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**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND
JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LIFE-SENTENCED
PRISONERS – A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY**

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Keywords

*Life-Sentenced
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Bazaar*

Abstract

Life-sentenced prisoners face unique challenges within the correctional system due to their extended sentences, limited prospects for relapse, and often the absence of external motivation such as parole. The correlation between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners in vocational settings is pivotal yet lacking sufficient research, crucial for designing impactful rehabilitation programs in correctional facilities. This cross-sectional survey aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners.

A sample of 30 life-sentenced prisoners were selected from the freedom prison bazaar. Data's were collected through a self-administered questionnaire consisting of the Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire (MSQ) to measure job satisfaction and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES) to measure self-esteem. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, serial numbers were given instead of names. The analysis revealed a positive correlation between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners where higher self-esteem tended to report higher levels of job satisfaction in freedom prison bazaar.

The study concludes a strong relationship between job satisfaction and self-esteem among life-sentenced prisoners currently working in the prison bazaar. Participants who had received vocational



training in the prison bazaar reported higher levels of job satisfaction. This shows that giving meaningful employment opportunities and skill development programs can help improve job satisfaction among life-sentenced inmates, potentially boosting their overall well-being and chances of successful reintegration into society.

The study's findings have significant implications for the creation of rehabilitation programs and support measures in correctional facilities. By focusing on bolstering self-esteem and providing vocational training opportunities, we can promote job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners, potentially reducing recidivism rates and facilitating their successful transition back into the community.

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of criminology has long been concerned with understanding the various factors that influence the lives of incarcerated individuals. According to the (APA) American Psychological Association. (2023), a prison or a correctional facility is a place where individuals are confined as punishment for committing a crime. The purpose of prison is to punish the individual and rehabilitate them so that they can return to society as productive citizens.

Providing opportunities for meaningful employment within correctional facilities plays a crucial role in this process. Job satisfaction, a vital aspect of individual well-being in various work settings, has garnered considerable attention in the research literature. Previous research has predominantly focused on the negative aspects of imprisonment, such as recidivism rates and the impact of incarceration on mental health, there is a growing need to explore positive psychological factors that may contribute to the well-being of prisoners ([Hemming, L., Pratt, D., Haddock, G., Bhatti, P., & Shaw, J. \(2021\)](#)). Self-esteem has been extensively studied regarding various aspects of individual functioning. However, little is known about the relationship between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners. In this research study, this current research aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners.

Self-esteem is an individual's overall sense of worth and value, which is closely tied to their self-image and can be influenced by various factors, including experiences, relationships, and external circumstances ([Rosenberg, M. \(1965\)](#)). Low self-esteem can negatively impact an individual's mental health and lead to a lack of confidence and motivation ([Crocker, J., Luhtanen, R., Cooper, M. L., &](#)



[Bouvrette, A. \(1994\)](#). High self-esteem has been linked to increased job satisfaction in different work environments, as individuals with positive self-perceptions are more likely to feel capable and fulfilled in their roles ([Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., & Robins, R. W. \(2003\)](#)).

Understanding the factors that influence job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners is vital for designing effective interventions within prison and improving their overall well-being. According to [National Informatics Centre, Tamil Nadu Prison and Correctional Service Department, Government of Tamil Nadu](#), prison bazaars are vocational setups that allow prisoners to gain work experience and earn some money while they serve their sentences. Studies have shown that vocational training and work programs can help improve the self-esteem of prisoners and reduce recidivism rates ([Wendy, K., & Melissa, V. \(2004\)](#)).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In August 2021, Kumba Hannah Lebbie conducted a study on the relationship between rehabilitation programs and recidivism rates among inmates. The primary aim was to assess the impact of rehabilitation efforts on reducing recidivism. The findings highlighted key factors influencing the effectiveness of these programs, particularly in enhancing inmates' job-seeking skills and readiness for employment post-release. The study underscores the importance of integrating successful rehabilitation strategies into mainstream private-sector practices and public policy decisions. By doing so, it aims to create a supportive environment for former inmates, decrease recidivism rates, and facilitate successful reintegration into society. Further research is recommended to explore the significance of incorporating rehabilitation program knowledge into both private sector and public policy contexts.

