**Psychological Well-Being and Happiness of Persons Deprived of Liberty in a Philippine Correctional Institution**

**ABSTRACT:**

*The increasing prevalence of mental health concerns due to various societal and personal challenges has affected many individuals, including Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL). As such, the study aimed to determine the level of psychological well-being and happiness of PDL amidst challenging circumstances using a descriptive research correlative survey to 41 PDL in a District Jail in northern Philippines. Data was gathered using Ryff Scales of Psychological Wellbeing and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and was subjected to descriptive and correlational analyses. Results revealed that self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life are the dimensions of psychological wellbeing among PDL that are found to be low while positive relations with others emerged to be high. Interestingly, the level of happiness of the PDL was found to be neutral, manifesting that they neither happy nor unhappy. More so, this study revealed that in examining the relationship between happiness and the dimensions of psychological wellbeing, only self-acceptance has a moderate positive relationship with the level of happiness. These findings could be useful to realize training pathways for the PDL to safeguard their mental health and well-being.*

**Keywords:** Happiness, Mental health, Personal growth, Persons deprived of liberty,

 Psychological well-being

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Freedom is not something everyone enjoys. When freedom is enjoyed, two of the aspects of personality that might be affected are mental and emotional aspects. One of the manifestations that an individual is enjoying freedom is having a stable psychological well-being. A person who has a constant psychological well-being has the ability to feel good and function well (Huppert, 2009 as cited by Yue Qi et al., 2021) even in the face of adversity (Telef, 2013). Psychological well-being may likely lead to happiness. Happiness is one of the strongest emotions that an individual experience. To be happy, one must be able to feel joy, hope, and trust rather than negative emotions in both professional and private life (Eryılmaz, 2011). However, when freedom is taken away from someone, such as those Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) may likely affect their psychological well-being and level of happiness.

Pre-trial detainees are those who stay in jail for years while undergoing trial (Narag, 2018). This implies innocence among detainees until proven guilty by the court of law. However, Meruenas (2013) expounded that these prisoners were innocent under the law but realistically they are being penalized as if they were guilty. The Philippine justice system enables detainees with offenses that can be bailed to experience temporary freedom, while those who cannot post their bail may likely to stay in jail. Apparently, (Narag, 2019) unveiled those pre-trial detainees were experiencing prolonged trial, since courts in the Philippines adhere to culture that condones leniency. Prosecutors and defense lawyers are often absent due to the fact that they serve several other courts resulting to postponement of court hearing by the judge.

 In addition, Philippine jails are highly jammed beyond their capacity, resulting to an overcrowded prison cell. This was validated by Marcelo (2019) highlighting how the Commission on Audit (COA) called out the attention of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) the unsparing conditions of prison jails across the country. More so, congestions in jails escalated to several problems including health, sanitation and even increased of gang affiliation within the prison jail.

 With these scenarios, one of the worst situations that PDL may likely experience inside the jail is to develop poor mental health among PDL. This was validated by (Shrestha et al., 2017) in which they found that there is an increasing prevalence of suicidal ideation and attempted suicide inside the prison. This is an indication of feeling of hopelessness, which affects psychological well-being. Furthermore, PDL experience negative emotions, such as regret, anxiety, and sadness (Van Harreveld et al., 2007), which denotes absence of positive emotions such as happiness.

 The Department of Health (2020) laid out the need of strengthening mental health across the Philippines. As such, this does not exempt the population of PDL. As a matter of fact, researches across countries presented various results regarding the mental health status of these individuals, such as psychological stress among PDL (Bronson & Berzofsky, 2017) and high prevalence of depression among them (Abdu et al., 2018). In connection, Van Harreveld et al. (2007) described that social support among PDL can significantly improved their physical and psychological well-being. The constant support from family members, friends, co-inmates and prison guards is significantly important to fill in the need of relatedness. This need of relatedness, when sufficient can increased happiness resulting to positive psychological well-being among PDL.

 Despite of the existing studies proving the mental vulnerability of PDL, it is worth noting that they still lack access to mental health care. Gonzalez & Connell (2014) revealed that more than 50 percent of PDL experiencing mental health problems did not receive any medication at all. Gamo (2013) also reported that punishment in prison cells becomes the trend in lieu of rehabilitation. In contrast to the current trend, it was found in the same study that PDL preferred a rehabilitation plan that is more participatory and inmate-centered.

In a province in northern Philippines, it was reported in the unpublished undergraduate study of Ayoc and Bullong (2019) that there were 144 total number of PDL who have low level of empathy. This implies lower ability to understand and treat people accordingly. It is safe to surmise that they are seemingly unhappy and experiencing negative or low psychological well-being. This current situation of PDL in this province is indeed alarming especially those who are under pre-trial. In a study of Orjiakor et al. (2017), it was found that these group of individuals tend to cut off from the society, experience intense preoccupation, they are being denied of achievements and felt shame which eventually result to traumatic and depressive emotions.

