

Inmates' Perception Of Environmental Factors Affecting Psychological Well-Being: A Case Of Kamiti Maximum Security Prison In Nairobi, Kenya

By

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Abstract

The aim of correctional centers worldwide is to protect the public, to punish, and to rehabilitate offenders. These institutions however face challenges that jeopardize effective achievement of these aims, among them being, ineffective rehabilitation programs, recidivism, mental disorders and suicide- with suicidal cases in prisons globally reported at 6% higher than in free population. Failure to obtain firsthand information on user needs leads to ineffective policies on rehabilitation philosophy. This paper therefore, examines the perception of inmates regarding environmental factors that influence their psychological wellbeing, indicated by stress, depression and anxiety. The moderating factors were age, marital status and length of imprisonment. The study was carried out at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kenya, adopting a descriptive-correlational methodology to assess the interaction between indicators of PWB and the environmental factors. Based on data collected from 250 respondents, using Semi-structured questionnaires, consisting of both open-ended and Likert type questions, the study identifies a range of emotional feelings to characterize PWB, including, sadness (36.5%), fear (16%), despair (17%), anger (5%) self-conscious (15.5%) and boredom (2%). Through Correlation and regression analysis, the study rules out on environmental factors that significantly influence PWB of inmates to include physical environment, self-acceptance, participation in rehabilitation programs, social interactions, family interactions and leisure activities. Age, marital status and length of imprisonment had insignificant contribution. This paper suggests on improving physical environment towards strengthening the psychosocial factors so as to promote PWB and rehabilitation at length.

Keywords: Kenya, Psychological Well-Being (PWB); Perception; Inmates; Mental illness; Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Rehabilitation.

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Introduction

Correctional centers are built environments whose intended purpose is to reduce crime through sentence, while providing a secure and decent environment for inmates as they go through rehabilitation (Schaefer *et al.*, 2020). Prison department is a major component of correctional centers worldwide and is classified as the common form of correction for long term imprisonment. Their governing mandate include safe custody of prisoners, deterrence and rehabilitation of offenders. A round table conference on prison policy in Kenya held in 2001, defined rehabilitation as an act of restoring to a health and useful condition. Rehabilitation aims at transforming the inmates so that they can live productive lives both inside prison and after being released (Corleto, 2018).

The fundamental goal is to change inmates' morals during solitary confinement, while avoiding the factors that contribute to crime (Musau, 2014). Rehabilitation combines psycho-sociological treatment, education, and work training to help offenders find productive roles (Moldes, 2019). Rehabilitation philosophy is built on theory that human behavior has identifiable causes and that negative behavior can be transformed to positive behavior through therapeutic treatments like education, vocational training, counselling and medical care (Dissel, 2009). It focuses on changing elements that facilitate crime, such as attitudes, cognitive processes, substance addiction, mental disorders, and the absence of education and employment (Ames, 2019).

Dissel (2009) reviews that the most effective rehabilitation methods are based on cognitive-behavioral approaches, focusing on the interrelationship between thoughts, feelings, and behavior. African nations often prioritize education, spiritual growth, and vocational training over behavioral and psychosocial aspects. For non-behavioral offenses, support centers are recommended for professional rehabilitative treatment.

Dissel (2009) in citing a study among Ugandan prisoners reviews that Vocational training was historically introduced in prisons to equip offenders with good quality of life, which was associated with a reduction in recidivism in Ugandan Prisons.

Sagada *et al.*, (2016) and Edgemon & Warner, (2018) in studying environmental behavior in correctional centers defends the use of architectural design that is based on scientific evidence, to influence behavior and in such cause rehabilitation. They both argue that if the prison architecture stimulates positive attitude, calmness and self-reflection among prisoners, then the resultant built environment will be safe and decent, which will then aid in rehabilitation. Thus, the process of achieving rehabilitation can be argued to involve evoking inmates' productiveness, positive attitude, self-reflection, hope and calmness.

Hight (2020) argues that architectural design of prisons is of equally importance to provision of legal services to prisoners. In studying the role of architecture in design of prisons Vessella (2017) notes that the effectiveness of a prison is not only given by the efficiency of the justice system in force, but also by the articulation of spaces and by the quality of its architecture. Furthermore, Karthus *et al.*, (2017) in analyzing UK Prison Estate for Wellbeing argues that any reform agenda would be thwarted if not integrated with the way

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the prison buildings are designed, upgraded, commissioned and maintained. Atlas (2016) in discussing physical environment as a function of correction in prison argues that physical layout of a prison facility to a great extent dictates the success of operational policies and the penal philosophy applied in that prison, for example, the humanitarian philosophy will demand for a minimum technological advancement in its spaces provided the safety of occupants is maintained. While rehabilitative philosophy demands for up-to-date spaces to necessitate delivering skills of equal standards to the free population.