In their 2017 study at James Camp Prison in Ghana, Bruce and Larweh explored the relationship between self-esteem, needs satisfaction, and psychological well-being among inmates. Using a correlation survey design, they sampled 155 male prisoners randomly from a population of 347. The study revealed a significant positive correlation among self-esteem, needs satisfaction, and psychological well-being, indicating that higher levels of self-esteem and needs satisfaction were associated with better psychological well-being. Surprisingly, the length of the prison sentence did not affect inmates' psychological well-being, suggesting stability regardless of imprisonment duration.

In June 2018, Kamoyo from Chuka University, Kenya, conducted a survey on the effects of imprisonment on self-esteem among female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. Using a descriptive survey design, the study included 291 female inmates and four prison staff, totaling 295 respondents. Both simple random sampling and purposive sampling methods were employed. The findings revealed a significant relationship between imprisonment and inmate self-esteem. The study recommended the implementation of rehabilitative programs focusing on self-esteem enhancement, such as counseling, therapy, skill-building workshops, and educational opportunities. Addressing low self-esteem among female inmates is crucial for mitigating mental health challenges and facilitating successful reintegration into society post-release.

In June 2018, Lambert, E. G., Jiang, S., Liu, J., Zhang, J., & Choi, E. conducted a study titled "A Happy Life: Exploring How Job Stress, Job Involvement, and Job Satisfaction Are Related to the Life Satisfaction of Chinese Prison Staff." The research aimed to investigate the relationship between job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among prison staff in Chinese correctional facilities. The study found that both job involvement and job satisfaction positively influenced the life satisfaction of Chinese prison staff. It emphasized the importance of addressing the psychological well-being of prison staff and implementing strategies to mitigate job stressors, enhance job satisfaction and involvement, and improve overall life satisfaction. Proposed initiatives included stress management workshops, employee recognition programs, and opportunities for professional growth.

In June 2015, Law, F. M., & Guo, G. J. conducted a study on the correlation between hope and self-efficacy with job satisfaction, job stress, and organizational commitment among correctional officers in the Taiwan Prison System. The research aimed to explore how hope and self-efficacy relate to job-related experiences and attitudes of correctional officers. The study found that higher levels of hope were positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with job stress. Additionally, officers with greater job satisfaction demonstrated higher organizational commitment, indicating a sense of loyalty and dedication to their institution.

In March 2021, Handika, M. H., Soleh, A., & Noviantoro, R. conducted a study on the influence of work environment and self-esteem on employee performance at the Directorate Prisoners and Evidence of the Bengkulu Police. The research aimed to investigate how these factors impact employee performance. Using a total sampling method, all 55 employees were included in the study.

The findings revealed that both the work environment and self-esteem had positive and significant effects on employee performance individually and in combination. Recognizing the importance of creating a positive work environment and fostering self-esteem could enhance workforce productivity and efficiency.

3. METHODOLOGY

Study Type: Quantitative cross-sectional survey conducted at Freedom Prison Bazaar - Coimbatore Central Prison.

Sample Size: 30 male participants.

Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling method.

Sample Population: Currently incarcerated prisoners working in the prison bazaar.

Selection Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants currently incarcerated and working in the prison bazaar.
- Participants willing and able to provide informed consent.
- Participants working in the prison bazaar for at least one month.
- Participants aged 18 years or older.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Participants unable to understand Tamil.
- Participants unwilling to participate.

Assessment Tools Used:

- Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES)
- Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:

The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, assesses an individual's self-esteem, a key aspect of psychological well-being. It consists of 10 items, half positively and half negatively worded, rated on a Likert scale. Scores range from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. The scale demonstrates high reliability, with test-retest correlations typically around .82 to .88, and strong convergent validity with measures of depression and anxiety [Rosenberg, M. \(1965\)](#).



Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire:

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), developed by David J. Weiss and colleagues in 1967, assesses various facets of job satisfaction. It consists of 20 items covering areas like autonomy, compensation, and growth opportunities, rated on a Likert scale. The scale demonstrates high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .86 to .91. Scores are summed to provide a total score, indicating overall job satisfaction. Higher scores reflect greater satisfaction ([Vocational Psychology Research, \(2023\)](#)).