To be labelled as PDL does not mean deprivation of everything. Having a good psychological well-being is a universal right of every individual. Human beings deserve to be happy despite of their disposition in life. It has been discussed previously that there are contributory factors that crippled an individual particularly PDL to experience happiness and sustain stable psychological well-being. Apparently, happiness is not an over-the-counter medication that is readily available for everyone. It is a complex construct of human behavior that fuels the psychological well-being of an individual. While it is true that there are various researches dealing with the challenges of inmates (Agbakwuru & Awujo, 2016; Tzatsis et al., 2019) and education programs for offenders or prisoners (Papaioannou et al., 2018; Goodwin, 2020; Muhlhausen & Hurwitz, 2019), only few are looking on the mental state of them, particularly the psychological well-being and happiness of Persons Deprived of Liberty. Likewise, there is also dearth of studies about PDL or anything about the status of prisoners or offenders during the time of pandemic, since most of the studies focused on education sector and its stakeholders.

As such, this study aimed to determine the degree of happiness and level of psychological well-being of Persons Deprived of Liberty. The results of such study would be of great help in designing appropriate mental health program that would keep them sane, happy and hopeful despite their adverse situation. Similarly, findings could be helpful as a reference in addressing United Nations of Sustainable Development Goal 3, which is ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. This study used the following central research questions to substantiate the development of this paper: 1) What is the level of psychological well-being among Persons Deprived of Liberty? 2) What is the level of happiness among Persons Deprived of Liberty? and 3) What is the relationship between the degree of happiness and level of psychological well-being among Persons Deprived of Liberty?

1. **METHOD**

**Research Design**

The approach of this study is quantitative; specifically, its design is descriptive research – correlative survey. It made use of a cross-sectional survey design. This design allows investigating how psychological wellbeing related to the level of happiness among persons deprived of liberty.

**Context and Respondents**

 During the time of the study, there were 59 PDL confined in a District Jail in Northern Philippines. The initial plan was to have them all as respondents; however, only 43 of them agreed to be part of the study, after getting informed consent from them. Upon completing the research instruments, there were 2 respondents whose instruments were invalidated since there were unanswered items on the questionnaires. Thus, a total of 41 respondents were included in this research study.

**Instrumentation**

Two research instruments were used to gather the appropriate data. The first instrument is the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-being. This scale uses a dynamic approach to encompass subjective, social, and psychological dimensions and health-related activities. This scale consists of 84 questions (long form) or 54 questions (medium form). There is also a quick form, but it is not meant to be used for clinical evaluation. The long and medium versions both include a sequence of statements that represent the six aspects of psychological well-being: autonomy (items 15, 17, 18), environmental mastery (items 4, 8,9), personal growth (items 11, 12, 14), positive interpersonal relationships (items 6, 13, 16), life purpose (items 3,7,10), and self-acceptance (items 1, 2,5) (Seifert, 2005). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.74 reflects the scale's psychometric characteristic, showing that it has a satisfactory level of internal consistency. On a scale of one to seven, respondents rated each item, with one indicating significant disagreement and seven indicating strong agreement (Boyle et al, 2009; Wilson et al., 2014).

In the short-form version of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Wellbeing, items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 17 were reversely scored before getting the total score of each category. For each category, a high mean score (3.51-7) indicates that the respondent has a mastery of that area in his or her life. Conversely, a low score (1-3.50) shows that the respondent struggles to feel comfortable with that particular concept.

The second instrument used is the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire – OHQ. This questionnaire is derived from the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Hills & Argyle, 2002), which on its turn builds on the design and format of the Beck Depression Inventory. The OHQ is a unidimensional self-report questionnaire with 29 statements using a six-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (Hills & Argyle, 2002). Reliability values of this questionnaire are considered high (a = .91).

Argyle, Hills, and Stephen (2014) proposed the following interpretation based on the computed mean scores when it came to interpreting the results:

**Table 1**

*Mean Score and Interpretation of Oxford Happiness Questionnaire*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mean Score** | **Interpretation** |
| 1.0-2.0 (Between one and two) | Not happy. |
| 2.1-3.0 (Between two and three) | Somewhat unhappy. |
| 3.1-3.99 (Between three and four) | Neutral – not really happy or unhappy. |
| 4.0 (Four) | Somewhat happy or moderately happy - satisfied. |
| 4.1-5.0 (Between four and five) | Rather happy; pretty happy. |
| 5.1-5.99 (Between five and six) | Very happy. |
| 6.0 (Six) | Too happy |

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The researchers first sought the permission from the authorities of the target Jail District to conduct the study. Upon approval, the assistance of the District Jail personnel was requested for proper assistance and observance of protocols. The researchers introduced themselves and explained about the study. Then, the researchers requested their voluntary participation, and after they responded positively, informed consent was secured. In compliance with the 2012 Data Privacy Act of the Philippines (Republic Act 10173), their privacy and anonymity were also ensured and respected. After which, the researchers read and explained the instruments directions before the respondents answered them. The respondents were informed as well to raise questions or clarifications for some words that they could not understand in the instruments. No monetary reward or honorarium was given to the informants after and during the administration of the questionnaire. The researchers further reiterated that the informants’ answers would be secured with utmost confidentiality.

