

# **RELATION OF DEPRESSION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG JOHOR PRISON FINAL PRISONERS**

*Journal of Correctional Issues*  
2021, Vol.4 (2), 104-109  
Politeknik Ilmu  
Pemasyarakatan

**Vinodh Elamkovam**

Deputy Superintendent of Prison, Johor Bahru Correctional Center,  
Malaysia Prison Department

*Review*  
30 Juni 2021

**Saralah Devi Mariamdarani Chethiyar**

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

*Accepted*  
20 Desember 2021

## **Abstract**

*The issue of depression among prisoners has received attention from researchers in the field of imprisonment and correctional services in recent times. Various studies have been conducted to answer the questions that arise in the issue of depression especially among final prisoners. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between depression and aggressive behavior among final inmates in Johor State Prison. This quantitative study used a questionnaire and involved a total of 127 respondents consisting of final inmates from three Johor State Prison institutions. The findings of the study found that there was a relationship between depression and aggressive behavior of final inmates in Johor State Prison. While the results found that there is no difference in aggressive behavior and depression according to the citizenship and age of final inmates in Johor State Prison. Thus, the formation of discipline and emphasis on the personality aspects of the final prisoner should be focused by the prison institution with the aim of producing final prisoners who can return to the basics if released later.*

## **Keywords:**

*Aggressive Behavior, Depression, Final Prisoner, Age, Citizenship*

## **Introduction**

In this increasingly challenging era of globalization, a human being can experience extreme psychiatric problems as they are unable to cope with the various obstacles that persist in daily life. Azlina Abu Bakar (2002), states that an individual will experience depression at least three times in their lifetime. He also described the symptoms of depression as follows; loss of appetite and drinking, feeling deficient in self, prone to crying, feeling pessimistic, helpless, feeling lonely and lonely, preferring to be alone and avoiding interacting with others.

Meanwhile, Tang and Wong (2018), also pointed out that depression can affect an individual's immune system

against disease and the likelihood of those involved being exposed to the risk of heart disease is two to three times higher than normal individuals. In the context of incarceration, final inmates who are in prison are prone to a wide range of psychological disorder problems as they rely on such long periods of imprisonment with no release date. Long periods of imprisonment result in final inmates facing a variety of problems that beset them (James & Glaze, 2006). Depression is one of the problems that afflict end inmates. Thus, prisoners who are confused and worried about the changes of the outside world and the iron curtain world will begin to challenge and seek different opinions or understandings among themselves, their families and also

with the prison staff (Mariamdarani, 2013). Loss of affection from family members and societal attitudes that look askance at them also cause aggressive behavior to arise among final inmates (James & Glaze, 2006).

Studies on aggressive behavior have been conducted in Malaysia in various sectors and dimensions. However, most of the studies conducted are more focused on the educational setting. Researchers are interested in examining the issue of aggressive behavior further by studying the relationship between depression and aggressive behavior in prison. Studies in prisons are still not widespread because there are various procedures that need to be passed by a researcher to make a study in the Prisons Department because prisons are security areas where every matter requires compliance at the Johor Bahru Correctional Center, Kluang Prison and Simpang Renggam Prison.

### **Literature Review**

Studies on aggressive behavior have been conducted in Malaysia in various sectors and dimensions. Mariamdarani (2016) has conducted a study aimed at identifying the level of depression between remand detainee inmates and inmates on conviction. The second purpose was to study the differences in levels of depression among the remand detainee population and inmates in law. The Beck depression inventory was used as a primary tool to identify the level of depression of prison inmates. The results of the Pearson correlation test partially support there is a relationship between the level of depression with remand inmates and inmates falling off the sentence.

An independent survey conducted by Gunn, Maden, Swinton conducted in

the United Kingdom in the early 90s showed prevalence rates (27% and 91% respectively) of neurotic disorders in the form of disturbed sleep, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and hot temper. Comorbidity exists among 25% of male prisoners and exists only 1/3 among female prisoners in remand prisons.

In a study conducted by Herrman et al., (2001), 351 inmates from one of the largest prisons in Iran were interviewed by the researchers. They used clinically structured interviews based on the DSM-IV Axis I Disorders as well as the Psychopathy Checklist. 88% of the inmates met the lifelong diagnosis criteria of at least one Axis I Disorders, while 29% met the diagnostic criteria during depressive disorder and 1.5% met the criteria for Dysthymic disorder. When compared to the general population in Iran, the rate of Psychiatric Morbidity is approximately three times higher. Furthermore, the prisoners were not from the same group.

