

Predictors of emotional distress among inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria

Abimbola Afolabi¹, Solomon Adekunle Odedokun², and Helen Ajibike Fatoye³

¹Department of Social Work, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

²Department of Counselling and Human Development Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

³Department of Social Work, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Emotional distress encompasses a range of symptoms, which include anxiety, depression, and general psychological discomfort. It is seldom defined with precision. This may be either due to a presumed common understanding of the term, or may reflect its reference to a range of experiences. Added to this is the fact that studies adopt different terminology, including 'psychological distress' and 'mental distress'. When people are going through emotional distress, it destabilizes the individual, makes life uninterested, the individual is overwhelmed or overburdened which could make one to lose interest in one's daily activities. Emotional distress, if not well handled could lead to suicidal ideation or actions. In view of the above, this study sought to investigate the predictors of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

The descriptive research design of ex-post-facto type was used in the study. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample size of two hundred inmates from the entire population in the prison. Valid and standardized instruments were used to collect data from the participants. Data obtained was analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression statistical tools.

The results showed that the joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates was significant. It also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R = .476$ and a multiple R^2 of .227. This means that 22.7% of the variance was accounted for by three predictor variables when taken together at $\alpha = 0.05$. The results also showed that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 24.057. This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Based on the above results, it was recommended that correctional administrators, mental health professionals, and social workers should collaborate to develop and implement programs aimed at fostering positive social interactions and supportive relationships among inmates. These programs may include organizing peer support groups, facilitating group therapy sessions, and providing opportunities for recreational activities to reduce social isolation within correctional facilities. Also, facility managers, and policymakers who are responsible for addressing issues related to overcrowding, inadequate healthcare services, and substandard living conditions in correctional facilities should wakeup to their responsibilities.

KEYWORDS: Emotional distress social isolation quality of life prison resilience prison inmates.

1 INTRODUCTION

Emotional distress encompasses a range of symptoms, including anxiety, depression, and general psychological discomfort. It is seldom defined with precision. This may be either due to a presumed common understanding of the term, or may reflect its reference to a range of experiences. Added to this uncertainty is the fact that studies adopt different terminology, including 'psychological distress' and 'mental distress'. According to [24], it is seen as a number of uncomfortable subjective states,

encompassing the mood and malaise (or bodily states) associated with depressive (e.g. sadness and worthlessness) and/or anxious states (e.g. worry and restlessness). Emotional distress is generally considered in dimensional terms, where individuals may be ranked along a continuum of severity. Factors contributing to emotional distress in the general population are varied and multifaceted. Economic challenges, such as financial instability and job insecurity, are significant contributors. People facing financial difficulties often experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression [6]. Additionally, lifestyle factors, such as smoking and heavy alcohol consumption, have been linked to increased psychological distress [13]. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated emotional distress across various populations. A systematic review found heightened levels of anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia due to the pandemic, with significant effects observed globally [40]. These findings underscore the broad impact of significant societal disruptions on mental health.

Correctional environments pose unique psychological challenges that can exacerbate emotional distress. Inmates often face social isolation, lack of autonomy, and exposure to potentially violent situations, contributing to elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and emotional vulnerability. These factors significantly impact their quality of life and psychological well-being [15]. Research on correctional inmates in Nigeria highlights the substantial psychological burden faced by inmates. Common issues include anxiety, depression, and poor quality of life, which in turn contribute to maladaptive behaviors and decreased in overall well-being ([2], [26a], [26b], [27]). In the context of limited correctional budgets and the high prisoner healthcare costs, understanding emotional distress may prove useful to identifying interventions which can reduce physical, moral and financial burden associated with inmates incarceration. When people are going through emotional distress it destabilizes the individual, it makes life uninterested, overwhelmed and making one to loose interest in one's daily activities which if not well handled could lead to suicidal ideation or actions. In view of the above, this study, sought to investigate the predictors of emotional distress among inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Social isolation is the first variable in this study. It is define as the lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly. True social isolation over years and decades can be a chronic condition affecting all aspects of a person's existence. Social isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, fear of others, or negative self-esteem. Lack of consistent human contact can also cause conflict with (peripheral) friends. Loneliness, social isolation, and lacking social capital are even more common in prisons, a harsh environment [29], where maintaining and forming meaningful relationships is challenging. Ami [29] wrote: "some incarcerated individuals learn to be "invisible" and disconnected from others. They retreat into themselves, trust no one, and lead isolated lives of quiet desperation". This leads to not entrusting others with personal health or intimate details. A strong relationship has been established in the recent literature between psychological distress and social isolation in prison [17]. Even though, detained individuals generally feel alone and abandoned, connectedness with the outside (family and friends) can reduce psychological harm and substance use [4].