 In analyzing the data collected, mean and standard deviation were used to describe the level of psychological well-being and level of happiness of PDL, while in assessing the relationship between the psychological well-being and level of happiness of PDL, Pearson-R was utilized. The data were subjected to SPSS version 25 for computation and analysis.

**III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Result**

One of the central aims of this study is to determine the level of psychological well-being among Persons Deprived of Liberty. The combined data shown in Table 2 presents the multiple dimensions of psychological wellbeing among persons deprived of liberty in a province in northern Philippines. These dimensions include autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

**Table 2**

*Level of Psychological Well-being of Persons Deprived of Liberty*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dimensions** | **Mean** | **SD** | **Description** | **Qualitative****Interpretation** |
| **Autonomy** |  |  |  |  |
| 15. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions | 3.20 | 1.63 | A little agree | Low |
| 17. I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think. ® | 2.37 | 1.44 | Somewhat agree | Low |
| 18. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important. | 2.63 | 1.53 | Somewhat agree | Low |
| **Overall Score** | **2.73** | **.99** |  | **Low** |
| **Environmental Mastery** |  |  |  |  |
| 4. The demands of everyday life often get me down. | 3.41 | 1.94 | A little agree | Low |
| 8. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live. ® | 3.10 | 1.92 | A little agree | Low |
| 9. I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life. ® | 2.24 | 1.45 | Somewhat agree | Low |
| **Overall Score** | **2.91** | **1.09** |  | **Low** |
| **Personal Growth** |  |  |  |  |
| 11. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth. ® | 1.49 | 1.05 | Strongly agree  | Low  |
| 12. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world. ® | 1.73 | 1.00 | Strongly agree | Low |
| 1. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago
 | 4.29 | 1.89 | Neither agree or disagree  | High |
| **Overall Score** | **2.50** | **.73** |  | **Low** |
| **Positive Relations with Others** |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me. | 3.95 | 1.88 | Neither agree or disagree | High |
| 13. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others. ® | 2.27 | 1.27 | Somewhat agree  | Low |
| 16. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others. | 4.20 | 1.75 | Neither agree or disagree  | High |
| **Overall Score** | **3.55** | **1.22** |  | **High** |
| **The Purpose in Life**  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them. ® | 3.07 | 1.74 | A little agree  | Low |
| 7. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future. | 3.63 | 2.17 | Neither agree or disagree  | High |
| 10. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life. | 3.59 | 1.76 | Neither agree or disagree  | High |
| **Overall Score** | **3.43** | **1.17** |  | **Low** |
| **The Self-Acceptance** |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I like most parts of my personality.  | 2.44 | 1.52 | Somewhat agree | Low |
| 2. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.  | 3.80 | 1.83 | Neither agree or disagree | High |
| 5. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life. | 3.56 | 1.90 | Neither agree or disagree | High |
| **Overall Score** | **3.26** | **1.17** |  | **Low** |

®-Reversed

 The current study revealed that the respondents have low sense of autonomy (M=2.73; SD .99). As a matter of fact, it has emerged that they get easily influenced with the strong opinions of other people (M=3.20; SD 1.63), they are not quite confident in their opinions, even if they are different from the way most people think (M=2.37; SD 1.44) and they judge themselves by what they think is important, not by the values of what others think is important (M=2.63; SD 1.53). Individual with low sense of autonomy, may defy societal pressure to think and act in specific ways, self-regulate their conduct, and assess themselves using personal standards.

 In understanding psychological well-being, it is notably important to look into the environmental mastery of an individual. The result shows that persons deprived of liberty have low level of environmental mastery (M=2.91; SD 1.09). Contributory to such result is the fact that persons deprived of liberty found to allow the demands of everyday life to get them down (M=3.41; SD 1.94), they do not feel they are in charge of the situation in which they live (M=3.10; SD 1.92) and they have poor skills in managing their responsibilities (M=2.24; SD 1.45).

 In terms of the third dimension of psychological well-being, PDL have low level of personal growth (M=2.50; SD .73). In fact, the respondents do not construe life as a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth (M=1.49; SD 1.05) and they do not think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how they think about themselves and the world (M=1.73; SD 1.00). Interestingly, they are trying to make big improvements (M=4.29; SD 1.89).

 As to their purpose in life, the result found to be significantly low (M=3.43; SD 1.17). This denotes that persons deprived of liberty may likely to have lack meaning and direction in their lives. More so, it was validated that sometimes they feel like they are one of those individuals who wander aimlessly in life (M=3.07; SD 1.74) and some of them felt that they have live their life one day at a time and do not really think about the future (M=3.63; SD 2.17). Although persons deprived of liberty feel that sometimes they have done all there is to do in life (M=3.59; SD 1.76).

 Another dimension of psychological wellbeing that is being measured is self-acceptance (M=3.26; SD 1.17). Such validation is evident by the fact that most of them do not like most of their personality (M=2.44; SD 1.52) and they feel disappointed about their achievements in life (M=3.56 SD 1.90). Interestingly, they are pleased with how things have turned out so far (M=3.80; SD 1.83).