Hurley and Dunne, (2010). studied the characteristics of inmates detected to have serious mental illness during admission to a New York prison. Chart reviews were used for inmates who entered prisons from May 2007 to June 2007 and found that most inmates had serious mental problems. Early detection is done by a psychologist or a community worker within days of arriving at the prison. A few days later, the psychiatrist reviewed the chart, conducted a second interview, then confirmed the validity or changed the diagnosis. 6% (172/2918) of inmates were detected to have serious mental problems. 22 inmates (13%) were diagnosed with major depressive disorder and 33 inmates (19%) had emotional disorder.

Clark (2011), conducted a study on the relationship of aggressive behavior

with depression among aggressive and non-aggressive juvenile offenders. The study was conducted on 95 male adolescents aged between 11 and 16 years. The Jesness Inventory-Revised (JI-R) questionnaire was used to collect data. The results of the study obtained showed no significant relationship between the aggressive behavior of juvenile offenders with depression.

### Methodology

The design of the study of aggressive behavior with depression among final inmates in Johor State Prison 3 is descriptive by using survey method. Through this study the information of selected prisoners was collected through the use of questionnaire instruments. In this study descriptive statistics describe about the demographic distribution of the respondents. Next, inferential statistics were used to test the study hypotheses. A total of 127 samples were randomly selected in this study.

The process for the selection of this sample is to use probability techniques. The researcher used a simple random sample selection method from each institution in the Johor State Prison, namely Kluang Prison, Simpang Renggam Prison and Johor Bahru Correctional Center. The instruments used in this study were the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and Aggression Questionnaire (AQ). The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was founded by Aaron Beck in 1996. The inventory contains 21 items and each item has four answer choices that describe low to high depression. The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) was founded by Buss and Perry in 1992. The inventory contains 29 items to assess aggressive behavior. The Alpha coefficients obtained in the pilot study were BDI (0.860) and AQ (0.862) and the Alpha coefficients from

the actual study were BDI (0.867) and AQ (0.868).

### Result

Through the descriptive statistical method conducted, found that the number of respondents with Level One depression (normal) is 15 people equivalent to 11.8% while the number of respondents with level two depression (mild emotional disorder) is 13 people equivalent to 10.2% and respondents who suffering from level three depression (clinical depression border) was a total of 12 people equivalent to 9.4%. Respondents with level four depression (moderate depression) is a total of 49 people which is equivalent to 38.6% while respondents with level five depression (serious depression) is a total of 23 people equivalent to 18.2% and respondents with level six depression (severe depression) serious) is a total of 15 people equivalent to 11.8%.

In addition, the findings of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between depression and aggressive behavior of end-prisoners. The relationship between the variables was positive and moderately strong at the 0.01 confidence level where  $(r(126) = 0.441, p < 0.01)$ . A positive relationship direction means that when a final inmate is in a state of depression then the chances of the final inmate behaving aggressively are moderately high. Table 1 shows the association between depression and aggressive behavior of final inmates.

**Table 1**  
**Relationship Between Depression And Aggressive Behavior Of Final Prisoners**

<u>Variable</u>		<u>AQ</u>
BDI	r	.441
	<u>Sig (2-tailed)</u>	<u>.000</u>

Furthermore, the results of the study showed that there was not

significant difference in depression among the final inmates in Johor State Prison by age at a confidence level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This is because the value of  $p = 0.384$  then ( $p > .05$ ). There were no significant differences in depression. Therefore H3 is rejected. The statistical formula for this analysis was  $F(4, 122) = 1.05$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . With this, the alternative hypotheses constructed are rejected. This means that descriptively, final inmates in the age group of 60 years and above have a higher level of depression than other age groups in the Johor State Prison. The following are the results of the final inmate depression ANOVA based on age:

**Table 2**  
**Final Inmate Depression ANOVA Results**  
**Based on Age**

	ANOVA				
	BDI				
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	585.930	4	146.483	1.050	.384
Within Groups	17022.054	122	139.525		
Total	17607.984	126			

### Discussion

The results of the study show that there is a significant relationship between aggressive behavior and depression of final inmates in Johor State Prison. This suggests that if a final inmate behaves aggressively then the individual is experiencing depression. The findings of the study showed inconsistencies with previous studies conducted by Fazel and Seewald (2012) which focused on the relationship between aggressive behavior with end inmate depression and the results showed no relationship between aggressive behavior with end inmate depression. Research found different results from the previous studies because

of the number respondents and the different study place.

