

# DEPRESSION AND SMUGGLING PROHIBITED AMONG PRISONERS

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## **Abstract**

*Tainted research information on depression and smuggling prohibited articles among prisoners has garnered researchers' attention to answer unanswered questions. This study aims to reveal about relationship between depression and smuggling prohibited articles into the 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 Prison Department because prisons are security areas where every affair requires adherence to relatively strict procedures. Researchers want to do a study at the Dungun Correctional Center which houses inmates entering drug cases for the 3rd time and above. Researchers want to study in depth the smuggling of prohibited articles and is a problem that needs to be addressed by all parties involved. By using Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) measurement as to elicit the pertinent information from 66 prisoners. This study conducted at Dungun, Terengganu Correctional Center by using the random sampling. The results show three hypotheses are insignificant, yet, it will be useful to prison management to focus on reducing depression level among prisoners which are being triggered by other factors. There is no relationship among the smuggling articles of the prohibition with depression is accepted. Meanwhile, there is also no relationship between modus operandi and depression.*

**Keywords:** Depression, BDI, Prison, Prisoners.

## INTRODUCTION

Prison is a place where prisoners get reprimanded for their crime acts which are unacceptable among public. For the public, prisons seem an ordinary place, however, the setting, overcrowding and the sober environment could lead to severe mental health among prisoners. As World Health Organization expressed their concern on this matter where they mentioned that prisoners are undergoing different types of mental health while in imprisonment compared to the general population. This morbidity can be challenging for prison management (Birmingham, 2003).

As aforementioned, whenever a prisoner is affected mentally, it could trigger him/her to commit other crimes, though, they are in the prison. Smuggle in prohibited items is a most popular crime in the prison. In order to ensure safety, correctional officers will do inspections time by time. Moreover, those prohibited items perhaps, impose a threat on the security of the prison and impeded the prisoner's recovery process (his/her imprisonment process). In addition, those prohibited items also raise disciplinary problem among prisoners.

There are various methods and modus operandi are often used by prisoners to smuggle in prohibited items. Even though, correctional officers have taken many drastic steps to curb the smuggling activities, yet, prisoners have different methods to bring in those prohibited items into the prison. For example, in 2016 at United Kingdom, a waitress caught for smuggling drugs through condom to the prison. She escaped from the sentence as she was considered as a juvenile during the case hearing (retrieved from Guardian

newspaper). In a nutshell, every step taken by prison management to eradicate those activities, somehow, they got hampered by prisoners' different ideas on smuggling prohibited articles.

Now, the protruding question is what cause prisoners to involve again in the smuggling of prohibited articles, despite of undergoing imprisonment?

Imprisonment can be the most disturbing event for prisoners. Once got sentenced, they may try to forget their hideous crime acts and seek for repentance. At this stage, it would be making them to be engulfed in guilty and sorrow. Those constant feelings may put them up in a depressive situation (Thomas, 2017).

A study conducted by Birmingham, Mason and Grubin (1996) shows the existence of mental disorders and the need for psychiatric treatment for newly remitted prisoners (as well as prisoners who are still in the trial) a male prison in Durham. An interview schedule (involving legitimate psychiatric materials and materials) is specially designed for this study. Mental illness (including wrong use) was found at 148 (26%) of 569 inmates at first entering prison. Major emotional disorders exist in 13 (2%) prisoners and dysthymic disorders present in 14 persons (2%) of the prisoners.

The National Statistic-Prison Survey Office in the United Kingdom (in Singleton, Meltzer, and Gatward, 1998) conducted surveys involving prisoners throughout the United Kingdom. It is found that the existence of all types of psychiatric disorders among the prisoners is higher than among ordinary people. The existence of neurotic disorders (in terms of anxiety, heat, depression, disrupted sleep, and fatigue) are as follows: 40% of men

who have been sentenced, 78% of men who have been remanded, 63% and 76% of female prisoners were remanded. As evidence, more women inmates who have neurotic symptoms compared to male prisoners and more convicted prisoners have neurotic symptoms compared to punished convicts.

