

# Comparison of Depression between Remanded and Sentenced Inmates

S. D. Mariamdarani

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Changlun, Malaysia.

devi@uum.edu.my

**Abstract** – *The purpose of this study is to identify the depression level between remanded and sentenced inmates. The second purpose was to examine the differences between level of depression among remanded and sentenced inmates. Beck Depression Inventory was used as main tool to identify inmate's depression level. Quantitative research was conducted. Survey methodology was adopted to collect primary data from 140 young prisoners in imprisonment at Northern Malaysia Jail. The results of Pearson correlation partially supported the relationship between the depression levels between remanded and sentenced inmates. Results showed that there were no significant differences in the level of depression between remanded and sentenced inmates. Therefore, an intervention for this particular population, as a whole was recommended in future. Copyright © 2016 Penerbit Akademia Baru - All rights reserved.*

**Keywords:** Depression, Prison Inmates, Remanded Inmates

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is assumed that young inmates in Malaysia are between 18-21 years old. Saralah [1] argued that young inmates have some problems such as high level of aggression and depression. And also the ability to change is low among young inmates. Depression has been defined as a feeling of sad, down, and worry. It can be divided into verbal and nonverbal [2]. A wide range of research findings from the field of psychology [3-5] training programs [6] provided evidence for the linkage between aggression, depression, and ability change. For instance, Saralah [1] in her study found that there is a relationship between aggression, depression, and ability change. She stated that the inmates' depression in prison is caused by an aggression act that was conducted in past, but there was no ability change. As the offender repeat his offenses more than three times. In another study, Howard [5] stated that depression, lead inmates to commit suicide.

Depressed inmates have an altered intranight temporal distribution of phasic rapid eye movement (REM) activity in REM period. By applying, the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, it was noted that there is an association between poor subjective sleep quality and suicidal behavior in during the phase of depression [6]. In addition, [7] administered the Sleep Habits Questionnaire and the Beck Scale for Suicidal Ideation (SSI) to 70 depressed prison inmates. The study found that depressed inmates with insomnia had significantly higher SSI scores than patients with excessive sleepiness. The relationship between depression and suicidal behavior in inmates with the HDRS depression symptom cluster is well supported by many previous studies [8]. Chellappa and Araujo [7] concluded that sleep disorderliness should be considered

in the assessment of suicidal risk in inmates with depressive disorder. The results of the previous studies have failed to examine the issue because there is no significant change that has been observed even after interventions. Furthermore, the government use these two tools for developing ability change, but no significant effect has been observed. Furthermore, very few researchers have studied in the world who have examined the relationship among aggression, depression, and ability to change especially among young inmates. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the relationship between these variables especially to explore the difference between remanded and sentenced inmates on the level of depression.

**Objectives.** On the basis of the issues discussed, this study has following objectives:

- 1- To examine the relationship between depressions among young remanded and sentenced inmates?
- 2- To identify the differences in depression level between remanded and sentenced inmates?

**Literature review.** The literature review cover the past studies that have been conducted on depression and level of depression in young inmates who have gone through remand or sentence.

One of the more influential theories of depression has been put forward by [9]. According to this, individuals who later become depressed have had early experiences that resulted in the formation of dysfunctional scheme about the self and the world. Later in life, the experience of matching stressors can activate these schemes which then bias cognition, including recall, in a negative manner that maintains depression. Moreover, recent psychology and counseling theories have been built on these ideas [4], and empirical investigators have examined whether depressed adults indeed differ because of controls in their memory for emotional information or not. Both studies agreed that the performance of clinically depressed inmates with controls, and studies using non-clinical inmates with high versus low levels of depression, have indicated that depressed adults show biased recall towards negative information as compared to non-depressed adults [10, 11].