 Lastly, the study found that persons deprived of liberty found to have positive relations to others (M=3.55; SD 1.22). Result revealed that they somewhat agree that people would describe them as giving people, willing to share their time with others.

 Another central question answered in this study is “What is the level of happiness of Persons Deprived of Liberty. It can be gleaned from table 3 the responses of the respondents in the Oxford Happiness Inventory. The result of the current study revealed that in items that were positively stated, the typical responses of the respondents when asked about their happiness is that they find most things amusing (M=4.41; SD=1.48), they have warm feelings towards almost everyone (M=4.39; SD=1.30), and they perceived that life is good (M=4.34; SD=1.74). Looking into the computed mean scores, the respondents’ responses on the three presented items connotes a moderate level of agreement. Meanwhile, slight disagreement emerged in statements such as, “I am very happy” (M=3.22; SD=1.84); “I feel able to take anything on” (M=3.27; SD=1.70); “I can fit in everything I can do” (M=3.32; SD=1.63); “I feel I have a great deal of energy” (M=3.41; SD=1.61), and “I am always committed and involved” (M=3.46; SD=1.52). The scaled response of the respondents is an indication of a neutral level of happiness, which connotes that they neither happy nor unhappy.

**Table 3**

*Level of Happiness of Persons Deprived of Liberty*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Mean** | **SD** | **Description** | **Qualitative Interpretation** |
| 1. I don't feel particularly pleased with the way I am. ® | 3.76 | 1.92 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 2. I am intensely interested in other people.    | 3.78 | 1.65 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 3. I feel that life is very rewarding.    | 4.20 | 1.42 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 4. I have very warm feelings towards almost everyone.    | 4.39 | 1.30 | Moderately agree | Pretty Happy |
| 5. I rarely wake up feeling rested. ®   | 4.29 | 1.50 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 6. I am not particularly optimistic about the future. ®  | 3.46 | 1.55 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 7. I find most things amusing.    | 4.41 | 1.48 | Moderately agree | Pretty Happy |
| 8. I am always committed and involved.    | 3.46 | 1.52 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 9. Life is good.    | 4.34 | 1.74 | Moderately agree | Pretty Happy |
| 10. I do not think that the world is a good place. ®   | 2.39 | 1.72 | Moderately disagree | Somewhat unhappy |
| 11. I laugh a lot.    | 3.85 | 1.73 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 12. I am well satisfied about everything in my life.    | 4.10 | 1.58 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 13. I don't think I look attractive. ®   | 3.12 | 1.62 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 14. There is a gap between what I would like to do and what I have done. ®  | 4.05 | 1.48 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 15. I am very happy.    | 3.22 | 1.84 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 16. I find beauty in some things.    | 4.32 | 1.51 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 17. I always have a cheerful effect on others.    | 4.15 | 1.41 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 18. I can fit in (find time for) everything I want to.    | 3.32 | 1.63 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 19. I feel that I am not especially in control of my life. ®  | 3.80 | 1.81 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 20. I feel able to take anything on.    | 3.27 | 1.70 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 21. I feel fully mentally alert.    | 3.95 | 1.58 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 22. I often experience joy and elation.    | 3.51 | 1.49 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 23. I don't find it easy to make decisions. ® | 3.63 | 1.55 | Slightly agree | Neutral |
| 24. I don't have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life. ® | 2.73 | 1.70 | Slightly disagree | Somewhat unhappy |
| 25. I feel I have a great deal of energy.    | 3.41 | 1.61 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 26. I usually have a good influence on events.    | 4.22 | 1.35 | Slightly agree | Pretty Happy |
| 27. I don't have fun with other people. ®   | 2.85 | 1.44 | Slightly disagree | Somewhat unhappy |
| 28. I don't feel particularly healthy. ®  | 3.27 | 1.67 | Slightly disagree | Neutral |
| 29. I don't have particularly happy memories of the past.®  | 2.46 | 1.57 | Moderately disagree | Somewhat unhappy |
| **Overall Level of Happiness** | **3.79** | **.50** |  | **Neutral** |

®-Reversed

 Furthermore, in items that were negatively stated, it was found that respondents rarely wake up feeling rested (M=4.29; SD=1.50); they felt that there is a gap between what they would like to do and what they have done (M=4.05; SD=1.48); felt that they are not specifically in control of their life (M=3.80; SD=1.81). The items presented earlier emerged to have the highest computed mean scores, which range from neutral to moderately happy. On the other hand, items such as “I do not think that the world is a good place” (M=2.39; SD=1.72); “I do not have particular happy memories of the past” (M=2.46; SD=1.57); and “I do not have a particular sense of meaning and purpose in my life found had the lowest computed mean scores” (M=2.73; SD=1.70). These responses signify that they are somewhat unhappy.

 In general, the result indicates that persons deprived of liberty are neither happy nor unhappy (M=3.79; SD=.50) during the peak of the pandemic.

