

*A Study on Reasons for Living
of Inmates in Chonburi Women's Penitentiary Center*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to survey the female inmates' reasons for living. The samples included 99 inmates who were convicted and sentenced to more than ten years. The survey instrument was “ The Reason for Living Scale ” translated from Linehan et al., in 1983. There were 72 questions which use a 6 point scales rating from 1 = Not At All Important to 6 = Extremely Important. The data was analyzed by frequency, percent, mean, and standard deviation.

Results of the survey indicated the youngest inmate in the sample of 99 inmates was 20 years old, and the oldest was 63 years old. The average age was 38 years (S.D. = 10.42). The shortest periods of time for the inmates who were convicted and sentenced was 10 years and the longest was 29 years. The average length of their sentence was 16.5 years (S.D. = 57.54). The shortest period of time served was 1.6 years and the longest period of time served was 19 years. The average period of time served was 8.9 years (S.D. = 53.32).

Ninety five of the female inmates (96%) indicated that family is the main factor for them to stay alive.

The total average of “ reason for living ” of inmates was 4.38 (S.D. = .62). The inmates gave precedence to child-related concerns, responsibility to family, survival and coping beliefs at a high level (Mean = 5.21 , 5.14 , 4.92) respectively.

At the .05 level of statistical significance, it resulted that Age there was a negative correlation of reasons for living which is the older inmates tended to have less reasons for living. Consider the six sides of Reasons for Living, it found that four sides of Reasons for Living which were Survival and Coping Beliefs, Responsibility to Family, Fear of Suicide and Fear of Social Disapproval were at the .05 level of statistically significant difference.

Keywords : Reasons for Living , Female Inmates

Introduction

Overview

Prisons are the particular society institutions. Prisoners must stay in the prisons by law. They do not have any chances to select when or what time they will leave. They must follow the new life style that is very different from the outside society such as their livings, rules, and cultures. All of these factors create depressions to the prisoners. A study of inmates' opinions showed that the beginning of their lives in prisons was scary, depressed, sad, stressed, and hopeless (Napapawn Hawanon et al., 2012).

No matter how short or long time for living in the prisons, the inmates extremely felt punished and blamed themselves. Some inmates lost their good emotions for themselves. Some felt like murdering themselves. For the ones who had lived in the prisons for a long period of time, they felt depressed and hopeless. After spending their penalty time, it was not easy for them to live their lives in the real society. They had problems such as keeping jobs, living lives, and being blamed as a prisoner. It is really important to support those former inmates to be strong and be able to move on to their lives.

These are not only the problems in Thailand, but also do happen around the world. The results of International Center for Prison Studies by King's College in 2006 revealed that the most inmates were in the United States of America (183,000 inmates), China (71,280), Russia (55,400), and Thailand (28,450) respectively. The statistics revealed the increase of inmates and also did male prisoners. The important problem was that the prisons were not built to serve the female prisoners. The health welfare was not appropriate for them. Also, there were the shortages of several services such as education, vocation training, and reviving program.

When women are sent to prison. They can feel isolated, distressed and extremely anxious about what is going to happen when they are in the prison. Their loss of freedom, loss of family and social support, fear of the unknown, fear of physical or sexual violence, uncertainty and fear about the future, embarrassment and guilt over the offence, and fear or stress related to poor environmental conditions. (WHO,2007). Inmates have a range of psychological problems. They may be suffering distress, frustration and confusion following imprisonment and will need a good deal of reassurance and support. (Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Mental Health DOH Sept 2003). Many women prisoners enter custody already struggling to cope with a wide range of difficult issues including drug misuse, a history of abuse, mental health problems and family background problems. These have all been identified as significant risk factors for suicide and self-harm. (PSO 2700 contains specific guidance about supporting women prisoners).

According to those problems, Princess Bajrakitiyabha invented a supporting project to help people who needed a second chance in Thai society. The project was called " The Enhancing Lives of Female Inmates Project " or ELFI between July 2009.

December 2010 the 65th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) signed an agreement establishing United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures of Women Offenders (The Bangkok Rules).

The researcher participated in the project according to The Bangkok Charter on the occasion of 7th anniversary Office of the Affairs Under the Royal Initiatives of HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha on October 31,2013 at Miracle Hotel , Bangkok. This motivated the researcher to aware of the many problems of inmates. The researcher would like to join the program of helping this group.

According to the mentioned problems, the researcher agreed that the prisoners mentally and physically suffered. They were depressed and sad. They blamed themselves and felt hopeless. Some prisoners committed suicide because they felt unacceptable from the society and they did not live in the real society. The researcher would like to deal with the problems and help these prisoners survive and live their lives in the real world via Reasons for Living.

The study of reasons for living was a study to discover factors and reasons of inmates' living. The results of the study would lead to the improvement of the reasons for living.

Research Objective

To study the inmates' reasons for living.

Methodology

1. Selection of subjects

Populations :

The population in Chonburi Women's Penitentiary Center is 1,266 inmates.

Samples :

The sample chose 99 inmates who were convicted and sentenced to over 10 years. Based on Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 80 inmates was needed (Reliability = 95%).

2. Variables

Independent variables :

Age
Years (Sentenced)
Time (Jail time left)
Who are you living for.