Carli et al. [12] reported an association of depression with insomnia and suicidal behavior among the inmates. From the study, the inmates had a semi-structured psychiatric interview that comprised the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS), and completed the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Spielberg Anger Expression Inventory and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. According to Fawcett et al. [13], insomnia can be a short term risk factor for committing suicide in depression. Globally; insomnia was found significant with more severity among the depressed inmates who committed suicide within 13 months of discharge from a psychiatric ward. In addition to this, depression is attributed to the effect of factual thinking or counterfactual thinking on blame, guilt, and shame of prisoners [14]. From this study, it is to be identified that counterfactual thinking would have a stronger amplificatory effect on guilt rather than on shame. Furthermore is would be identified that effect would be mediated by self-blame. The results show that compared to factual-focused prisoners, counterfactual-focused prisoners reported the feeling of being more blameworthy and guilty but not more shameful.

Also, Sabo et al. [15] compared depressed inmates with and without a history of attempting suicide with controls for their electroencephalographic (EEG) sleep features. Lohner and Konrad [16] studied the deliberate self-harm and suicide attempt in custody by distinguishing features in male inmates' self-injurious behavior. The study indicated that there is a significant correlation between seriousness and some demographic, prison-related variables as well as different measures of depression. Depression is also considered to be a Self-Injurious Behavior

(SIB) as there are a number of studies that deal with risk factors, predictors and clinical pictures of inmates with SIB. Therefore, the results on the forensic and demographic factors just like the ones on substance abuse, measures of depression, and character pathology, are up to a large extent in contradiction with regards to their risk potential for SIB [16].

Several studies have shown that within the realm of depression, there is lack of reporting regarding the relationship between these variables that have been tested empirically [1]. Although this study was unable to find a single study dedicated to observe the combined variables on young inmates, but there are very few studies that have observed few of the variables but not on the young inmates [1, 3, 5]. Depression plays a significant role in suicide attempt. Especially hopelessness and suicidal ideation, as it correlates with depression. It is important in the study of disease development. But on the other hand, researchers found that depression and hopelessness are associated with higher lethality of the SIB as detected by Garvey and Spoden [17]. They argued that higher depression values leads to more serious Suicide Intention (SI). Haines, Williams, and Brain [8] detected higher depression values in cases of deliberate self-harm (DSH) while Muchlenkamp and [18] studied the entire aspects of SIB, that is SI and DSH in the entire population but found no difference between the groups with regards to suicide ideation or depression.

Depression is considered to be one of the emotional variables and recidivism as it is identified as part of host of negative emotions such as hopelessness, anger, frustration, anxiety, and loneliness [19]. Therefore, the present study aims to examine the level of depression among remanded and sentenced inmates. Along with that another purpose of this study is to investigate the differences on the depression levels between remanded and sentenced inmates in Prison. Wenzlaff and Prohaska [20] studied the notion behind the individuals preferring to stay with unhappy people but depend on the perception that others are not responsible for their own sadness. The state of temporary mood may have a significant effect on the way information about events is being processed and strong mood influence on behavior assessments, recall memory and significant effects due to target self, and other interaction episode [21]. Another study showed that individuals in joyful mood are most affected by social concerns related to helping request, whereas individuals in a depressed mood are most affected by the personal pleasurable considerations involved with the request [22]. In other vein, non-depressed subjects' moods generally worsened following information about others that are unhappy. Also, the study suggested that depressed individuals avoid deservedly happy people and are attracted to others who are unhappy together due to misfortune.

**Hypotheses of the study.** Two hypotheses were tested in this study:

- 1- There is a relationship between depression among remanded and sentenced young inmates?
- 2- There are no significant differences between remanded and sentenced inmates on the level of depression?

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

**Participants.** All the prisoners covers the population of this study. This study has been conducted particularly on one particular jail in Malaysia. A total number of 140 young inmates from one prison in Northern Malaysia were chosen. Purposive sample was drawn from the population based on their crimes. Participants were divided into two groups, remanded 72 (51.4%) and sentenced 68 (48.6).

**Procedures and Instruments.** All participants completed the research surveys assessing their depression. One instrument has been used in this study in order to collect data from respondents which are as follow:

Beck Depression Inventory: the scale consists of 21 items which adapted from Aaron T. Beck [2]. The items were ranged from 0- not sad into 3- very sad. A reliability coefficients indicated acceptable scale reliability ( $\alpha = .98$ ).