**Table 4**

*Relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Happiness among Persons Deprived of Liberty*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Psychological Well-being** |  | **Level of Happiness** |
| Autonomy | Pearson’s r | 0.093 |
|   | p-value | 0.563 |
| Environmental Mastery | Pearson’s r | 0.115 |
|  | p-value | 0.474 |
| Personal Growth | Pearson’s r | 0.227 |
|  | p-value | 0.154 |
| Positive Relationship with Others | Pearson’s r | 0.204 |
|  | p-value | 0.201 |
| Purpose in Life | Pearson’s r | 0.003 |
|  | p-value | 0.987 |
| Self-Acceptance | Pearson’s r | .309\* |
|  | p-value | .049 |
| **Overall Psychological Well-being** | Pearson’s r | .316\* |
|   | p-value | 0.044 |
| \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). |
| \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |

 Scrutiny of table 4 presents the relationship between psychological wellbeing and happiness among persons deprived of liberty in a district jail in northern Philippines. Pearson analysis revealed that in examining the relationship between happiness and the six dimensions of psychological wellbeing, only self-acceptance has a moderate positive relationship with the level of happiness [r (39) = 0.309, p=0.049].

 **Discussion**

Remarkably, this study focused on the degree of happiness and the psychological wellbeing of Persons Deprived of Liberty. The descriptive correlational approach provided an opportunity to explore how degree of happiness and the psychological wellbeing are associated which each other. The findings revealed that the respondents perceived their overall level of happiness to be neutral. It has also emerged that the global psychological wellbeing of persons deprived of liberty is low. Personal growth, autonomy and environmental mastery are among those with the lowest mean scores resulting to inadequate psychological wellbeing. Correlating these two variables, it was found that there is a positive moderate relationship.

Positive affective states of PDLs such as happiness is sternly altered. The poor justice system which resulted to drawn-out trials among pre-detainees (Narag & Jones, 2017), congested prison cells (Venture, 2018; Marcelo, 2019; and Cahapay, 2020), inappropriate castigation in lieu of rehabilitation (Gamo, 2013), lack of mental services for PDL (Ayoc & Bullong, 2019) presents an overview of their predicament in experiencing genuine happiness. This situation is further intensified by many personal and societal challenges and adversities. In a short span of time, various crises have profoundly impacted lives, including those behind bars. The repercussions of these hardships have affected the overall happiness and psychological well-being of incarcerated individuals, as evidenced in this study.

It was transpired in the findings that one of the factors that contributes why they feel unhappy is that they do not think that the world is a good place. This finding can be explicated by the fact during the peak of Covid-19 pandemic. The outbreak has played a huge threat on health, jobs, incomes (Bachmann et al., 2022). More so, the low rate of people who got inoculated worldwide (Sonawane et al., 2001) caused an increasing number of variants with higher transmissibility (Galili, 2021). As a result, the virus spreads across international borders and the covid related death rate worldwide increased significantly (Aguiar et al., 2022; Cascella et al., 2022). In response to the pandemic, lockdowns have been implemented with unintended consequences. Hapal (2021) described that the Philippines is among those countries with the longest and strictest lockdowns in the world. Regrettably, lockdown procedures restricted routinary activities (Dhami et al., 2020) and visitors' access to friends and relatives (Brennan, 2020) in prison cells. Amalgamating these realities elucidate how this previous situation has affected the global happiness and psychological wellbeing of persons deprived of liberty.

Indeed, these situations evidently caused tremendous human suffering and challenged the most basic foundations of societal well-being. The current finding agrees with existing studies that there is an increasing rate of people in all walks of life who are suffering from mental health glitches, including depressive symptoms, anxiety, PTSD, academic stress, loneliness (Kivelä et al., 2022), and even suicidal thoughts (O’Connor et al., 2021;Winkler et al., 2020). The finding shed lights for future researchers to perform an in-depth analysis of social phenomena particularly with regard to the preparedness and readiness of prison institutions and detention facilities in safeguarding the wellbeing of persons deprived of liberty during the pandemic. In doing so, it will reveal crucial details about how the government is responding to their physiological and psychological needs. Moreover, this study relies on a standardized psychological test that measures general psychological wellbeing and happiness. It is notably important to use or even develop instruments measuring psychological wellbeing and happiness in the local context.

Another salient finding of this research and perhaps the core is the discovery that the overall level of happiness and psychological wellbeing of persons deprived of liberty emerged to have a moderately significant positive correlation. The result signifies a direct relationship wherein both variables such as happiness and psychological wellbeing move in the same direction. This means that the level of happiness of PDLs increases, the psychological wellbeing also increases. In like manner, when the level of happiness decreases, the psychological wellbeing also decreases. The result of the current study corroborates to growing literatures (Ghasempour et al., 2013; Piqueras et al.,2011; Heizomi et al., 2015; Allahverdipour et al., 2019). This study contributes that in understanding mental health status of persons deprived of liberty it is crucial to look into their state of happiness and psychological wellbeing. This also suggests that mental health professionals might consider integration of happiness promotion initiatives to improve psychological wellbeing. Despite the current result as supported by the aforementioned literatures, there shall be a careful consideration when making generalizations since the nature of these studies made use of non-experimental design which does not explain direct causality of the two variables. Thus, this proposes future research direction to make use of experimental designs as it offers systematic view to scientific inferences and clarity as to the causality between happiness and psychological wellbeing. Likewise, quasi-experimental designs might be considered when assumptions of experimental designs are not feasible (Kim & Steiner, 2016).