Procedure:

- Permission obtained from KMCH College of Occupational Therapy and Coimbatore Central Prison Management to conduct the study at Freedom prison bazaar.
- Requisition letter sent and acknowledged by Coimbatore Central Prison Management.
- Target population selected from life-sentenced prisoners at Freedom Prison Bazaar.
- Informed consent obtained from participants; procedures explained to manager and participants.
- Participants assigned serial numbers for privacy during data collection.
- Questionnaires on demographic information, job satisfaction (MSQ), and self-esteem (Rosenberg Scale) administered through interviews.
- Data analyzed using statistical software SPSS Version 25.

4. RESULTS

In the current study, 30 individuals participated according to the selection criteria. The data was collected from the participants using Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES). The results were determined by the statistics using IBM SPSS software (Version 25). Tables and graphs were used to present the Descriptive Statistics and Pearson correlation Coefficient.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics of Life-Sentenced Prisoners who are currently working in Prison Bazaar*

S.NO	VARIABLES	VALUES
1.	Gender (Male)	30 (100%)
2.	Age (Mean± SD)	43.23±2.712



3. Age Range (Min- Max) 39-47

*SD- Standard Deviation.

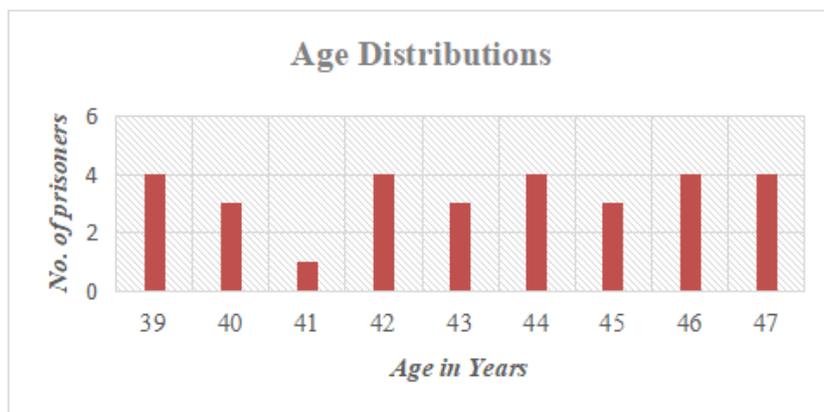


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Life-Sentenced Prisoners in the Prison Bazaar

Figure 1 shows the age distribution of 30 prisoners, where the age of prisoners ranges from 39 to 47 years.

Table 2: Type of Work site of the Life-Sentenced Prisoners who are currently working in Freedom Prison Bazaar

S.NO	WORKSITE	PERCENTAGE	NO. OF PRISONERS
1.	Freedom Indian oil petroleum	33.3%	10
2.	Freedom Bakery	23.3%	7
3.	Freedom Aavin Milk Outlet	20.0%	6
4.	Freedom clothing outlet	20.0%	6
5.	Freedom ICICI ATM	3.3%	1