Lanciano (2022) observes that prison rehabilitation programs help to reduce distress such as depression and anxiety among inmates and enhances their psychological well-being. Rehabilitation programs that emphasize education, psychological wellbeing and development of life skills play an important role in the achievement of objectives in all correctional facilities (Arbour *et al.*, 2021).

According to Nwefoh *et al.* (2020) and Pat *et al.* (2023), overcrowding and a feeling of diminished self-efficacy are among the causes of psychological challenges among confined persons. Moldes (2019) in citing Seligman (2011) observes that confined persons who are able to make friends in prison feel in better control of their daily lives and are able to adapt easily to prison life.

Ghazanfari (2022) observes that successful rehabilitation of inmates can be achieved through enhancing the inmates' psychological well-being, which in turn influences positive behavior among inmates, thus reducing prison violence (Rubiales & Prado, 2020). WHO (2020), defines psychological wellbeing as the ability to manage stress, maintain positive emotions and live a productive life at work and in social relationships, among others. This WHO (2020) framework goes on to identify stress, depression and anxiety as interrelated dimensions that contribute to the overall mental health. Thus, this study, basing its definition of PWB from WHO (2020), measures stress, depression and anxiety levels to assess inmates' PWB.

Wang (2020) in studying models of emotions identifies stress, depression and anxiety as finer characteristics of feelings extracted from an individual's sentiment, expressed using individual's common language or experience. For example, expressions such as disappointed and loss, characterize sadness; while displeasure, hostility and dissatisfaction signify anger. Emaealu *et al.* (2016) identify depression as prolonged sadness caused by overcrowding and low self-efficacy among prisoners, consequently affecting moods, emotions, and self-evaluative judgment.

Hidayati (2021) defines psychological well-being as a positive mental condition that enables an individual to self-evaluate positively while experiencing disappointment. Ghazanfari (2022) defines PWB as an individual's perception of their level of happiness that is characterized by a good feeling and efficient performance, and indicated by self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, personal growth, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and autonomy. In reviewing Ryff's scale of PWB, Moldes (2019) defines psychological adjustment as mental wellbeing manifested by positive symptoms and psychological maladjustment as its negative attributes indicated by negative responses such as burn out, exhaustion, anxiety and distress.

Factors theorized to challenge psychological wellbeing among inmates worldwide include restricted movement, overcrowding, lack of personal privacy, and material deprivations (Fair Trials, 2019) & Angkasa, (2020). Inmates' helplessness to change their situation coupled with their living conditions and insufficient healthcare, subject them to a feeling of diminished personal autonomy and self-worth (Robins, 2021). According to

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Quandt and Jones (2021), imprisonment leads to various disorders, such as mood disorders, anxiety, depression, bipolar disorders, social alienation, psychosis and suicidal thoughts some of which last beyond the time of incarceration. Lanciano (2022) further observed that confined persons experience psychological distress that include anxiety, and depression, but that prison intervention programs reduces this distress among confined persons and enhances their well-being. Brewer *et al.* (2023) established that faith-based prison programs provide a proven solution that gives hope and self-worth to prisoners, which influences change of behavior thus reducing recidivism. According to Pat *et al.* (2023), prisoners' well-being is positively influenced by the support confined persons receive from within and without the prison, including visits by family members, watching TV and engaging in sporting activities. Nwefoh *et al.* (2020) observed low psychological well-being among inmates in Nigeria because of heightened physical and psychological distress such as anxiety and depression. This situation was aggravated by inadequate mental health care and social support.

Hutchings and Davies (2021) also reported that mental health problems and diminished psychological well-being among inmates in England is poorer compared to the general population. A World Health Organization report, WHO (2022) report further indicates that psychotic illnesses among the incarcerated is two to 16 times higher among inmates compared to the general population, and the rate of major depression among the inmates is 2 to 6 times higher than in the general population. Stringer (2019) found that incarcerated people in the U.S have higher rates of mental health problems that include depression (24%), bipolar disorder (17%), personality disorder (13%), and post-traumatic stress (12%), all signs of diminished psychological well-being among inmates (Lanciano, 2022).

According to Lovett *et al.* (2019), there is a high prevalence of mental disorders among people who are detained within the justice system in Africa. In South Africa, Modupi (2019) observed that mental disorders were reportedly at a higher prevalence in prisons than expected. Nwefoh *et al.* (2020) highlighted Nigerian correctional facilities' high physical and psychological distress among inmates, particularly depression, due to inadequate mental health and social care. Adepoju *et al.* (2020) found that low- and middle-income countries have higher mental illness burdens of prisoners, but marital status, resilience, and spirituality significantly impact their psychological well-being.