Exploring the individual aspects of psychological wellbeing enables one to have a more complex knowledge of how happiness affects psychological wellbeing. Compellingly, the association that emerged between the two variables was only parallel with one of the dimensions of psychological wellbeing which is self-acceptance. This would explain the possibility that maintaining sense of happiness improves the psychological wellbeing specifically self-acceptance but no other dimensions. Ruggeri et at., (2020) acknowledged such possibility when examining individual dimensions of psychological wellbeing due to the fact that some variance explained may be larger when all are combined, whereas others may have reduced the amount of variance in a prediction. The fact that human behavior is a tough subject to examine lends support to yet another theory that may be used to explain these events. Thus, this gives idea for future researchers to investigate other variables that may have significant mediating, moderating or confounding effect on the direct association of the variables and the dimensions.

In addition, the findings might elicit possibility for mental health practitioners and correctional management in exploring individual dimensions of psychological wellbeing for targeting interventions to mental health issues among persons derived of liberty. Considering the association of happiness and self-acceptance among persons of liberty, researchers like Daryanti, Sugaiharto, and Mulawarman (2020) found that self-acceptance evokes forgiveness, which is necessary for convicts to feel happy. It was further elaborated that acceptance from family, self-commitment and a sense of purpose in life contributed to the prisoners' forgiving nature and subjective wellbeing. This suggests new directions on forgiveness therapy and involvement of family members in the program that might be introduced among PDLs.

1. **CONCLUSION**

Mental health is for all and for all ages, even for those who are in jail like those persons deprived of liberty. Nonetheless, due to their adverse situation, their mental health may suffer, particularly their psychological well-being and their level of happiness.

 This study proved that persons deprived of liberty might likely to experience low psychological well-being, which may be caused by various factors. Although, happiness is subjective, the level of it may likely to increase or decrease depending on the degree of self-acceptance of persons deprived of liberty, thus, these individuals should be assisted in understanding and accepting their condition and themselves. These vulnerable group who are usually taken for granted and whose freedom has been taken away have to be heard and given equal opportunity to ensure that one’s psychological well-being and happiness are looked after.

**V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The researchers wish to thank the Ifugao State University, Research and Development Office for supporting the conduct of this study. Special thanks is also extended to the PDLs for courageously and diligently participating in this study.

