure of adaptation (Zamble & Porporino, 2014). In addition, other literature shows that there is a relationship between self-awareness and prisoners. Therefore, there has been inconsistency between the findings and results about the relationship between self-awareness and life in prison.

Fabiano (2020) identified that only a small number of studies reporting lower self-awareness in offender samples prior to 1980. However, they argued that the lake between prisoners and self-awareness many operate through the locus of control. Many prisoners are externally oriented in their ability to affect change or have control in a tier environment (i.e., internal control). Studies on stress say that prisoners are uncomfortable and stressful environment (Baumeister, 1993). The person who suffers the acute pair of imprisonment necessarily manifests psychological discomforts such as post-traumatic stress disorder or other forms of disability may be in the form of diminished sense of self-worth and personal value. These psychological problem effects of life in prison vary from individual to individual (Haney, 2002).

4.2. Gender difference on prisoners level of stress, self-awareness and stress coping

The other objective of the present study was to assess the statistical gender difference in prisoner's level of stress and self-awareness. As the findings indicate, there is a significant statistical gender difference in prisoners' level of stress and self-awareness. Similarly, Wolff, Shi & Siegel (2009) indicate that females are more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma than men and post-traumatic stress disorder is more prevalent among female prisoners. Furthermore, previous studies show that trauma experienced by female prisoners strongly influences offending behaviour.

4.3. The relationship between age of prisoners self –awareness, stress and stress coping

The other objective of the present study was to assess the relationship between the age of prisoner's self-awareness, stress and coping mechanisms. The results of the finding revealed that there is a relationship between the age of prisoners and self-awareness. Similarly, previous studies indicated that younger prisoners aged 25 or below are initially more resistant to the prison structure which makes them more likely to be stressful than any other older inmates who assume passive avoidance roles in prison (Mccorkle 1992). However, it has been suggested that after the initial shock of imprisonment, younger inmates tend to demonstrate increasing level of conformity over time (Bartol and Bartol 2018). In contrary, the study shows that there is no significant relationship between some components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness stress coping and stress) and age of the prisoners.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

From the findings of the study, following concluding and recommendation notes were made:

- There is a significant difference between male and female prisoners on the components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping).
- There is a significant relationship between the duration of stay in prison and the components of psychological well-being (i.e., self-awareness, stress and stress coping) among the prisoners of Hosanna town. Based on the components of psychological well-being studied in this research, stress has an inverse relationship with duration in prison (i.e., as the length of imprisonment increases the prisoner's adaptation to stress increases and the level of stress decreases).
- Maintains interaction by creating favourable conditions for the prisoner to develop a sense of good interaction when he/she is in the prison or/and after return to society.
- They should be done by practicing different physical exercises in accordance with a flexible plan of schedules.

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