Like the rest of Africa, Kenyan prisons battle the challenges of overcrowding which (Baffour *et al.*, 2024; Saeed *et al.*, 2021) says to negatively affect the inmates' psychological well-being. This situation seems to have persisted as Kamakil (2001) had reported that Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, which was originally designed to host 700 inmates, is holding up to 2000 inmates. Museve (2020) and Muringú *et al.* (2021) reported a high level of mental disorders, among Kenyan life-sentenced inmates, which exposes them to depression and suicide. Depression is termed as the most common form of mental illness in prisons globally, followed by anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (Puglisi and Wang, 2021). A reconnaissance survey by the author noted cases of suicidal deaths as a result of mental illnesses and mood disorders; sexual harassment among inmates; spread of infections; re-offense; and inmates escaping as among common challenges at Kamiti Maximum Prison. Karthus *et al.*, (2017) notes failure to study inmates' needs and characteristics from a firsthand information, leads designers and policy makers to creating infrastructure and policies that inhibit psychological withdraw, hence compromising effectiveness of rehabilitation. Mukasheva *et al.*, (2024) points out that Inmates' perception of their views on safety, privacy, and environmental quality, impact on their psychological state and engagement in rehabilitation.

It is on this basis that this study seeks to examine inmates' views of factors they feel influence their PWB, so as to suggest improvements that prison policy makers and planners can consider to enhance the contributing factors so as to promote PWB and consequently, rehabilitation.

Research Design

Kamiti maximum prison is a male maximum security prison established by the British government in 18th century, on the philosophy of capital punishment and solitary confinement. Rehabilitation philosophy was introduced after Kenya gained independence to replace corporal punishment with skill development, maintaining solitary confinement. It confines adult male offenders the country considers to be of high risk, both convicts and capital remands, and sentenced to above 10 years.

The study defines psychological well-being as being subjective and thus focused on subjective assessment of feelings, attitudes, opinions and behavior to measure psychological well-being. The paper thus, measures dimensions of PWB against the perceived factors to examine the strength of the effect. The study therefore adopts a mixed method design incorporating descriptive-correlational approach. A population of 1952 inmates, comprising of convicts and non-convicts formed the study target population. 250 respondents were randomly picked from the convicts' population. Participation was based on individual willingness and thus every individual in the convicted population had an equal chance. Semi-structured questionnaires, consisting of standardized open-ended and Likert types scales were used to gather data on inmates' judgment of their emotional state, both negative and positive, and their views on what they consider to influence the emotional state.

The emotional attribute was extracted from respondents' own sentiments, as expressed using own language. The characteristic responses were translated into a common language and categorized, according to similarities, into more specific emotions according to the Shaver *et al.'s* (1987) model of emotions analysis. The quantitative scores were analyzed descriptively using descriptive statistics (specifically frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics with the assistance of SPSS software, to further understand the common attitudes. Qualitative responses from the open-ended questions were summarized, described narratively identifying similarities and then grouping the patterns into themes.

The themes were treated as the perceived factors. The perceived factors together with the emotional states were then cross-tabulated by age, marital status and length of imprisonment, in the Pearson correlation coefficient @ in the SPSS software, to identify possibilities of a relationship. A regression analysis was further conducted to identify the significance of the relationship. Narration was used to report and present the data.

Findings

The constructed environment was found to be the most significant predictor of psychological well-being, with little extra influence from age, marital status, and length of incarceration. This was established through identifying participants feelings immediately they were incarcerated. Participants expressed their emotional states with 36.5% recording sadness, 17% expressing despair, 16% fear, and 15.5% indicated to have obtained consciousness. Other feelings included boredom, isolation, pessimism and rage, as shown in fig.1.1 below

