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Analysis of the Racial and Ethnic Representation of Adult Male Inmates in Large Jail Isolation Units in the United States

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Abstract

Black males are overrepresented in US large jails, and this overrepresentation may extend into their isolations units, or DHUs. While overrepresentation in prison populations has been explored and well documented in academic literature. Far less is known about overrepresentation in jail populations where prisoners serve far less time, and in some cases, may not yet be convicted of crimes. The study analyzed the classification of adult male prisoners to DHU within large jails. This central research question of the study primarily focused on exploring the causes and prevalence of overrepresentation in DHUs in jails based on race or ethnicity. The theoretical construct of this study was based on Foucault's (1975) theory of panopticism. The purpose of this quantitative study was first to document whether an overrepresentation problem existed among US large jails. The sample for this study included wardens or directors of 40 large jails across the US. Data were collected by an electronic survey and were analyzed by logistic regression. Findings indicate a statistically significant relationship between race and ethnicity and the potential placement in DHUs, particularly among adult Black male populations. This statistical finding indicates that Foucault's panopticism theory does not address correctional staff training and potential bias.

Keywords: Jails, Corrections, Isolation, Restricted housing, Disciplinary Housing Units, Restricted Housing Units

Introduction

Jail personnel in the United States (US) use an internal classification system to classify inmates for institutional security. This classification system is to classify or categorize inmates by security level. There are five classifications that an inmate can be categorized, which are: minimum security, medium security, maximum security, administrative segregation, disciplinary housing and segregation. Internal jail classification systems within the jail system in America need empirical evaluation. Multiple variables that include staff training opportunities, overcrowding, as well as gender and race of employees appear to be inconsistent from jail to jail. These inconsistencies have an impact on the classification of inmates in jails.

Improper use of disciplinary housing units (DHU) also leads to poor morale among minority groups within the facility, especially if they are being housed there more often than other prisoners. Inmates who perceive discrimination or mistreatment often bond to form solidarity groups to protect themselves from a perceived common enemy (Gomez, 2008). Security threat groups create issues for the institutional security mission and can be problematic for a correctional facility. These groups can create disturbances and riots, as a result, such as the 1971 Attica prison riot (Gomez, 2008; McCorkle, Miethe, & Drass, 1995).

Several issues have been identified that can create disturbances, misconduct, and poor morale among inmates in correctional facilities (Gomez, 2008; McCorkle, Miethe, & Drass, 1995; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2008). If the institutional culture is one where staff do not understand other racial or ethnic cultures it could result in an improper housing assignment trend. This situation can result in an overpopulated DHU of predominately minority groups (Haney, 2008; Skarbek, 2012).

Literature Review

In order for jail managers to supervise inmates under their care, they need to have good facility design, tools, surveillance equipment and technology. In modern correctional facilities, inmates are tracked and watched everywhere they go by correctional employees to maximize surveillance, the same way Foucault relates with his panopticism theory (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault's panopticism theory (1977) illustrates the overall correctional facility design and explains the posts of the guards to maximize surveillance, efficiency, and control over the prisoners. The observation tower is a post where a guard is stationed to observe prisoners in their cells. However, since prisoners cannot see the guard, prisoners feel like they are always being watched. Since the prisoners always feel like they are always being watched, even when they are not, they themselves become their own guard (Foucault, 1977).

The panopticism theory has two substantial limitations. One component in Foucault's theory explains the guard's duties. Foucault fails to recognize the training needs of these individuals. Why would this be important? Each guard is predisposed to certain cultural biases as we all, as we are social beings. What a guard may consider as misconduct on the part of a prisoner may be due to miscommunication, their own gender or racial bias, or lack of training (Foucault, 1977).

The second substantial limitation is that Foucault fails to recognize in his panopticism theory is that it does not address rehabilitation of inmates nor does he address proper classification of inmates with mental health issues or inmates who develop mental illness for special housing so they can receive treatment and rehabilitation (Foucault, 1977).

Foucault (1977) uses Bentham's (1787) Panopticon design to develop his panopticism theory. Foucault (1977) refers to this architecture design that can transform offenders; the architecture is constructed in such a way where the offender feels that he is always being watched or has the sense that if he or she does something wrong they will be caught. Foucault (1977) states that this technique of architectural design is can create better observation and create docile people through hierarchal surveillance. The older style of architectural types where there was no direct observation the offender would be out of view of the guard and would engage in mischievous acts such as homosexual behavior, fighting with a cellmate, attempting to escape, fashioning a weapon, or destroying the fixtures in the cell and etc. The older style of architectural design did not make the offender feel as if he was always being watched or supervised. The Panopticon architectural design allowed for constant supervision, which made the docile inmates.