**VI. REFERENCES**

1. Abdu, Z., Kabeta, T., Dube, L., Tessema, W., & Abera, M. (2018). Prevalence and Associated Factors of Depression among Prisoners in Jimma Town Prison, South West Ethiopia. Psychiatry Journal, 2018, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/5762608
2. Agbakwuru, C., & Awujo, G. C. (2016). Strategies for Coping with the Challenges of Incarceration Among Nigerian Prison Inmates. Journal of Education and Practice, 7(23), 153–157. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1112896.pdf
3. Aguiar, A., Pinto, M., & Duarte, R. (2022). A qualitative study on the impact of death during COVID-19: Thoughts and feelings of Portuguese bereaved adults. Plos one, 17(4), e0265284.
4. Allahverdipour, H., Karimzadeh, Z., Alizadeh, N., Asghari Jafarabadi, M., & Javadivala, Z. (2021). Psychological well-being and happiness among middle-aged women: a cross-sectional study. Health Care for Women International, 42(1), 28-42.
5. Argyle, M., Hills, P., & Wright, S. (2014). The Guardian. Take the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/nov/03/take-the-oxford-happiness-questionnaire
6. Ayoc, L. & Bullong, B. M (2019). Empathic Behavior of Persons Deprived of Liberty in The Province of Ifugao (Unpublished Master’s thesis). Ifugao State University.
7. Bachmann, M., Enodien, B., Taha-Mehlitz, S., & Taha, A. (2022). The Development of healthcare jobs in the COVID Pandemic-A New Economic Market. Frontiers in Public Health, 552.
8. Boyle, P. A., Barnes, L. L., Buchman, A. S., & Bennett, D. A. (2009). Purpose in life is associated with mortality among community-dwelling older persons. Psychosomatic medicine, 71(5), 574–579. https://doi.org/10.1097/PSY.0b013e3181a5a7c0
9. Brennan, P. K. (2020). Responses taken to mitigate COVID-19 in prisons in England and Wales. Victims & Offenders, 15(7-8), 1215-1233.
10. Bronson, J., & Berzofsky, M. (2017). Indicators of Mental Health Problems Reported by Prisoners and Jail Inmates, 2011-12. Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 250612(June), 1–17.
11. Cahapay, M. B. (2020). National responses for persons deprived of liberty during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines. Victims & Offenders, 15(7-8), 988-995.
12. Cascella, M., Rajnik, M., Aleem, A., Dulebohn, S. C., & Di Napoli, R. (2022). Features, evaluation, and treatment of coronavirus (COVID-19). Statpearls [internet].
13. Daryanti, E. T., Sugiharto, D. Y. P., & Mulawarman, M. (2019). Forgivingness and Subjective Well-Being of the Female Prisoners. Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling, 8(3), 79-85.
14. Department of Health (2020). Your Mind Matters: DOH Calls for Unified Response to Mental Health. https://doh.gov.ph/press-release/YOUR-MIND-MATTERS-DOH-CALLS-FOR-UNIFIED-RESPONSE-TO-MENTAL-HEALTH
15. Eryılmaz, A. (2011). Ergen öznel iyi oluşunun, öznel iyi oluşu arttırma stratejilerini kullanma ile yaşam amaçlarını belirleme açısından incelenmesi. Dusunen Adam: The Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences, 24(1), 44–51. https://doi.org/10.5350/dajpn2011240106
16. Galili, U. (2021). COVID-19 variants as moving targets and how to stop them by glycoengineered whole-virus vaccines. Virulence, 12(1), 1717-1720.
17. Gamo, M. D. (2013). Voices behind prison walls: Rehabilitation from the perspective of inmates. Philippine Sociological Review, 205-227.
18. Ghasempour, A., Jodat, H., Soleimani, M., & Zhalehshabanlo, K. (2013). Happiness as a predictor of psychological well-being of male athlete students. Annals of Applied Sport Science, 1(2), 25-32.
19. Gonzalez, J. M. R., & Connell, N. M. (2014). Mental health of prisoners: Identifying barriers to mental health treatment and medication continuity. American Journal of Public Health, 104(12), 2328–2333. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302043
20. Hapal, K. (2021). The Philippines’ COVID-19 response: Securitising the pandemic and disciplining the pasaway. Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, 40(2), 224-244.
21. Heizomi, H., Allahverdipour, H., Jafarabadi, M. A., & Safaian, A. (2015). Happiness and its relation to psychological well-being of adolescents. Asian journal of psychiatry, 16, 55-60.
22. Hills, P., & Argyle, M. (2002). The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire: A compact scale for the measurement of psychological well-being. Personality and Individual Differences, 33(7), 1071–1082. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(01)00213-6
23. Kim, Y., & Steiner, P. (2016). Quasi-experimental designs for causal inference. Educational psychologist, 51(3-4), 395-405.
24. Kivelä, L., Mouthaan, J., van der Does, W., & Antypa, N. (2022). Student mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic: Are international students more affected?. Journal of American College Health, 1-9.
25. Marcelo, E. (2019, June 11). ‘Jail congestion drops 439% in 2018. Philstar. https:// www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/06/11/1925526/jail-congestion-drops-439-2018-but
26. Muhlhausen, D., & Hurwitz, H. (2019). First Step Act: Best Practices for Academic and Vocational Education for Offenders. Federal Sentencing Reporter, 32(1), 56–62.
27. Merueñas, M (2013, June 25). Too poor to post bail, thousands spend years in jail without conviction. GMA News Online. https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/ special reports/ 314386/too-poor-to-post-bail-thousands-spend-years-in-jail-without-conviction/story/
28. Narag, R. E. (2018). Understanding Factors Related to Prolonged Trial of Detained Defendants in the Philippines. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 62(8), 2461–2487. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X17736041
29. Narag, R. E., & Jones, C. R. (2017). Understanding Prison Management in the Philippines. The Prison Journal, 97(1), 3–26.https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885516679366
30. Narag, R. E. (2019). Exploring the consequences of prolonged pretrial incarceration: evidence from a local jurisdiction in the Philippines. International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 43(2), 117–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2018.1444651
31. O'Connor, R. C., Wetherall, K., Cleare, S., McClelland, H., Melson, A. J., Niedzwiedz, C. L., ... & Robb, K. A. (2021). Mental health and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic: longitudinal analyses of adults in the UK COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing study. The British journal of psychiatry, 218(6), 326-333.
32. Oducado, R. M., Rabacal, J., Moralista, R., & Tamdang, K. (2020). Perceived Stress Due COVID-19 Pandemic Among Employed Professional Teachers. IJERI: International Journal of Educational Research and Innovation, 15, 305–316. https://doi.org/10.46661/ijeri.5284
33. Orjiakor, C. T., Ugwu, D. I., Eze, J. E., Ugwu, L. I., Ibeagha, P. N., & Onu, D. U. (2017). Prolonged incarceration and prisoners’ wellbeing: livid experiences of awaiting trial/pre-trial/remand prisoners in Nigeria. International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being, 12(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/17482631.2017.1395677
34. Papaioannou, V., Anagnou, E., & Vergidis, D. (2018). Adult Inmates’ Motivation for Participation in Educational Programs in Greece. International Education Studies, 11(6), 132. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v11n6p132
35. Piqueras, J. A., Kuhne, W., Vera-Villarroel, P., Van Straten, A., & Cuijpers, P. (2011). Happiness and health behaviours in Chilean college students: a cross-sectional survey. BMC public health, 11(1), 1-10.
36. Ruggeri, K., Garcia-Garzon, E., Maguire, Á., Matz, S., & Huppert, F. A. (2020). Well-being is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries. Health and quality of life outcomes, 18(1), 1-16.
37. Shrestha, G., Yadav, D. K., Sapkota, N., Baral, D., Yadav, B. K., Chakravartty, A., & Pokharel, P. K. (2017). Depression among inmates in a regional prison of eastern Nepal: A cross-sectional study. BMC Psychiatry, 17(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-017-1514-9
38. Sonawane, K., Troisi, C. L., & Deshmukh, A. A. (2021). COVID-19 vaccination in the UK: Addressing vaccine hesitancy. The Lancet Regional Health–Europe, 1.
39. Telef, B. B. (2013). The Adaptation of Psychological Well-Being into Turkish: A Validity and Reliability Study. Journal of Education, 28(3), 374–384.
40. Tzatsis, P., Anagnou, E., Valkanos, E., & Fragkoulis, I. (2019). The Challenges of the Inmates’ Adult Educator. A Greek Case Study. Education Quarterly Reviews, 2(2), 377–385. https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1993.02.02.70
41. Van Harreveld, F., Van Der Pligt, J., Claassen, L., & Van Dijk, W. W. (2007). Inmate emotion coping and psychological and physical well-being: The use of crying over spilled milk. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 34(5), 697–708. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854806298468
42. Wilson, R. S., Boyle, P. A., Segawa, E., Yu, L., Begeny, C. T., Anagnos, S. E., & Bennett, D. A. (2013). The influence of cognitive decline on well-being in old age. Psychology and Aging, 28(2), 304.
43. Winkler, P., Formanek, T., Mlada, K., Kagstrom, A., Mohrova, Z., Mohr, P., & Csemy, L. (2020). Increase in prevalence of current mental disorders in the context of COVID-19: analysis of repeated nationwide cross-sectional surveys. Epidemiology and psychiatric sciences, 29.
44. Yue Qi, L., Roslan, S., & Zaremohzzabieh, Z. (2021). Perceived Social Support and Psychological Well-Being of International Students: The Mediating Effects of Resiliency and Spirituality. Asian Journal of University Education, 17(3), 220. https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v17i3.14502

**BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A person in a suit and tie  Description automatically generated | **DONATO OXILES ABAYA, EdD, RPM,** is an Associate Professor II and currently designated as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Ifugao State University – Lamut Campus. He graduated with the degree Bachelor of Arts Major in Psychology as a CUM LAUDE at Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela on March 2003 and Master of Arts major in Psychology in the same university in April 2015. He is presently finishing his thesis for the Master of Arts in Education degree, majoring in Special Education, at Saint Mary’s University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. He also finished his Doctor of Education degree in Educational Management at Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela, in 2020. Through Resolution Number 24, Series of 2014 of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology, he became a Registered Psychometrician. In 2015, he successfully passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers and became ranked 8 in the entire Region 2. He is also civil service eligible pursuant to Presidential Decree 907. Prior to becoming a faculty member of Ifugao State University, he served as a Permanent Senior High School Teacher I. He was designated as a Guidance Assistant at Santiago City National High School from June 2016 to 2018. He also served as an Instructor, Psychometrician, Guidance Counselor, Head of Student Affairs and Human Resource Manager at Cagayan Valley Computer and Information Technology College, Santiago City from June 2004 to April 2015 where he became 2013 Regional Best Public Employment Service Officer – School Category and a National Qualifier. He also worked as a Human Resource Manager at Grupo Marilen, Inc, Mabini, Santiago City from May 2015 – May 2016. Mr. Abaya also extends his services as a mental health practitioner, resource speaker, lecturer, panelist, adjudicator of different socio-cultural activities, choreographer, events coordinator and director.Google Scholar: Donato O. AbayaOrcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7733-5031> |
| A person in a suit and tie  Description automatically generated | **MR. AIKEN DALE K. MAGAYA** is an Assistant Professor at Ifugao State University, Nayon, Lamut, Ifugao, Philippines who is currently designated as a College Research Coordinator with six years of work experience in the academe. He was designated as the Program Chairperson of the BS Psychology for two years. In terms of his academic background, Aiken Dale K. Magaya holds Bachelor of Science in Psychology, a Bachelor of Arts in Guidance and Counseling and a master’s degree in psychology. Currently he is pursuing his PhD in Psychology to deepen his knowledge and contribute to body of knowledge in the field of Psychology. His dedication to evidence-based procedures is evident in his published and presented work. Currently he has ongoing collaborative research in related discipline to explore interdisciplinary approaches in understanding human behavior. Through the integration of research, teaching, and professional practice, Aiken Dale K. Magaya is passionate about motivating colleagues and students while advancing the development and use of psychological knowledge in diverse contexts. Google Scholar: Aiken Dale K. MagayaOrcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8995-3742> |

**Donato O. Abaya\*1, Aiken Dale K. Magaya2**

1(Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences/ Ifugao State University, Nayon, Lamut, Ifugao, Philippines, xerdon17@gmail.com)

2(Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences/ Ifugao State University, Nayon, Lamut, Ifugao, Philippines, aiken7674@gmail.com)

\* Aiken dale K. Magaya corresponding author