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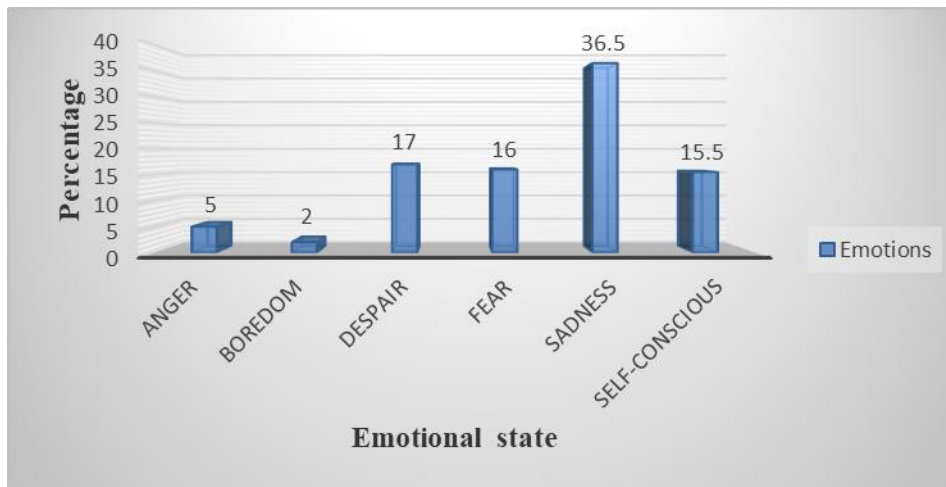


Figure.1.1 Respondents Emotional State.

Source: Field Data 2024

These leading negative attitudes were documented high across all the categories on length of imprisonment, with those windowed, married and bachelors expressing the highest recording. These negative feelings were also common among those aged above 60 years followed by ages 18-30 years, as summarized in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Respondents Emotional State by moderating variables

Variable	Emotional State F (%)						
	F (%)	Anger	Boredom	Despair	Fear	Sadness	Self-Conscious
Age (Years)							
18-30	41 (20.5)	1 (2.4)	1 (2.4)	7 (17.1)	7 (17.1)	15 (36.6)	6 (14.6)
31-40	69 (34.5)	5 (7.2)	1 (1.4)	16 (23.2)	12 (17.4)	23 (33.3)	8 (11.6)
41-50	46 (23.0)	2 (4.3)	2 (4.3)	6 (13.0)	7 (15.2)	16 (34.8)	9 (19.6)
51-60	27 (13.5)	2 (7.4)	0 (0.0)	4 (14.8)	6 (22.2)	8 (29.6)	4 (14.8)
Above 60	14 (7.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	9 (64.3)	3 (21.4)
Marital Status							
Single	49(24.5)	3(6.1)	2(4.1)	9(18.4)	9(18.4)	17(34.7)	4(8.2)
Married	122(61.0)	6(4.9)	2(1.6)	18(14.8)	19(15.6)	48(39.3)	20(16.4)
Separated	16(8.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	5(31.3)	4(25.0)	3(18.8)	3(18.8)
Widowed	4(2.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(25.0)	0(0.0)	2(50.0)	1(25.0)
Cohabiting	1(0.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(100.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
Duration of Imprisonment							
10-20 years	46(23.0)	4(8.7)	2(4.3)	8(17.4)	10(21.7)	14(30.4)	5(10.9)
21-30 years	34(17.0)	2(5.9)	0(0.0)	8(23.5)	6(17.6)	10(29.4)	6(17.6)
Over 30 years	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(33.3)	3(33.3)	2(22.2)
Life Sentence	69(34.5)	4(5.8)	1(1.4)	12(17.4)	10(14.5)	24(34.8)	11(15.9)
Death Sentence	5(2.5)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(40.0)	0(0.0)	2(40.0)	1(20.0)
Period at Kamiti Prison							
Less than one Year	22(11.0)	1(4.5)	1(4.5)	3(13.6)	6(27.3)	5(22.7)	6(27.3)
1-10 years	130(65.0)	6(4.6)	3(2.3)	26(20.0)	21(16.2)	48(36.9)	16(12.3)
11-20 years	31(15.5)	3(9.7)	0(0.0)	3(9.7)	5(16.1)	14(45.2)	4(12.9)
Over 20 years	14(7.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(14.3)	0(0.0)	4(28.6)	4(28.6)

Source: Field Data 2024

Lack of adequate facilities, such as mental rehabilitation center, therapeutic spaces and specific facilities for the aged inmates, increased worry and pessimism, as both the inmates and staff felt it was a barrier to achieving rehabilitation. An investigation on the forms of accusation against the inmates at Kamiti Maximum Prison identified sexual offenses, drug traffickers, murders, and violent robberies as the most offences, as shown in table 1.2

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Table 1.2 Nature of offences

Accusation	Frequency	Percent
Drug trafficking	6	3.0
Incest	4	2.0
Multiple charges	2	1.0
Murder	39	19.5
Robbery with violence	53	26.5
Sexual offence	93	46.5
Undisclosed	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data 2024

Although Kamiti Maximum Prison categorize inmates charged with sexual offenses and drug and substance related offenses to require more therapy in addition to chemical treatment than other inmates, it does not offer therapeutic spaces. The inmates' attitude towards the physical environment was recorded on a 5-point Likert scale with Agree and Disagree statements, illustrated in table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Inmates' Perception on constructed environment

Lack of adequate spaces for academic training was also perceived to paralyze performance in formal education. Engaging in formal education was listed as the most preferred rehabilitation program in prison as 18% of the participants indicating to engage as a coping mechanism, as indicated in table 1.4.