Dependent variable :

Reasons for Living.

3. Instrument

The survey instrument was " The Reasons for Living Scale " translated from Linehan et. al., in 1983. There are 72 questions which use a 6 point scale : 1 = Not At All

Important / 6 = Extremely Important. The researcher requested 3 experts to check content validity. The questionnaire was tried out with 41 inmates who were not the sample. The reliability of the instrument was .96

4. Collection of Data

The researcher asked for the cooperation from the Director of the Chonburi Women’s Penitentiary Center. The questionnaires were given to the director and the official workers to pass them to the inmates. The number of the respondents was 99 persons (100%).

5. Analysis of Data

The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data as follows:

1. Demographic characteristics consisted of age , years (sentenced) , time (jail time left) , who are you living for. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were analyze from the data.
2. The Reasons for Living were analyzed to find mean, standard deviation, and average.

Results

Table 1 : General information of Female Inmates.

	Minimum (years)	Maximum (years)	Mean (years)	SD
Age	20	63	38.02	10.42
Years (sentenced)	10	29	16.5	57.54
Time (jail time left)	1.6	19	8.9	53.32

From table 1 found that :

- Results of the survey indicated the youngest inmate in the sample of 99 inmates was 20 years old, and the oldest was 63 years old. The average age was 38 years (S.D. = 10.42).
- The shortest periods of time for the inmates who were convicted and sentenced was 10 years and the longest was 29 years. The average length of conviction and sentence was 16.5 years (S.D. = 57.54).
- The shortest period of time served was 1.6 years and the longest period of time served was 19 years. The average period of time served was 8.9 years (S.D. = 53.32).

Table 2 : Frequency and Percent of “ Who are you living for ”

Who are you living for	Frequency	Percent
1. Oneself	-	-
2. Family	95	96.0
3. Friend	-	-
4. Oneself , Family and Friend	-	-
5. Oneself and Family	1	1.0
6. Family and Friend	1	1.0
(No Answer)	2	2.0
Total	99	100.0

From table 2 found that : Ninety five of the female inmates (96%) indicated that family is the main factor for them to stay alive.

Table 3 : Meaning of “ Reasons for Living ”

Related Element	Mean	SD	Rank	Level	Meaning
1. Survival and Coping Beliefs	4.92	.56	3	5	Quite Important
2. Responsibility to Family	5.14	.78	2	5	Quite Important
3. Child-Related Concerns	5.21	.77	1	5	Quite Important
4. Fear of Suicide	3.24	.81	6	3	Somewhat Unimportant
5. Fear of Social Disapproval	4.03	.83	4	4	Somewhat Important
6. Moral Objections	3.72	1.14	5	4	Somewhat Important
Total	4.38	.62		4	Somewhat Important

From table 3 found that : The total average of “ reasons for living ” of inmates was 4.38 (S.D. = .62). The inmates gave precedence to child-related concerns ,

responsibility to family , survival and coping beliefs at a high level (Mean = 5.21 , 5.14 , 4.92) respectively.

Meaning of the scores.

- 5.51 - 6.00 = reasons for living are Extremely Important
- 4.51 - 5.50 = reasons for living are Quite Important
- 3.51 - 4.50 = reasons for living are Somewhat Important
- 2.51 - 3.50 = reasons for living are Somewhat Unimportant
- 1.51 - 2.50 = reasons for living are Quite Unimportant
- 1.00 - 1.50 = reasons for living are Not At All Important

Table 4 : An Analysis of relation of Age, Years (sentenced) and Time (jail time left) with reasons for living of inmates.

		Survival and Coping Beliefs	Responsibility to Family	Child - Related Concerns	Fear of Suicide	Fear of Social Disapproval	Moral Objections	re fo liv (
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.232*	-.198*	-.128	-.254*	-.223*	-.056	-.2
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.050	.207	.011	.027	.579	.0
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Years (sentenced)	Pearson Correlation	-.073	-.085	.002	.012	.007	.029	-.0
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.473	.405	.985	.903	.945	.775	.8
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Time (jail time left)	Pearson Correlation	-.013	.041	.121	.115	.088	-.134	.0
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.895	.686	.235	.257	.388	.186	.7
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99	99

* $p < .05$

From table 4 found that : At the .05 level of statistically significant difference, it resulted that Age there was a negative correlation of reasons for living which is the older inmates tended to have less reasons for living in overall and the four sides which were Survival and Coping Beliefs, Responsibility to Family, Fear of Suicide and Fear of Social Disapproval.

Discussion

Results of the survey indicated that the youngest inmate in the sample of 99 inmates was 20 years old, and the oldest was 63 years old. The average age was 38 years (S.D. = 10.42). The shortest periods of time for the inmates who were convicted and sentenced was 10 years and the longest was 29 years. The average length of their sentence was 16.5 years (S.D. = 57.54). The shortest period of time served was 1.6 years and the longest period of time served was 19 years. The average period of time served was 8.9 years (S.D. = 53.32).

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Suggestion for research

1. For application :

Enhancing program on Reasons for Living should focus for the aging prisoners.

2. For research :

Counseling program should be developed to train workers who work in Penitentiary Center in order that they can be counselors.

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