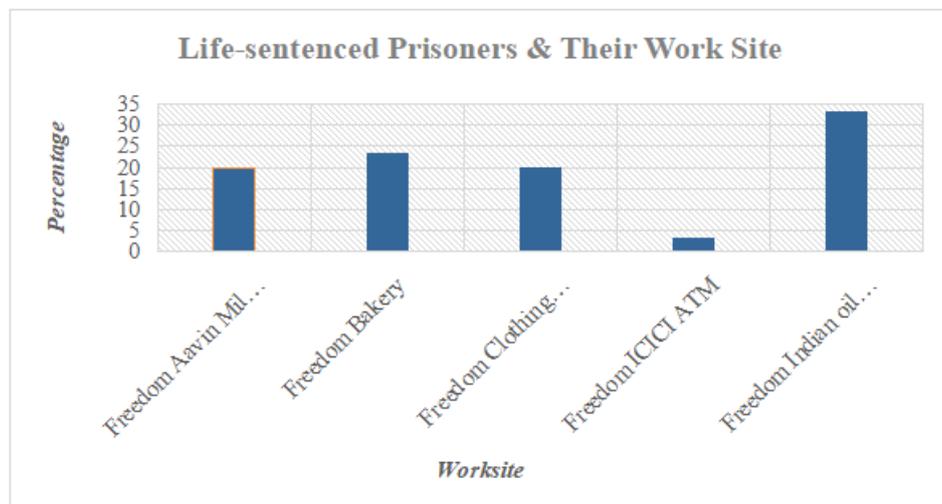


Figure 2: Life-Sentenced Prisoners & Their Work site at Freedom Prison Bazaar

Figure 2 shows that 33.3% of the Life-sentenced Prisoners who works at Freedom Indian Oil Petroleum, 23.3% of the Life sentenced Prisoners who works at Freedom Bakery, and 20.0% of the Life sentenced Prisoners who works at Freedom Aavin Milk Outlet and Freedom Clothing Outlet each respectively and 3.3% at Freedom ICIC ATM Bank.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Job Satisfaction and Self-Esteem of Life-Sentenced Prisoners who are currently working in Prison Bazaar

S. NO	VARIABLES	MEA N	SD
1.	MSQ	63.79	10.144
2.	RSES	23.07	3.258

*SD- Standard deviation.

*MSQ- Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire.

*RSES- Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale.

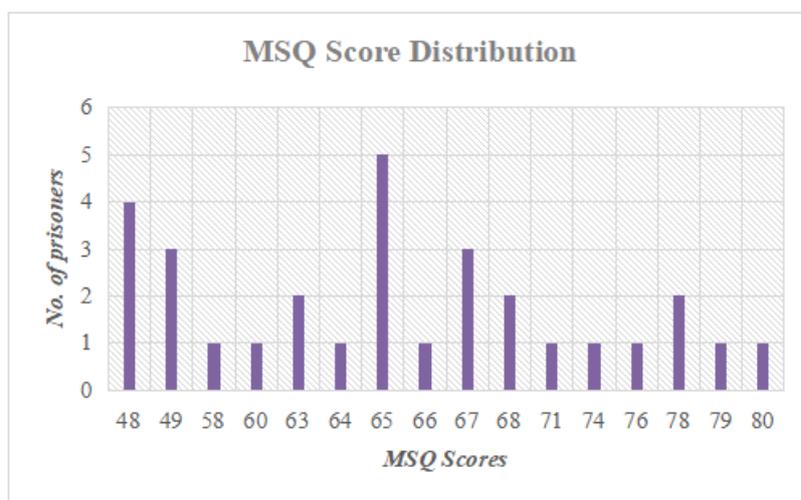


Figure 3: MSQ Score Distribution of Life-Sentenced Prisoners

Figure 3 shows the MSQ score distribution of Life sentenced Prisoners who are currently working at the Freedom prison bazaar.

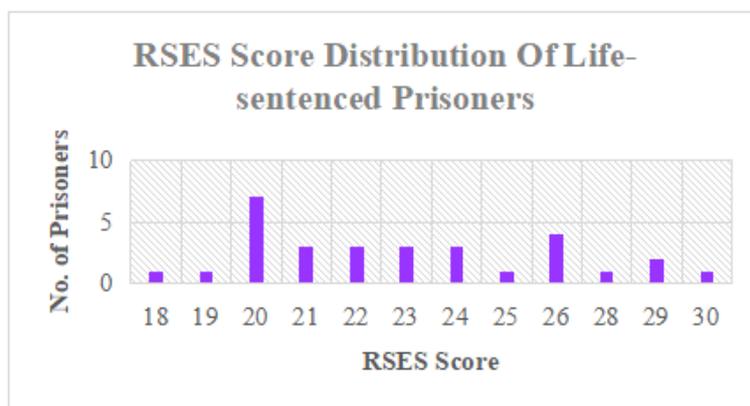


Figure 4: RSES Score Distribution of Life-Sentenced Prisoners

Figure 4 shows the RSES score distribution of the Life-sentenced prisoners who are currently working in the Freedom prison bazaar.