Impact of built environment	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
1. These tall, opaque walls make me feel isolated and lonely	23(11.5%)	41(20.5%)	11(5.5%)	44(22%)	81(40.5%)	3.60	1.47
2. The presence of wide, open and clear compounds throughout Kamiti maximum prison makes me feel safe, confidence and less anxious	69(34.5%)	81(40.5%)	19(9.5%)	26(13%)	5(2.5%)	2.09	1.08
3. The long distances between facilities gives me a chance to interact with nature	53(26.5%)	92(46%)	17(8.5%)	28(14%)	10(5%)	2.25	1.14
4. Access to green spaces encourages me to engage in outdoor activities and also gives me an opportunity to interact with my friends	55(27.5%)	99(49.5%)	9(4.5%)	24(12%)	13(6.5%)	2.21	1.16
5. When I spend time in vegetated spaces, I feel relaxed, motivated and less stressed	47(23.5%)	92(46%)	12(6%)	27(13.5%)	22(11%)	2.43	1.28
6. The small high-level windows make me lack a sense of hope and makes me feel isolated	11(5.5%)	30(15%)	13(6.5%)	58(29%)	88(44%)	3.91	1.26
7. The colour on the walls inside my ward is interesting, calming and makes me feel hopeful	73(36.5%)	53(26.5%)	11(5.5%)	45(22.5%)	18(9%)	2.41	1.40

Source: Field Data 2024

Table 1.4 Reasons for choice of rehabilitation program

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
No response	8	4.0
Acquire knowledge	29	14.5
Advance academically	28	14.0
Application after incarceration	25	12.5
Coping mechanism	36	18.0
Passion	37	18.5
Practical skills	24	12.0
Support fellow inmates	13	6.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data 2024

The study established that the space arrangement at Kamiti Maximum Prison was based on the concepts of solitary confinement and corporal punishment, which called for tall separating walls. In addition to preventing visual contact between groups, the walls were reported to lessen interactions between staff and inmates. The tall, opaque walls and small, high-level windows, were thought to evoke feelings of pessimism, isolation, and lack of freedom. With 62.5% of the participants expressing that the opaqueness made them feel isolated and lonely, while 32% of their counterparts positively perceived the opaque walls, expressing that seeing the outside world rekindles anger.

The prison's open spatial layout was felt to breed anxiety and timidity, Lack of views to the outside from the wards, restricted access to shared outdoor areas and lack of interaction with nature, was perceived to erode social ties, which added to the cycle of despair and anxiety. 77% of the participants expressed that lack of physical access to greeneries discouraged engagement in outdoor activities, denied them interactive opportunities, hence exacerbating isolation and anxiety. The fact that inmates cannot open the windows on need basis, due to the positioning of the windows at high levels, makes 73% of the participants to rate the environment as causing hopelessness and isolation. overcrowding in the wards was associated with loss of personal space and place. The prevalent white hue on internal walls was seen as boring and exacerbated feelings of rage and terror. 60% of the respondents perceived the sound spectrum in wards as positive sound needed for mitigating meditation felt to cause hopelessness.

The study further sought to establish whether the feelings had changed overtime and the perceived reasons for change. Seventy percent (70%) of the participants indicated that their negative feelings had changed overtime in the prison environment, citing counselling sessions, self-acceptance, adaptation, participation in rehabilitative programs and religious teachings, as the reasons for change, expressed in their own sentiments as:

Participant 1, said: "I realized that I have a caring and loving family and there are many people serving longer sentences and in more desperate situation than me.

Participant 2, said: I decided to engage in self-development, including undertaking a diploma in theology and IT".

Participant 3 said: "I am pursuing educational goals such as teaching and counseling. I also engage in football activities.

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Participant 4 said: “Listening to gospel music and advice from security guards gave me hope.”

The distribution of reasons for change is as illustrated in table 1.5 below.