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that individuals experiencing social isolation report higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. For instance, a study by [7] found that socially isolated individuals had increased levels of depressive symptoms and perceived stress compared to their socially connected counterparts. Similarly, [14] conducted a meta-analytic review revealing that social isolation and loneliness are associated with a 29% increased risk of coronary heart disease and a 32% increased risk of stroke. In the context of correctional facilities, the impact of social isolation is even more pronounced [11] indicated that solitary confinement and social isolation in prisons lead to severe psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and even emotional distress. These findings underscore the critical role that social connections play in mitigating emotional distress and highlight the need for interventions aimed at reducing social isolation, particularly in high-risk environments such as prisons. In Nigeria, prisons are devoid of safety, the prison climate is overcrowded with other inmates, no interaction and opportunity to meaningful activities like social-recreational activities within the prison environment in a situation where these are not there it could give room for boredom, withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor psychological wellbeing and social isolation.

Quality of life (QoL) is another variable in this study. It is defined as an individual's overall assessment of their well-being, encompassing physical health, psychological state, social relationships, and environmental factors. It reflects how individuals perceive their position in life within the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns [4]. Empirical evidence demonstrates a strong correlation between QoL and emotional distress. [36], found that individuals with chronic conditions who reported lower QoL experienced significantly higher levels of depression and anxiety. Furthermore, [9] revealed that lower levels of life satisfaction and emotional well-being, key components of QoL are closely associated with increased symptoms of emotional distress. In correctional settings, this relationship is even more pronounced. [12] discovered that poor QoL among inmates, due to inadequate healthcare, substandard living conditions, and limited social support, leads to higher incidences of psychological issues such as depression and anxiety. These findings underscore the necessity of improving QoL to mitigate emotional distress, particularly in vulnerable populations like prison inmates. The prison condition of most of the Nigerian correctional facilities are in a terrible state, the centres has 81, 647 inmates as against official capacity of about 50,153 (NCS, 2024). Overcrowding is a common issue of

concern, there is food and portable water shortages, inadequate medical personnel and facilities, inadequate sewage facilities, poorly ventilated rooms, all these could make inmates to have poor mental state, depression and loneliness which could lead to emotional distress.

Prison resilience is the last variable in this study. It refers to the capacity of inmates to withstand, recover from, and adapt positively to the challenging conditions of incarceration, including social isolation and limited autonomy. It connotes the fact that no matter the situations in the prison the individual has wherewithal to withstand the situation. It involves a combination of psychological, social and behavioural strategies that help individuals manage the stress and adversity inherent in prison life. Empirical research underscores the importance of resilience in mitigating emotional distress among inmates. According to [37], higher levels of resilience are associated with lower levels of depression and anxiety among incarcerated individuals. Additionally, [18] found that inmates who exhibited strong coping mechanisms and resilience reported better mental health outcomes compared to those with lower resilience. In the correctional context, resilience is fostered through supportive relationships, positive social networks, and access to mental health resources. A study by [18] indicated that programs aimed at enhancing resilience, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and peer support groups, significantly reduce emotional distress and improve overall well-being among inmates. These findings suggest that enhancing prison resilience can be an effective strategy for reducing the psychological impact of incarceration, thereby improving the quality of life for inmates.

The study addresses a significant gap in the existing literature by examining the interconnected roles of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience in predicting emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

While prior research has established the adverse effects of social isolation and poor quality of life on mental health in the general population ([7], [36] and highlighted the importance of resilience in coping with incarceration stress [38], [8] there is a lack of comprehensive studies that integrate these variables specifically within the context of Nigerian correctional facilities. This study is necessary to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on how these factors collectively influence the emotional well-being of inmates. Understanding these dynamics can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at improving mental health outcomes and overall quality of life for inmates, ultimately aiding in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the impact of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

In particular, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- To determine the influence of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- To explore the combined effect of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- To assess the respective contributions of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience to emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the significant relationship between social isolation, quality of life, prison resilience, and emotional distress of among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria?
- What is the joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria?
- What is the relative contribution of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria?