Table 4: Scales and their Cut off scores

SCALES	SCORES	RANGE OF SCORES	PERCENTAGE
MSQ	Low Job Satisfaction	0-27	-
	Moderate Job Satisfaction	28-54	23.3%

	High Job Satisfaction	55-80	76.7%
RSES	Low Self-esteem	0-10	-
	Moderate Self-esteem	11-20	30.0%
	High self-esteem	21-30	70.0%

*MSQ- Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

*RSES- Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

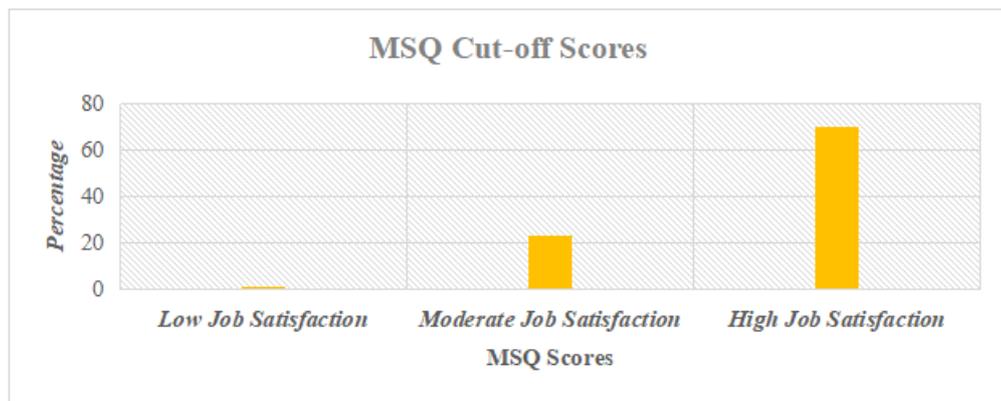


Figure 5: MSQ Cut-Off Scores of Life-Sentenced Prisoners

Figure 5 represents that 76.7% of the Life-sentenced prisoners have High Job satisfaction scores and 23.3% of the Life sentenced prisoners have Moderate Job satisfaction scores and a Nil Percent of the Life sentenced prisoners have Low Job satisfaction.

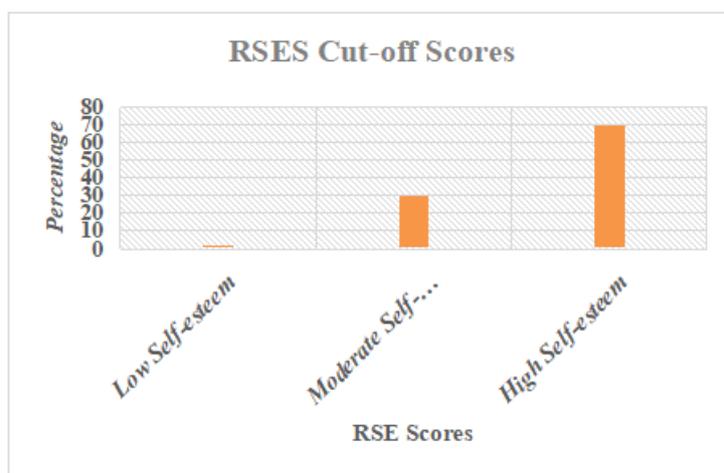


Figure 6: RSES Cut-Off Scores of Life-Sentenced Prisoners

Figure 6 represents that 70% of the Life-sentenced Prisoners have High Self-esteem and 30% of Life-sentenced Prisoners have Moderate Self-esteem and a Nil Percent of the Life sentenced Prisoners have Low self-esteem.

Table 5: Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Self-Esteem for Life Sentenced Prisoners

SCALES	“r” value*	“p” value**
MSQ	.780	.000
RSES		

*“r” value represents Pearson correlation coefficient

**p value represents significance value ($p < 0.05$)

MSQ- Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

RSES- Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

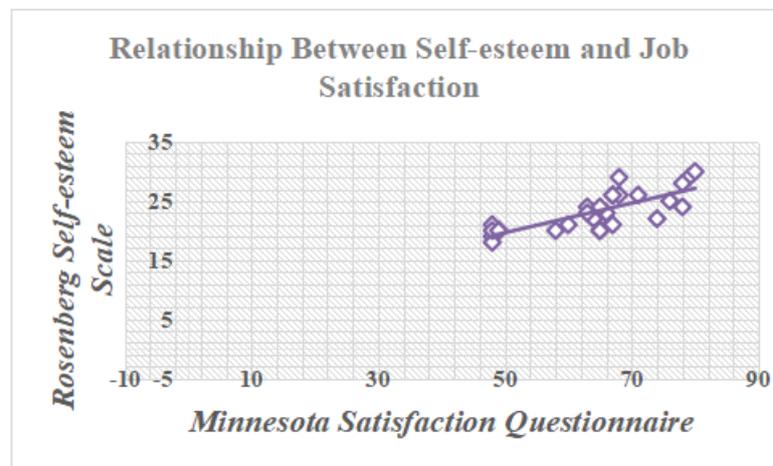


Figure 7: Relationship between Self-Esteem and Job Satisfaction for the Life-Sentenced Prisoners

Figure 7 shows the positive significant high correlation between Job Satisfaction and Self-esteem among Life-sentenced Prisoners who are currently working at Freedom prison bazaar, a vocational setup.