Table 1.5 Reasons for change of negative feelings

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Not applicable	79	39.5
Counseling sessions	14	7.0
Rehabilitation programs	29	14.5
Religious teachings	26	13.0
Self-acceptance	52	26.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data 2024

Counselling had the lowest effect with 7% of the participants indicating to have positive change through attending counselling sessions, this could be contributed by evidenced low enrolment in counselling programs as the findings indicated a 6% enrolment. The findings further revealed that 78% of the participants were enrolled in rehabilitation programs as coping mechanism, in addition to passion and desire to acquire academic knowledge. Formal education program as the most desired at 51%. Social initiatives such as sports, music, group discussions with fellow inmates and visits by relatives, were also found to significantly aid in coping. However, family interactions through phone calls outweighed visits, probably due to lack of support infrastructure. Interaction with friends was found to elicit positive PWB with feelings of joy, serenity and inspiration taking the lead cause. The study thus, delved further into evaluating the inmates' perception of the stated coping mechanisms to determine their significance in PWB.

Participation in Rehabilitation program

The study begun by determining the rehabilitation programs offered at the institution then the inmates recorded their designations, summarized in table 1.6. The offered programs include, performing and live arts, counselling, religious activities, formal education, and Vocational training. 98% of the study participants indicated to be attached to a particular rehabilitation program, formal education having the majority.

Table 1.6. Forms of Rehabilitation programs at Kamiti Maximum Prison

Program	Frequency	Percent
No response	2	1.0
Arts department	10	5.0
Carpentry	32	16.0
Counseling department	12	6.0
Formal education	102	51.0
None	2	1.0
Tailoring	22	11.0
Technical department	18	9.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data 2024

Of the participants, 44.5% noted that engaging in rehabilitation programs helped in coping with the prison life and cultivates optimism in addition to breeding joy in a rather monotonous day, as one Participant (5) said:

Participant (5) “So that when I come out of prison I will go and have a job or be employed because I have experience and I have learnt more. When I was not in prison, I had no knowledge and I had no experience and due to unemployment, I engaged in bad habits”.

The expressions were further segmented by quantitative data where participants were presented with a 5-point Likert scale containing response format statements, to score their attitudes towards participation in rehabilitation programs, as in table 1.7.

Table 1.7 Participants views on rehabilitation programs

Perception	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev
Being in this program gives me an opportunity to identify and explore my potential, interests and achieve life goals	108	60	4	2	13	4.05	1.495
When I am working on my program activities, I forget about the stress of being in prison	84	73	7	10	12	3.83	1.515
Being in prison is stressful, but it has exposed me to new skills, new friends and greater confidence	82	72	9	12	12	3.81	1.499
Participating in this program gives me an opportunity to interact with officers which makes me feel happier, motivated and less stressed	65	77	15	10	17	3.58	1.574

5- strongly agree (SA), 4-agree (A), 3-neither agree or disagree (N), 2-disagree (D), 1-strongly disagree (SA).

Source: Field Data 2024

The mean scores prove that participating in rehabilitation programs allowed them a chance to discover life objectives, triggered positive emotions such as hope, interest, happiness, motivation, self-confidence.

Participation in social initiatives

Engaging in leisure activities and family interactions were also cited to aid in coping as they elicited happiness. All the participants recorded to engage in leisure activities listed to include sports, participating in religious activities, listening to music, counselling sessions, mediation, Engaging in drugs and spending time with friends. However, Counselling sessions and meditation were perceived to aid sadness, with sporting and religious activities scoring high in triggering happiness.

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Family Interactions

Participants reported to interact with their relatives through phone calls as well as visits. The interactions are however minimal due to lack of support facilities and policy restrictions, which lowered their perceptions. Participants expressed mixed feelings about the effects of family visits with equal numbers expressing sadness, grief, gratitude and joy. A recurring sentiment among the participants was presented by Participant 6 who said:

“I feel they still care about me when we communicate or when they visit me and also feel sad because we can't go home together” (Participant 6).

Socialization with friends

An investigation on to the contribution of friendship between fellow inmates indicated positive PWD adjustment as majority viewed such friendships to create a feeling of normalization. Such sentiments include those of participants 7,8&9, who said:

“I feel that I am alive again and even though I am in prison, I feel much love like that of my brother and family” (participant 7).

“I feel appreciated” (participant 8).

“Some give guidance and motivation, and you feel happy” (participant 9).

A 5-point Likert scale with statements meant to gauge the participants' stress, anxiety, and depression levels, was used to evaluate for PWB, as presented in table 1.8.