## 3.0 DATA ANALYSIS

**Relationship between depression and remanded and sentenced inmates.** This study focuses on the relationship between depression and sentenced inmates and remanded inmates. The measurement based on the Pearson Product-Moment correlation coefficient was calculated and the results are tabulated in Table 1. The range of these strengths is from -0.450 to 0.274 exclude the diagonal value of unity. Any value that is close to either -1 or 1 indicates that the strength of the relationship between two variables. Whereas, correlation value that is close to 0 indicates weak relationship. Pair of variables that are considered strong and significant correlation are marked with asterisks “\*” depending on the type I error,  $\alpha$ . Table 1 showed positive sign which indicate the same direction of relationship. For example, the positive coefficient between aggression and depression ( $r = 0.274$ ) may reflect that if young inmates possesses high level of aggression they will show high level of depression as well. But, some correlation values are negative which indicate opposite direction of relationship such as between aggression and ability change ( $r = -0.450$ ). However, the results reflect that there is a positive relationship between aggression and depression ( $r = 0.274$ ), whereas, negative relationship between aggression and ability change (-0.450), and no relationship between depression and ability change (0.099).

**Table 1:** Correlation between EI Dimensions

	Depression	
	r	Sig (2-tailed)
<b>Sentenced Inmates</b>	.274**	.001
<b>Remanded Inmates</b>	-.450**	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

**Differences in level of depression between remanded and sentenced.** Independent sample t-test test was conducted to analyze the differences in depression level between remanded and sentenced groups, in which the details are listed in tables 3. In detail, for the depression level, non-significant differences were found between remanded and sentenced groups ( $t = -.288$ ,  $p$ -value = 0.774). Specifically, sentenced shows greater mean scores than remanded.

**Table 3:** Result of Independent Sample t-test

Source	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Depression	-2.88	138	0.774

#### 4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of Pearson correlation partially supported the depression as dependent variable. The result also showed that there is no significant differences in the level of depression between remanded and sentenced inmates. Therefore, the major contributions of this study is that it examined the relationship between these variables which have not been examined by previous studies. This study has indicated partially significant correlation between these depression among remanded and sentenced inmates. Along with this contribution the other contribution is that no study has done to identify the difference in level of depression between remanded and sentenced inmates. Therefore, the findings of this study would be a key for developing intervention in order to reduce the level of depression among young inmates. Anderson and Lyon [23] also posit that the ways at which people anticipate future outcomes and especially, their perception that aversive future occurrence, are inevitable. The study revealed that when a negative outcome is certain to happen, inmates may give up on the possibility of being spared the outcome and become depressed. This is applicable to remanded inmates since they have no idea on what the future holds for them, which is in contrast to already known fate held by the sentenced inmates. Moreover, out of depression and social comparison motives, this research has supported that individuals prefer to compare themselves to others who are similar on attributes connected to the focal judgment. According to Weary, Marsh and McCormick [24], people engage in social comparison activities because of the intention to lower the level of uncertainty about the adequacy of their opinions and capabilities.

The study revealed that remanded inmates are more stressful than sentenced inmates due to the fact that remanded inmates hardly know their stand and their period of stay which in some cases may take one to five years before they are eventually prosecuted. However, sentenced inmates are little relaxed than remanded because they already know the actual number of days they are going to spend in prison and can plan for their future. Thus, depression among remanded inmates is highly correlated than depression among the sentenced inmates at the same time. This proves that level of depression among remanded inmates is much higher than the sentenced inmates.

Finally, this study like other studies that deal with psychology has some limitations. Firstly, quantitative data is collected through self-report measures; therefore, there is an ample chance that participants chose answers which were not their true experience. Due to that fact, this study recommends to future researchers to use qualitative methods for collecting the data. Another limitation is purposive sampling applied for this study. The sampling might not be used as representation of the whole population. Future studies should examine the relationship between these variables among inmates using different sample type and methods.

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