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESIGN

The study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically investigate the relationship between social isolation, quality of life, prison resilience, and emotional distress among correctional inmates in Ibadan. Data collected from the inmates were analyzed using statistical tools, including the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to examine the relationships between variables and regression analysis to determine the joint contribution of the predictor variables to emotional distress. These statistical methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing inmates' psychological well-being.

2.2 POPULATION

The population of the study consisted of inmates incarcerated at Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria. This population includes individuals serving various sentences, ranging from short-term to long-term incarceration, and encompasses a diverse demographic in terms of age, and socio-economic background. The study aimed to include a representative sample of this inmate population to accurately reflect the impact of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress within this specific correctional facility.

2.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample size for the study was 250 prison inmates. The simple random sampling procedure was adopted for the study, randomizing both awaiting trial inmates (ATIs) and Convicted inmates. (CIs) two hundred and forty (242) 96.8 % male inmates were randomly selected as well as eight (8).032% female inmates. Their mean age is 32.8 and S.D of 4.2.

2.4 INSTRUMENTATION

The study utilized questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire comprised of sections including the demographic information division and instrumentations. The details are as follows:

2.5 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The respondents' background details such as age, religion, and incarceration status (awaiting trial/conviction) were collected in this section.

2.6 EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) [35] a widely used measure for assessing psychological distress and symptoms of anxiety and depression, was incorporated and used in the study to measure psychological distress of the prison inmate. The scale consists 10 items designed to capture various aspects of emotional well-being and mental health of the participant's frequency rate of experiencing specific feelings and symptoms over the past month, with responses ranging from "None of the time" to "All of the time." The K10 has demonstrated strong reliability and validity across diverse populations and settings. Its brevity and ease of administration make it a popular choice for both clinical and research purposes in evaluating psychological distress. Reported reliability coefficients for the K10 typically range from .80 to .90, indicating robust internal consistency.

2.7 SOCIAL ISOLATION

The UCLA Loneliness Scale, a prominent tool designed to assess subjective feelings of loneliness and perceptions of social isolation was adopted in the study. Developed [30] the scale has since undergone revisions to enhance its effectiveness. Originally comprising 20 items, participants rate the frequency of their experiences using options ranging from "O" (often) to "N" (never). Subsequent revisions included the introduction of reverse-scored items and simplification of wording, aimed at improving the scale's validity and reliability. This instrument remains widely utilized in research and clinical settings for understanding and measuring loneliness. The UCLA Loneliness Scale reliability as reported across studies ranged from .80 to .90.

2.8 QUALITY OF LIFE

The Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire (SQLQ) by Maria Straś-Romanowska measures global QoL and consists of 60 items (rated on a 4-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree). The internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach’s alpha) is $\alpha = 0.77$ for the psychophysical QoL scale, $\alpha = 0.71$ for the psychosocial QoL scale, $\alpha = 0.72$ for the personal QoL scale, $\alpha = 0.65$ for the metaphysical QoL scale, and $\alpha = 0.70$ for the total score. In this article present an analysis of QoL total score as the sum of all scale scores. The correlations between the SQLQ and other measures (construct validity) were significant and ranged from 0.30 (Psychophysical QoL scale) to 0.53 (Personal QoL scale). Example items are: “There are more successes than failures in my life” and “I like what I do”.

2.9 PRISON RESILIENCE

The study incorporated the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), a well-established measure widely recognized for its validity and reliability in assessing resilience. The CD-RISC consists of 25 items designed to gauge various dimensions of resilience, including personal competence, coping mechanisms, and adaptability to change. Participants responded to statements reflecting their experiences over the past month. Sample items from the CD-RISC include statements such as "I am able to adapt to change" and "I can find ways to solve problems, even if they seem impossible at first." These items are indicative of the scale’s focus on individuals’ abilities to overcome challenges and maintain a positive outlook. The CD-RISC has been extensively utilized in both research and clinical practice to evaluate resilience across diverse populations and contexts. With reported reliability coefficients typically exceeding .80, the scale demonstrates strong internal consistency and reliability, making it a preferred tool for assessing resilience in various settings.