Table 1.8: Inmates’ score of agreement with statements on dimensions of PWB

Statement	SA (1)	A (2)	N (3)	D (4)	SD (5)	Me an	SD
I'm able to overcome the difficulties of everyday prison life.	75 (37.5%)	24 (12%)	28 (14%)	73 (36.5%)	-	2.50	1.32
I usually feel at peace and relaxed in this place.	107(53.5%)	16(8%)	19(9.5%)	57(28.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.15	1.34
I rarely experience headaches and stomach aches, due to stress in prison.	87 (43.5%)	14 (7%)	14 (7%)	83 (41.5%)	2 (1%)	2.50	1.42
I usually have restful sleeps, even in this environment.	98(49%)	6(3%)	16(8%)	78(39%)	2(1%)	2.40	1.44
I am positive about my life despite being in prison.	116(58%)	13(6.5%)	11(5.5%)	59(29.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.08	1.37
I still find satisfaction in activities I used to enjoy before imprisonment	94(47%)	4(2%)	20(10%)	81(40.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.46	1.43
I feel hopeful about the future, despite my current circumstances	96(48%)	10(5%)	12(6%)	81(40.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.41	1.43
I feel in control of my situation within the prison	102(51%)	8(4%)	34(17%)	56(28%)	-	2.22	1.33
Am not worried by things that I am not able to do here.	101(50.5%)	3(1.5%)	13(6.5%)	83(41.5%)	-	2.39	1.45
I feel safer being in prison.	75 (37.5%)	24 (12%)	28 (14%)	73(36.5%)	-	2.49	1.32
Staying with my inmate friends makes me feel connected and supported.	107(53.5%)	16 (8%)	19(9.5%)	57(28.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.15	1.34
I rarely get recurring shots of fear while in prison.	88(44%)	14 (7%)	14(7%)	83(41.5%)	1(0.5%)	2.47	1.41

Source: Field Data 2024

Difficulty in adapting to regular prison routine, physical symptoms including regular headaches, and unrest, characteristic of stress, indicate that majority of prisoners have gradually lost their autonomy. Powerlessness, emotional breakdowns, loss of interest, and a protracted sense of despair, received highest rankings, signifying depression, with 49% of the participants indicating that even though they can still participate in the activities within the prison, they have lost interest in them overtime. Worry was reported at 52%, fear at 51%, social disconnection at 61.5%, and lack of confidence at 49.5%, indicating considerably high level of anxiety.

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A correlational analysis between the perceived factors and dimensions of PWB established a substantial relationship between psychological wellbeing and sentiments regarding the jail environment ($r(200) = .52, p < .05$). participation in a rehabilitation program ($r(200) = .64, p < .05$). Engaging in leisure activities has a substantial positive correlation with psychological wellness ($r(200) = .69, p < .05$), as does socializing with friends ($r(200) = .56, p < .05$). family relationships and psychological wellness ($r(200) = .61, p < .05$).

Table 1.9: Correlations between Prison Psychosocial Factors and PWB

		PWB
Feelings about prison environment	Pearson Correlation	.52**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
Participation in rehabilitation program	Pearson Correlation	.64**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
Participation in leisure activities	Pearson Correlation	.69**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Socialization with friends	Pearson Correlation	.56**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
Family interactions	Pearson Correlation	.61**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.00
	N	200

Source: Field Data 2024

The results show that inmates' opinions about prison environment, involvement in rehabilitation program, participation in leisure activities, socialization with friends and family interactions have a major impact on their psychological wellness.

A multiple regression analysis was computed to determine the impact of prison psychosocial factors on psychological wellbeing of prisoners. The results are summarized in table 2.0 below.

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Table 2.0 Model Summary^b on Prison Psychosocial Factors and Psychological wellbeing

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.69 ^a	.48	.48	6.21

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction with family, friendships, rehabilitation programs, leisure activities, prison environment

b. Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing

Source: Field Data 2024

The independent variables accounted for 48% variance in psychological wellbeing and that psychological wellbeing is moderately explained by the selected factors, $R = 0.69$.

Table 2.1 ANOVA^a on Prison Psychosocial Factors and Psychological wellbeing

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7126.83	1	7126.83	184.55	.00 ^b
	Residual	7646.05	198	38.62		
	Total	14772.88	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing

b. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction with family, friendships, rehabilitation programs, leisure activities

Source: Field Data 2024

From Table 2.1, the prediction of psychological well-being by prison psychosocial factors was statistically significant $F(1, 198) = 184.55, p < .05$.

Table 2.2 shows that the regression coefficient for feelings about prison environment was 2.62, the coefficient for rehabilitation programs in prison was 1.85, participation in leisure activities was 2.11, socialization with friendships coefficient was 1.94 and family interactions regression was 3.57. The level of significance (p value) was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). These findings mean that feelings about prison environment, participation in rehabilitation program, participation in leisure activities, socialization with friends and family interactions can be used to predict psychological well-being of inmates.