According to Foucault (1977), Bentham's design is designed to secure the inmates in individual cells, in isolation, out of view from all other inmates; the only view the inmate has is the observation tower where the guard stands watch. All of the cells surround the watch tower, which is in the middle of the large circle of cells, and the watch tower has a view into each and every cell within the Panopticon. Although there may be a minimal amount of guards standing watch, the offender always feels that he is being watched. Foucault's Panopticism theory asserts the sense of constant surveillance and controls inmate conduct, according to Foucault this will transform the inmate and make him conform to the rules. Foucault feels that Bentham's Panopticon design is the ultimate architectural type for modern prisons; many prisons in America were designed in this style. Foucault (1977) states that having a central tower to observe an inmate creates the ultimate set up for observation and supervision. As a result of this correctional facility architectural design, Bentham (1787) was able to come up with the Panopticon design, which became the symbol of Foucault's (1977) Panopticism theory.

“New Penology” The Use of Isolation within Incarceration

There are many instances where an inmate or prisoner may have to be placed in isolation or segregation, most of the time the placement is for violating institutional rules. (Smith, 2008) It was reported by mental health professionals that many inmates that were housed under the Pennsylvania model suffered or developed serious mental health symptoms and problems.

Under the Auburn model, inmates did not suffer the same mental health symptoms and problems, which later concluded that the confinement in complete solitude either exacerbated or developed mental health problems in the inmates. A correctional officer may not be able to determine what inmates are acting out or what inmate has a mental health condition. Throughout history, many correctional professionals were not sensitive to inmate's mental health issues.

According to Smith (2008), the psychiatrists discounted isolation as a catalyst to mental illness. Instead, the psychiatrists claimed that the mental illness was caused by biological determinism. If the psychiatrists would have acknowledged isolation as a critical reason for the psychological problems then perhaps many cases could have been diverted.

The nature and purpose of prisons is to separate dangerous people from others who are not dangerous. According to Cohen (2008) penal institutions also segregate people who are found to be a risk to the safety and security of the institution. Many times, prisoners deemed a risk are classified as such after they have committed an institutional infraction or have committed multiple or repeated institutional infractions. The segregation may involve the prisoner being secured in a cell for twenty-three hours a day, exercised for one hour a day outside of his cell, have limitations placed on visits, limitations on interaction with other inmates, limited interaction with security staff, limited reading materials, and restricted access to programs. The author refers to this type of segregation as "penal isolation" (p.1017).

Haney (2008) explains the concept of a "new penology" and its purpose was to efficiently manage operational costs and control dangerous inmate populations. In order to accomplish this, correctional administrators would have to classify those deemed as being dangerous or worse than other prisoners, and then segregate them. After segregating these dangerous prisoners, corrections administrators would attempt to change their behavior by punishing them more, through isolation and restricted access to everyday privileges. The punishment would be elevated, if there was any further misbehavior on the part of the prisoner (p.962). Tjaden & Martinez (2007) highlight the concept of preventing recidivism as an expectation of an offender program, system, or service plan.

Mental Health Crisis: The Unintended Consequences of Isolation of Prisoners

Once an offender is incarcerated, he or she will be evaluated to determine the classification and security level. Many times this process has not involved an in depth psychological and physiological evaluation or history, so when the inmate starts to exhibit signs of mental illness he or she is deemed non-compliant or a disciplinary problem. The literature states that many suicides occur while inmates are in isolation. This is a reaction or response to the inmates intense feeling of desperation and depression (Bonner, 2005).

More than 200,000 to 300,000 men and women inmates suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression (Fellner, 2006). There is a growing number of mentally ill in the U.S jail system as a result of diminishing and inadequate community mental health services.

Isolation and segregation can have different effects on inmates, if they are kept in isolation long enough there appears to be a common outcome. (Smith, 2008) As one inmate states, "the feeling of being instantly overpowered by a depressing and poignant solitude." This sort of confinement was reported to send an inmate into insanity (Bonner, 2005, p.1050).

According to Smith (2008) many doctors that worked in the Vridsloselille prison, especially during the time when the Pennsylvania system was being enforced, reported symptoms of lethargy, apathy, headaches, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, and mental illnesses.

Inmates that have been diagnosed, misdiagnosed or undiagnosed with mental health problems are often assigned to disciplinary housing, special housing units, or segregation units to be kept in isolation. The inmates assigned to these units are kept in isolation for institutional rule violations and kept in these units for an inordinate amount of time (Kupers, 2008).

According to King (2006) one in six US prisoners are mentally ill, many suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression. The conditions of confinement associated with isolation can exacerbate mental illness, especially those who are housed in solitary confinement or Supermax facilities for extended periods of time.