Bureau of Justice Statistics in the United States (in James and Glaze 2006) conducted three surveys. In 2002, prisoners in all local prisons were interviewed and in 2004, prisoners from state and federal prison were interviewed. Recent history of mental health that occurred during the 12 months prior to an interview or any history involving clinical treatment and diagnosis by a mental expert was also taken into account for the manifestation of mental problems. This survey also includes structured clinical interviews that have been modified by DSM-IV. Based on the above statement, 56% of state prisoners were mentally ill, while 45% of federal prisoners and 64% of local prisoners were symptom of mental illness. Major depressive disorders exist among 24% state prisoners, 16% federal prisoners and 30% local prisoners in the past year since inception.

In a study conducted by Assadi, Noroozian, Pakravannejad, Yahyazadeh, Aghayan Shariat, and Fazel (2006) in Iran, 351 prisoners from one of the largest prisons in the country were interviewed using a simple random sampling. They use clinical structured interviews based on DSM-IV Axis I Disorders and Psychopathy Checklist. 88% of the prisoners met the lifetime diagnosis criteria of at least one Axis I Disorders, while 29% met diagnostic criteria during depression and 1.5% met the criteria for Dysthymic disorders. Depression disorder is very unhealthy as well as anxiety disorders (26%), substance

abuse disorder (83%) and Psychopathy (23%).

Moreover, environmental factors are also a cause for depression behaviors that are due to the lack of enthusiastic activity, overpressure administration on the prisoners, and other prisoners' attitudes that vary from backgrounds, cultures and upbringing, but they have been put together which as a result, the situation causes them difficulty to adapt with. As a consequence, a depressive mode urge prisoner to smuggle prohibited articles into the prison. It can be considered as an escapism strategy from their appalling condition in the prison.

The issue of smuggling of prohibited articles into the prison area has become much prevalent in developed countries. For example, in jail Calhoun, Georgian jails and Gatineau in Quebec have undergone a drone attempt to smuggle prohibition articles into jail. In the case of Calhoun's state prison, prison guards found remote control helicopters, tobacco and some mobile phones (BBC, 2013). In most of the prisons in Kenya face many barriers to smuggling articles (Angira, 2014). This is mostly related to the use of drug substances, mobile phones and equipment such as weapons for extortion. In one of the check-up activities carried out at the maximum prison Kamiti, Kenya's PI Nyaachi, the deputy responsible for the Kamiti said "in the past four days, search and inspection in a few blocks of occupants found more than 600 mobile phones and around 5,000 SIM cards, knives and cigarettes "(Angira, 2014).

Based on these prior studies, there are scanty evidences on depression among prisoners and smuggling of prohibited articles especially in Malaysia context. Furthermore, prison studies are still not widely available because there are various procedures that a researcher must

undergo to study in the Prison Department because prison is a secured area where every affair requires adherence to a fairly strict procedure.

Thus, the researchers want to carry out the research at Dungun's Correctional Centre that imprisoned drug offenders who commit more three times. The outcome of this study will fulfil the scarcity in the correctional literatures and enlighten readers about real scenario in the prison.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study that will be conducted, the location selection is at the Dungun Terengganu Correctional Center. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) questionnaire form founded by Aaron Beck (1996) modified from previous studies was used. BDI is used because it is more appropriate and widely used for testing non-clinical respondents. In addition, BDI also has a clear and easy -to -administer format. The Beck Depression Inventory is the most frequently used measure of depression. This inventory is in the form of a self -report that can be administered quickly and easily. It can be answered within 10 minutes. The inventory contained 21 items and each item had four answer choices describing low to high depression. The answer format is in the form of a four-point scale It can be answered within 10 minutes. Samples

marked on the statement that depicts their depression. The arrangement of this statement is given a score of 0, 1, 2 or 3 in ascending order. The maximum score that can be obtained is 63 and the minimum is 0.

The population of the study was prisoners who had disciplinary cases relating to the smuggling prohibited articles. Total of them are 81 prisoners. While for samples, when a population is too large or too large to be studied, only a few of the population are selected for the study which are referred as the sample. Sample selection was based on simple random sampling using krecjie and morgan's (1970) table. In this study, only 66 prisoners were selected as survey respondents. They were chosen based on their imprisonment frequency which were more than three times.