Table 2.2 Regression Coefficients^a on Prison Psychosocial Factors and Psychological wellbeing

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients Beta	
1	(Constant)	24.42	2.34		.00
	Feelings about prison environment	2.62	.18	1.31	.00
	Participation in rehabilitation program	1.85	.68	1.12	.00
	Participation in leisure activities	2.11	.54	1.98	.00
	Socialization with friends	1.94	.74	1.36	.00
	Family interactions	3.57	.69	.3.15	.00

Source: Field Data 2024

Discussion

Findings of this study have established that inmates across all age categories, regardless of length of imprisonment and period spend since imprisonment, are battling high levels of stress, anxiety and depression, despite the consented efforts by professional counsellors and religious groups. The results, based on the inmates' views, indicate that dealing with PWB in prison requires an interplay between physical environment and prison psychosocial factors. These findings are consistent with other researchers including Steyn and Hall (2015) who investigated stress, anxiety, and depression levels of female prisoners at a Gauteng, South Africa. The results revealed that one in three respondents had Severe to extremely severe levels of anxiety (31.8%), depression (30.2%) and stress (74.2%). Majority of respondents reported normal to moderate levels of depression (69.8%), anxiety (68.3%), and stress (74.2%), as a result of manipulation of moderating factors.

Okeke, Ezeokana, and Abamara (2020) looked at self-blame, age, gender, stress, and other factors as predictors of suicide thoughts among prison inmates in South East Nigeria. The results showed that one of the main reasons for the inmates' suicidal thoughts was despair. According to Castelino (2021), rehabilitation programs assist the criminal in creating a conscious decision to learn from his mistakes and refrain from committing crimes in the future. Symkovych (2023) analyzed views of men and women residing in a sizable, medium-security correctional facility in Gauteng, South Africa, and concluded that official rehabilitative discourse aids inmates in understanding their situation, realizing their lives, and maintaining hope. Furthermore, Muasya (2013) investigated the effects of rehabilitation programs on the self-sustainability of the prisoners in the Thika sub-county of Kiambu County, Kenya. The results showed that 73.6% of the ex-convicts had participated in a vocational education rehabilitation program while incarcerated, and 15.7% of them believed that vocational training improved their self-sustainability. Sibley (2024) assessed Canadian inmates' attitude towards sporting and concluded that physical activity and sports have a

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positive psychological impact and help young people who are leaving in custody rehabilitate quickly, especially when they are incorporated into larger support and provision programs. Bronson (2008) studied prison friendships, and noted that friends helped each other out emotionally while incarcerated, which reduced loneliness. Larger prison friendship networks significantly lower stress (Edison and Haynie, 2023).

Dixey and Woodall (2012) investigated how convicts in a category B local prison in England perceived family visits. Their findings showed that prisoners considered the visit to be the high point of their incarceration because they felt reassured and loved by their family. According to a different study by De Claire and Dixon (2017), prison visits from family members had a positive impact on inmates' well-being, survival, rule-breaking, and recidivism. According to Tangney and Grossmann's (2019) keeping in touch with family throughout incarceration promoted better psychologically sound adjustment during the trying process of re-entering society.

Conclusion

According to the survey, the majority of the inmates at Kamiti Maximum Prison, were dealing with grief, hopelessness, and terror. The results reveal high level of stress, depression and anxiety among inmates which despite efforts to mitigate, are persistent. These findings concur with those of Craig *et al.* (2022) that sadness, worry, anger, hopelessness, fatigue, physical harm including, panic attacks, headache, and sleep problems, characterize depression among inmates.

The study found the prison physical environment to predominantly contributor to psychological distress, against age, marital status and length of imprisonment. Inmates were found to have negative attitudes towards the current characteristics of the constructed environment as the poorly planned areas, crowding, a lack of views, access to nature, and bad aesthetics, were significantly linked to melancholy, loneliness, and a lack of self-drive.

Engagement in rehabilitative programs, social interactions and recreational activities, family interactions, are the psychosocial elements thought to improve PWB among Kamiti Maximum Prison inmates. Nevertheless, prison environments lacked adequate facilities to support these factors.

Recommendations

The study has established that the physical characteristic of the prison environment plays a significant role in molding behavior and emotional state of inmates, however, the physical environment at Kamiti Maximum Prison was found deficient of critically needed facilities, thus, the study recommends that policy makers embark on redesigning of Kamiti Maximum prison architecture to accommodate the needs of the inmates to improve their psychological wellbeing.

The findings have revealed that psychosocial factors significantly assist in coping and adapting to the harsh conditions consequently promoting seamless rehabilitation and reintegration. However, Kamiti Maximum Prison, founded on solitary confinement, was found to have a weak support on these programs. Therefore, the study recommends that prison management engage prison designers to create infrastructure that is appropriate in supporting and encouraging family visits and social interactions

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