Background

The problem of misclassification, improper housing assignment, and the lack of employee training negatively impact certain demographic groups, their respective communities and taxpayers (Pew, 2010). Many of these prisoners have serious mental health issues that were exacerbated by being placed into a DHU or isolated confinement (Kupers, 2008).

Notably, Blacks make up 13% of the population in the US, yet comprise 46% of the incarcerated population in the US prisons, with 63% being minority, Black or Hispanic (Pew, 2010). Pew (2010) also reported that 1,612,071 are incarcerated in state and federal correctional facilities. Pew (2008) reported that jails then incarcerated 723,131 prisoners; the total number of prisoners incarcerated in correctional facilities had reached 2,219,258 prisoners. According to the United States Census Bureau, the total population in the US in 2010 was 308.7 million people. Pew (2010) reported that the ratio of incarcerated people in the US is 1 in every 100 adults.

A questionnaire was designed to collect information for this study. The list of large jails was obtained from the National Institute of Corrections and all 165 large jails were sent a letter of informed consent and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of 21 questions. Some of these questions were contingency questions, offering the respondent the opportunity to provide further explanation.

Data Analysis/Results

Data were evaluated and analyzed by multivariate statistical analysis, using logistic regression analysis with the use of beta weights, binary logistical regression, linear regression analysis, measures of central tendency, frequency distributions, probability and variability, as they applied.

There were six research questions formulated upon the assumptions, the data collected, and the sample size. Data was transferred into PASW 18.0, for statistical analysis. Data was screened for accuracy, missing data, consistency of response-set, outliers and extreme cases. Frequency distributions were conducted to determine that responses were within possible range of values and that the data was not distorted by inaccuracies, outliers, non-random patterns, or missing data.

Forty participants responded to the survey, but not all participants provided responses to all the items resulting in fewer than forty responses in some cases. Percentages reflect the percentage of those who responded to the item.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the demographics of adult male inmates and housing in U.S. large jails?

Research Question 2: Is there was a relationship between the overall percentage of female officers in the U.S. large jails and the race of the male offenders currently assigned in the DHU?

Research Question 3: What is the number of White males in DHU to the number of Black males in DHU compared to the number of all other minority males in DHU?

Research Question 4: What is the overall percentages of minority staff as compared to the number of minority male inmates assigned to the DHU?

Research Question 5: How do training factors, types of training, and hours of training influence the number of minority male offenders assigned into to the DHU?

Research Question 6: How does overcrowding effects minority inmates being classified to DHU?

Facility Characteristics

The majority ($N=34$, 85%) of facilities were classified as minimum, medium and maximum security (combined). A large number of facilities ($N=26$, 66.7%) reported an average daily population between 1,000 and 2,000 inmates. More than half reported they were *not* overcrowded ($N=22$, 57.9%). 60% *did not* use their DHU for reasons other than for discipline ($N=24$, 60%). For those that reported DHU was used for reasons other than discipline, some facilities reported DHU had multiple uses, some reported DHU was used for protective custody, some reported DHU was used as a special management unit, and some used DHU for administrative segregation. The majority of large jail facilities ($N=33$, 82.5%) had a PCU and reported the PCU was *not* used for reasons other than the safe-keeping and protection of inmates ($N=31$, 81.6%). Large jail facilities that that used PCU for other reasons, three cited multiple reasons, two cited special management unit, and two cited disciplinary reasons.

Facility and Staff Characteristics

One facility reported having no female inmates, and two facilities did not provide data regarding females. Excluding those facilities, the number of number of female inmates ranged from 44 to 1,323 ($M = 258.03$, $SD = 243.74$). Female staff and officers accounted for 10% to 55% of facility employees, with a mean percentage of 30% for the entire sample.

The total number of male inmates at the facilities sampled ranged from 90 to 5,347 ($M = 1,527.39$, $SD = 1,145.86$). The largest percentage of these inmates was Black males (40.80%), followed by White males (37.44%). Hispanic males (16.68%) represented the next largest percentage, and the other minority groups followed with much smaller percentages.