2.10 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected in the study was analysed using descriptive statistics like percentage tables, ranges, mean and standard deviation. Additionally, the Person Product Moment Correlation was used to assess the relationships among the variables in line with the research questions. Multiple regression was also used to examine the joint and relative contributions of the independent variables on emotional distress. Data were analysed at 0.05 level of significance.

3 RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29 years	12	4.8
30-39 years	94	37.6
40-49 years	111	44.4
50 years and above	33	13.2
Total	250	100.0

Table 1 showed 12 (4.8%) inmates are between 20-29 years of age, 94 (37.6%) are aged 30-39 years, 111 (44.4%) are aged 40-49 years, and 33 (13.2%) are 50 and above years of age.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	252	100.0
Female	8	-
Total	250	100.0

Table 2 showed that the male inmates accounted for 96.8 % while female accounted for 0.32.0%.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	32	12.8
Married	167	66.8
Divorced	51	20.4
Total	250	100.0

Table 3 showed that most of the inmates are married, accounting for 66.8%, which was followed by those who were divorced (20.4%). A small proportion of the inmates are single accounting for 12.8% of the population of inmates in the study.

Table 4. Frequency distribution of respondents by religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	110	44.0
Islam	138	55.2
Others	2	0.8
Total	250	100.0

Table 4 showed that 110 (44.0%) inmates are Christianity, 138 (55.2%) are Muslim, and 2 (0.8%) are traditionalists.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of respondents by years used in prison

Number of years used in prison	Frequency	Percentage
1-3 years	76	30.4
4-6 years	121	48.4
7-9 years	40	16.0
10 years and above	13	5.2
Total	250	100.0

Table 5 showed that 76 (30.4%) inmates had been in the prison for 1-3 years, 121 (48.4%) had been in prison for 4-6 years, 40 (16.0%) had been in prison for 7-9 years, and 13 (5.2%) inmates had been in prison for 10 and above years respectively.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What is the significant relationship between social isolation, quality of life, prison resilience, and emotional distress of among correctional inmates in Ibadan?

Table 6. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between social isolation and emotional distress among prison inmates

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	p-value	Remarks
Emotional distress	44.2080	3.50054	250	.445*	.001	Sig.
Social isolation	73.1360	3.37447				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 presents the findings of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigating the relationship between social isolation and emotional distress among prison inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria. The table showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between social isolation and emotional distress among prison inmates ($r=.445$, $n=250$, $p (.001) < .05$). Hence, social isolation influenced/enhanced emotional distress among inmates in the study.

Table 7. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between quality of life and emotional distress among prison inmates

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	p-value	Remarks
Emotional distress	44.2080	3.50054	250	.287*	.001	Sig.
Quality of life	33.9760	3.42203				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 presents the findings of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigating the relationship between quality of life and emotional distress among prison inmates at Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria. The table showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between quality of life and emotional distress among prison inmates ($r=.287$, $n=250$, $p (.001) <.05$). Hence, quality of life influenced/enhanced emotional distress among inmates in the study.

Table 8. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between prison resilience and emotional distress among prison inmates

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	p-value	Remarks
Emotional distress	44.2080	3.50054	250	-.011	.863	Not Sig.
Prison resilience	40.5360	6.15730				

Table 8 showed the findings of a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis investigating the relationship between prison resilience and emotional distress among prison inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria. The table showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between prison resilience and emotional distress among prison inmates ($r= -.011$, $n=250$, $p (.863) >.05$). Hence, prison resilience does not influence emotional distress among inmates in the study.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What is the joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Table 9. Summary of Regression analysis showing joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.476	.227	.217	3.09673			
A N O V A						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	692.109	3	230.703	24.057	.001	Sig.
Residual	2359.075	246	9.590			
Total	3051.184	249				

Table 9 showed that the joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates was significant. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation ($R =.476$ and a multiple R^2 of .227. This means that 22.7% of the variance was accounted for by three predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 24.057 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

What is the relative contribution of social isolation, quality of life and prison resilience on emotional distress among correctional inmates in Ibadan?