In the context of convicted or remanded prisoners they still have the opportunity to be released after winning a case or completing a prison sentence. But for the final inmates they just have to pray to have to win the case or go down the section on the Court of Appeal, Federal Court as well as last chance at the State Pardon Board. If they fail at all levels then they will be transferred to Kajang or Sungai Buloh Prison for execution. As such, they are always depressed thinking about the outcome of the case and the beloved family out there. With such a situation, the probability for the final prisoner to act aggressively is high either against the member on duty or among other final prisoners.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between aggressive behavior and the age of final inmates in Johor State Prison. This means that the hypothesis constructed is rejected. This is because in the context of final inmates, age factors do not determine aggressive behavior rather they act aggressively if their needs are not met by prison management. This is due to, the prison still adheres to the laws and regulations that have been laid down in the management of the final inmates.

According to Ronke and Happines (2015), aggressive behavior among 122 prison inmates and 121 non-prison inmates in Makurdi Metropolis Prison, Nigeria. The results showed that prison inmates in the age group of 18-35 years were more aggressive than non-prison inmates. He also suggested that the aspect of anger management should be emphasized among inmates in prisons. Although the results of this study contradict the results of the researcher's study due to the specialization of the

study by the researcher in the context of final prisoners where final prisoners act more aggressively than other prisoners regardless of age because they know there is no heavier punishment than death penalty while if convicted prisoners commit offenses in prison then they will be charged in prison pursuant to the Prisons Act 1995 and the Prisons Regulations 2000, Articles 122 and 123.

### Conclusion

Based on the studies that have been done, there are several suggestions by researchers to reduce the depression of end inmates and in turn be able to reduce their aggressive behavior. The first suggestion made by the researcher is that the members working in the Johor State Prison should be responsible in the formation of human capital in the prison in addition to their daily duties. In addition, the formation of discipline and emphasis on the personality aspects of the final prisoner should be focused by each prison with the aim of producing final prisoners who can return to the basics if released later.

From the findings and conclusions of this study, there are implications of the study that involve several things that can be identified by the researcher in this study. The first implication is to show the validity and reliability of the research tool based on the research that has been conducted by the researcher. The results show that this tool has high reliability. The second implication of the results of this study is that it can provide useful information to prison staff about the testing tools that should be used to detect aggressive behavior and depression experienced by final inmates.

This study has some limitations. First, the respondents of this study were limited to final inmates in the Johor State Prison

only. Therefore, the results of the study cannot represent the population of final inmates in the Malaysian Prisons Department but can only represent the population of final inmates in the Johor State Prison. The honesty and sincerity of the respondents in answering the questionnaire is also a matter that needs to be given serious attention so as not to affect the results of the study.

In conclusion, the final inmates in prison should be given appropriate reinforcement in rehabilitating themselves according to the Prison Department's rehabilitation module so that they can lead a normal life after their release. Efforts from various parties are needed to ensure that the life of the final prisoner is on the right track. With the help and support from family, community, final prisoners can strengthen their personalities to become more useful human beings to themselves, family, society and country.

### Reference

- Bakar, A. A. (2002). *Psikologi personaliti individu*. Karisma.
- Clark, A. N. (2011). *Correlation of depression and aggression with violent or nonviolent crimes and recidivism in juvenile offenders* (Doctoral dissertation, Roosevelt University).
- Fazel, S., & Seewald, K. (2012). Severe mental illness in 33 588 prisoners worldwide: systematic review and meta-regression analysis. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 200 (5), 364-373.
- Herrman, H, McGorry, P, Mills J, Singh B. (2001). *Hidden severe psychiatric morbidity in sentenced*

- prisoners: an Australian study. *AmJ Psychiatry*, 148: 236-9. *Behavioural Sciences*, 3(1), 72-78.
- Hurley, W, Dunne, M. P. (2010). *Psychological distress and psychiatric morbidity in prisoners*. *Aust NZJ Psychiatry* 1991; 25: 461-70.
- James, D. J., & Glaze, L. E. (2006). Mental health problems of prison inmates. *Special Report of the Justice Statistics. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington DC*.
- Maden, A., Taylor, C. J., Brooke, D., & Gunn, J. (1995). *Mental disorder in remand prisoners*. Great Britain, Home Office, Research and Planning Unit.
- Mariamdarani, S. D. (2016). Comparison of depression between remanded and sentenced inmates. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and*
- Ronke, G. & Happiness, I.. (2015). An Assessment of Aggressive Behaviour between Prison Inmates and Non-prison Inmates in Makurdi Metropolis, Nigeria. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 190. 502-509.10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.05.034 .
- Saralah Devi, M. (2013). *Kesan Intervensi Psiko-Positif Terhadap Tingkahlaku Agresif, Kemurungan dan Kecenderungan Berubah Penghuni Muda Penjara* (Doctoral dissertation, Universiti Utara Malaysia).
- Tang, X., Tang, S., Ren, Z., & Wong, D. F. K. (2019). Prevalence of depressive symptoms among adolescents in secondary school in mainland China: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 245, 498-507.