5. DISCUSSION

The study conducted at Freedom Prison Bazaar in Coimbatore, India, aimed to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and self-esteem among life-sentenced prisoners. Using a cross-sectional survey design with a sample size of 30 prisoners, the study found a significant positive correlation ($r=.780$, $p=.000$) between job satisfaction and self-esteem. The prisoners, predominantly male, were employed in various vocational setups within the prison, such as Indian Oil Petroleum, Bakery, Aavin Milk Outlet, Clothing outlet, and ICICI ATM.

The survey utilized the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to assess job satisfaction and the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (RSES) to measure self-esteem levels. Results indicated that the majority of prisoners exhibited moderate to high levels of both job satisfaction (mean score=63.79 out of 80, $SD=10.144$) and self-esteem (mean score=23.07 out of 30, $SD=3.258$). Additionally, a previous study on the effects of imprisonment on self-esteem among female inmates in Kenya ([Kamoyo, R. \(2019\)](#)) and another study on self-esteem, needs satisfaction, and psychological well-being of inmates in ([Ghana Bruce, D., & Larweh, E. \(2018\)](#)) provided contrasting findings, suggesting the impact of vocational and rehabilitative programs on self-esteem among prisoners.

The vocational and rehabilitation setup at Freedom Prison Bazaar was highlighted as a key factor contributing to the prisoners' positive outcomes. This setup provided inmates with meaningful work aligned with their skills and interests, fostering a sense of satisfaction and contributing to their self-esteem. Through specialized training and ongoing support, prisoners gained confidence in their abilities and found pride in their accomplishments, ultimately positively impacting their overall well-being.

The study's findings underscore the importance of vocational and rehabilitative programs in prisons for enhancing job satisfaction and self-esteem among life-sentenced prisoners. By recognizing prisoners' abilities, providing tailored support, and fostering a supportive environment, such programs empower individuals to overcome barriers and cultivate healthy self-esteem, thereby promoting their successful reintegration into society.

Here are a few reasons why one might expect a positive correlation between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced prisoners.

- Sense of purpose.
- Skill development and growth.
- Positive social interactions.
- Opportunities for personal expression.

Therefore, the current study reports that there is good job satisfaction and self-esteem for life-sentenced prisoners who are working in the prison. Occupational therapy has an important role to play in promoting the self-esteem and job satisfaction of life-sentenced prisoners who are participating in vocational training programs. Occupational therapy programs in prisons provide opportunities for inmates to acquire and develop essential life skills. Inmates are provided with the tools and resources to acquire essential life skills, ranging from activities of daily living to vocational competencies. These skills may include activities of daily living (ADLs) such as personal hygiene, self-care, and meal preparation, as well as vocational skills, problem-solving abilities, and social skills ([Wendy, K., & Melissa, V. \(2004\)](#)). Recognizing job satisfaction as a rehabilitative tool is crucial for reducing recidivism rates.

6. CONCLUSION

Recent research at Freedom Prison Bazaar found a strong positive link between self-esteem and job satisfaction among life-sentenced inmates undergoing vocational training, by imparting valuable



skills and training, fostering confidence and self-worth among participants. Higher self-esteem correlated with increased job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of positive self-perception in such settings. In a prison environment, inmates face numerous stressors and challenges. Occupational therapists can play a crucial role for prisoners in prison bazaars, offering a range of rehabilitative services and reintegration of inmates. By addressing their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social needs, occupational therapists help individuals develop the skills necessary to reintegrate into society successfully. This can reduce recidivism rates and promote positive behavior change.

However, the study's small sample size and cross-sectional design limit generalizability and causal inference. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, diverse assessment methods, and explore factors like family support. Implementing recommended strategies can advance rehabilitation efforts for incarcerated individuals, promoting successful reintegration into society.

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