Table 10. Summary of regression analysis showing relative contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
(Constant)	5.747	4.799		1.198	.232
Social isolation	.420	.062	.405	6.756	.001
Quality of life	.171	.061	.167	2.797	.006
Prison resilience	.048	.033	.085	1.490	.138

Table 10 revealed the relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz: Social isolation ($\beta = .405$, $p < .05$), Quality of life ($\beta = .167$, $p < .05$), and Prison resilience ($\beta = .085$, $p > .05$) respectively. Hence, social isolation and quality of life were significant i.e. could independently and significantly predict emotional distress among prison inmates in the study.

4 DISCUSSION

The statistically significant correlation found between social isolation and emotional distress among prison inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria, suggests a plausible link between these two variables. There seem to be a detrimental effects of social isolation on mental health outcomes among incarcerated individuals. The confined nature of prison environments often results in limited social interactions and reduced access to social support networks, which can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and isolation. Studies have indicated that these factors contribute to increased levels of depression, anxiety, and psychological distress among inmates [1]. Moreover, the stressors associated with incarceration, such as overcrowding and violence, further intensify emotional distress in socially isolated individuals [15]. Hence, it is reasonable to infer that social isolation significantly influences emotional distress among incarcerated populations. The rejection of the hypothesis in this study underscores the importance of addressing social isolation within correctional settings as a means of mitigating emotional distress and promoting mental well-being among inmates.

The statistically significant correlation observed between quality of life and emotional distress among prison inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria highlights a compelling relationship between these factors. Inmates with diminished quality of life may be more susceptible to experiencing heightened emotional distress due to various stressors inherent in the prison environment, including limited access to resources, restricted opportunities for recreation, and the challenges associated with incarceration. These stressors could engender feelings of hopelessness, frustration, and psychological anguish among inmates, consequently impacting their overall well-being. The rejection of the hypothesis suggests that quality of life significantly influences emotional distress among incarcerated individuals, emphasizing the necessity of addressing factors contributing to poor quality of life within correctional settings to enhance the mental health outcomes of inmates. Existing research supports the notion that quality of life is intricately linked to emotional well-being among incarcerated populations. Studies have consistently demonstrated the adverse impact of incarceration on quality of life and mental health outcomes among inmates [23], [10]. Additionally, research has underscored the importance of interventions aimed at improving the living conditions and overall quality of life within correctional facilities to alleviate emotional distress and promote better mental health outcomes among inmates [22], [3]. These findings lend further credence to the significance of addressing quality of life factors in mitigating emotional distress among incarcerated individuals.

The non-significant correlation between prison resilience and emotional distress among prison inmates of Agodi correctional centre, Ibadan, Nigeria may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, while resilience is often regarded as a protective factor against adverse outcomes, such as emotional distress, its effectiveness may vary depending on the specific context and individual circumstances. In the challenging environment of a prison, where inmates face numerous stressors and limited resources, the ability of resilience to buffer against emotional distress may be constrained. Additionally, the measurement of resilience itself could influence the findings; variations in how resilience is conceptualized and assessed across studies may contribute to inconsistencies in results. Moreover, individual differences in coping strategies, past experiences, and levels of social support may also play a significant role in shaping emotional distress outcomes among inmates, potentially overshadowing the impact of resilience alone [21]. These factors collectively highlight the complexity of emotional distress in correctional settings and the need for comprehensive, multi-dimensional approaches to address mental health issues among incarcerated populations.

The significant joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates underscores the multifaceted nature of mental health outcomes in correctional settings. Social isolation within prison

environments often leads to feelings of loneliness and alienation, exacerbating emotional distress among inmates. Similarly, the quality of life in prisons, influenced by factors such as living conditions, access to resources, and opportunities for rehabilitation, directly impacts inmates' psychological well-being. Additionally, prison resilience, encompassing coping strategies and adaptive behaviors developed in response to incarceration-related stressors, plays a crucial role in mitigating emotional distress among inmates. Understanding the combined influence of these variables provides valuable insights for developing comprehensive interventions aimed at promoting mental health and well-being within correctional facilities. Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of addressing social isolation, improving quality of life, and fostering resilience among inmates to effectively alleviate emotional distress and enhance overall mental health outcomes in prison settings.