In this study descriptive statistics will explain about the demographic distribution of respondents from i.e. age and race. Next, inferential statistics were used to test the study hypotheses. The analysis used to test the hypothesis was Pearson Correlation.

## RESULTS

This study used Correlation analysis to examine the relationship between depression among prisoners and intention to smuggle prohibited articles. The results are depicted as in the following tables;

### Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between factors of prohibited articles smuggling and depression among prisoners.

Table 1: Pearson correlation analysis of factors of prohibited articles smuggling and depression among prisoners.

		Factors of Smuggling	Depression
Factors of Smuggling	Pearson Correlation	1	-.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.553

	N	66	66
Depression		-.074	1
		0.553	
	N	66	66

This hypothesis aims to see whether there is a relationship between prohibited items smuggling' factors with depression and testing made using the Pearson correlation analysis. Results in Table 1 show that there is no significant correlation between

diffusion factor and depression ( $r = -0.074$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis that is being constructed. Conclusion, the smuggling factor does not affect the depressant depression.

**Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between modus operandi and level of depression among prisoner.**

**Table 2: Pearson correlation analysis of modus operandi and level of depression among prisoners.**

		Modus Operandi	Depression
Modus Operandi	Pearson Correlation	1	-.201
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.106
	N	66	66
Depression	Pearson Correlation	-.201	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	
	N	66	66

This hypothesis aims to see whether there is a relationship between modus operandi with depression and testing made using the Pearson correlation analysis. Results in Table 2 shows that there is no significant relationship between modus operandi and

depression ( $r = -0.201$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Conclusion, modus operandi does not affect the depressant depression.

**Hypothesis 3: There is no relationship between imprisonment frequency and level of depression among prisoner.**

**Table 3: Pearson correlation analysis of imprisonment frequency and level of depression among prisoners.**

		Imprisonment Frequency	Depression
Imprisonment Frequency	Pearson Correlation	1	.080
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.521
	N	66	66
Depression	Pearson Correlation	.080	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.521	
	N	66	66

This hypothesis aims to see whether there is a relationship between imprisonment frequency with depression and testing made using the Pearson correlation analysis. Results in Table 3 shows that there is no significant relationship between imprisonment frequency and depression ( $r = .080$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis that is constructed is accepted. In conclusion, the frequency of imprisonment does not affect depression among prisoners.

### DISCUSSION

The results of the study conducted on 66 Dungun Corrective Center respondents found that the smuggling factor with depression, the modus operandi with depression, and the frequency of imprisonment with depression have no effect at all.

There is no relationship among the smuggling articles of the prohibition with depression is accepted. This can be explained through the smuggling of smuggled articles by 66 prisoners' respondents from Terengganu Dungun Corrective Center. Of the total respondents 33 respondents or 50% diving of the prohibition is due to stress. While 29 respondents or 43.9% were due to eliminate boredom. Next, only 2 respondents or 3% each represented a factor to get rid of depression and to gain strength and courage from the number of 66 inmates who answered the questionnaire.

Meanwhile, there is also no relationship between modus operandi and depression. This hypothesis is accepted because modus operandi does not affect depression. Independent surveys conducted by Gunn, Maden, Swinton (including convicted prisoners of war) and Maden, Taylor, Brooke, Gunn (including

prisoners of detention) were conducted in the United Kingdom in the early 90s showing their rates (27% and 91 % respectively) neurotic disorders in the form of disrupted sleep, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and heat. With this depression more is a mental health problem and does not contribute to the pressure to smuggle prohibition articles into prisons.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, the findings also provide additional information in the effort to improve the rehabilitation program so as not to conduct smuggling in prisons. However, many of the efforts and researches that need to be undertaken to examine important inputs especially on the effects of smuggling of prohibited articles on correctional officer's mental health. This is because there is still no study on smuggling of prohibited article in prison which are bringing negative consequences and threatening security correctional officers. There are limitations on this studies. First, this study only can generate among prisoners. Second, the study only focus at Malaysia prison.

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