The significant joint contribution of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress among prison inmates aligns with existing research findings in correctional settings. For instance, Smith et al. [32] found that social isolation was strongly associated with increased levels of emotional distress among incarcerated individuals, emphasizing the detrimental impact of limited social interactions on mental health outcomes. Furthermore, Hayes, et.al (2004) in their work demonstrated that higher levels of prison resilience were linked to lower levels of emotional distress among inmates, highlighting the protective role of resilience in buffering against the adverse effects of incarceration on mental well-being. Together, these findings corroborate the importance of considering social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience as significant factors influencing emotional distress among prison populations, thereby informing the development of targeted.

The relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, indicates that social isolation and quality of life emerged as significant predictors of emotional distress among prison inmates in the study. The significant beta weight for social isolation suggests that higher levels of social isolation are associated with increased emotional distress among inmates. Similarly, the significant beta weight for quality of life indicates that better quality of life within the prison environment is linked to lower levels of emotional distress. However, the non-significant beta weight for prison resilience suggests that, while positively correlated with emotional distress, prison resilience may not exert a significant independent effect on emotional distress among inmates in this particular study. These findings highlight the differential impact of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience on emotional distress outcomes within correctional settings, emphasizing the importance of addressing social and environmental factors to improve mental health outcomes among incarcerated populations. Several studies found the relative contributions of this study factors on emotional distress of correctional inmates [20], [22].

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made to improve mental health outcomes in correctional settings:

- **Enhance Social Support Systems:** Correctional administrators, mental health professionals, and social workers should collaborate to develop and implement programs aimed at fostering positive social interactions and supportive relationships among inmates. These programs may include organizing peer support groups, facilitating group therapy sessions, and providing opportunities for recreational activities to reduce social isolation within correctional facilities
- **Improve Living Conditions:** Correctional administrators, facility managers, and policymakers are responsible for addressing issues related to overcrowding, inadequate healthcare services, and substandard living conditions in correctional facilities. It's essential to allocate resources for infrastructure improvements, ensure access to essential amenities, and maintain hygienic and safe living environments for inmates
- **Foster Resilience-Building Interventions:** Correctional counselors, psychologists, and rehabilitation specialists should develop and implement resilience-building programs tailored to the unique needs of inmates. These programs should provide training in coping strategies, stress management techniques, and adaptive behaviors to empower inmates to navigate challenges effectively during their incarceration
- **Implement Mental Health Screening and Support:** Correctional healthcare providers, mental health professionals, and policymakers need to establish routine mental health screening protocols to identify inmates at risk of emotional distress. Additionally, ensuring access to mental health professionals, counseling services, and psychiatric care is crucial for providing timely interventions and support to inmates in need
- **Promote Rehabilitation and Reintegration:** Correctional educators, vocational trainers, and reintegration specialists should offer educational and vocational training programs aimed at addressing underlying issues contributing to emotional distress among inmates. Moreover, providing transitional support services can facilitate successful reintegration into society upon release, reducing the likelihood of recidivism
- **Strengthen Staff Training and Support:** Correctional staff, human resources departments, and training coordinators must provide training and support to recognize and respond effectively to inmates' mental health needs. Promoting a culture of

empathy, understanding, and de-escalation techniques among staff members can create a supportive environment conducive to the mental well-being of both inmates and staff alike

6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One limitation of the study is its reliance on data collected from a single correctional facility and a relatively small sample size of 250 inmates. This restricted scope may limit the generalizability of the findings to other correctional settings or inmate populations.

7 CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the complex interplay of social isolation, quality of life, and prison resilience in influencing emotional distress among correctional inmates. The findings underscore the significant role of social and environmental factors in shaping mental health outcomes within correctional settings. By identifying social isolation and quality of life as significant predictors of emotional distress, alongside the nuanced understanding of prison resilience, the study provides valuable insights for informing targeted interventions aimed at improving mental well-being among incarcerated populations. Future research endeavors should strive to replicate and expand upon these findings in diverse correctional contexts, with larger and more inclusive samples, to further elucidate the multifaceted nature of emotional distress among inmates and inform evidence-based interventions tailored to meet their unique needs.

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