Staff diversity was reported by percentage for each race, with the largest percentage of staff being White 56.5% ($SD = 28.48$) and ranging from 2% to 98% among the facilities. This was followed by Black staff, who accounted for 32.4% ($SD = 26.68$), ranging from 1% to 97% among the facilities, and Hispanic staff, who accounted for 9.1% ($SD = 12.91$), ranging from 0% to 65% among the facilities. American Indian, Asian and other males were represented in limited percentages overall. Participants were asked to rate the diversity of their staff using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 indicated not diverse at all and 10 indicated very diverse (survey item 21). The range of scores was between 1 and 10 ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 2.56$) suggesting that on average participants described their facilities as moderately diverse. Descriptive statistics on the facility characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 — Descriptive Statistics on Facility and Staff Characteristics

Facility characteristic	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Current number female inmates	38	44	1,323	258.03	243.74
Percentage of female staff/officers	38	10	55	30.08	12.96
Current number of male inmates	39	90	5,347	1,527.39	1,145.86
Number of male inmates by race					
White males	39	20	1,656	529.97	411.44
Black males	39	7	2,494	663.87	583.01
Hispanic males	39	0	1,794	245.38	378.50
American Indian males	39	0	56	6.64	14.92
Asian males	39	0	45	8.36	11.72
Other	39	0	2,003	73.15	319.55
Percentage of male inmates by race					
Percentage White males	39	3	87	37.44	19.46
Percentage Black males	39	7	89	40.80	20.57
Percentage Hispanic males	39	0	58	16.68	14.70
Percentage American Indian males	39	0	54	1.75	8.64
Percentage Asian males	39	0	3	0.60	0.74
Percentage other males	39	0	37	2.73	6.43
Diversity percentages of staff					
White staff	33	2	98	56.55	28.48
Black staff	32	1	97	32.38	26.68
Hispanic staff	32	0	65	9.06	12.91
American Indian staff	26	0	6	0.92	1.29
Asian staff	25	0	51	2.52	10.26
Other staff	27	0	5	0.59	1.34
Describe diversity of staff scale 1 to 10	39	1	10	6.46	2.56

The majority of facilities (N=30, 78.9%) reported they practiced cross-gender supervision. There was a range of staffing levels described, with the largest percentage of the sample (N=13, 32.5%) reporting between 201-300 correctional officers. Percentage of minority staff also varied, with 10 (25%) facilities reporting that more than 60% of their staff was considered racial/ethnic minorities.

Facility DHU Characteristics

Facilities reported between 90 and 5347 male inmates, with a mean number of 1527.39 ($SD = 1145.86$) males. The group with the largest mean number of DHU inmates was Black males ($M = 21.00$, $SD = 21.85$). This was followed closely by White males ($M = 11.71$, $SD = 9.68$) and Hispanic males accounted for the third largest group of inmates ($M = 7.89$, $SD = 11.01$).

One facility reported that 59 (58%) of the 102 males in their facility were Hispanic, which accounted for more than half of the population. American Indian, Asian, and other males were represented in limited percentages overall, although one facility reported that 54 (54%) of 100 total male inmates were American Indian and one facility reported that 2003 (37%) of 5347 male inmates were categorized as other. Descriptive statistics on the facility DHU characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 — Descriptive Statistics on Facility DHU Characteristics

Facility DHU characteristic	<i>N</i>	Minimum#	Maximum#	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Disciplinary Housing Unit Capacity	35	16	1561	138.29	294.18
Current inmates in DHU	39	6	117	39.38	27.16
Number of males in DHU by race					
White males	38	0	35	11.71	9.68
Black males	38	0	83	21.00	21.85
Hispanic males	35	0	41	7.89	11.01
American Indian males	30	0	10	0.37	1.83
Asian males	29	0	4	0.31	0.85
Other males	30	0	4	0.40	0.89

Percentage of Males in DHU by Race

The number of males in DHU was divided by the number of males in each race category to provide the percentage of each race assigned to DHU. The largest percentage of DHU inmates was found among Black males where 8% of the Black male population was assigned to DHU. This was followed by Hispanic males (7% of the population) and White males (6.1% of the population). The other race group (groups that were not identified or labeled 3.5%), American Indian males (3.1%) and Asian males (1%) were represented in smaller percentages. Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 — Descriptive Statistics on Percentage of DHU Males in Each Race Group

Race	Max. %	<i>M</i> %	<i>SD</i> %
White males	75.0	6.1	13.4
Black males	86.0	8.0	15.4
Hispanic males	67.0	7.0	15.1
American Indian	25.0	3.1	8.0
Asian males	13.0	1.0	2.9
Other males	33.0	3.5	9.0

Staff Training

The majority of facilities (N=30, 75%) provided more than 40 hours of annual training to correctional officers. Interpersonal communications training (N=37, 92.5%) was offered or required by most facilities; twelve respondents citing this was offered annually, eight reported it was offered during basic training and three noted it was offered, but not required.

Cultural diversity training (N=35, 87.5%) was offered or required by most facilities; ten respondents cited it was offered annually, seven reported it was offered during basic training, and two reported it was offered but not required. Thirty (75%) facilities either offered or required attendance in conflict resolution training; nine reported conflict resolution training was offered, but not required, seven reported it was offered annually, and three reported it was offered during basic training. Frequencies and percentages on the staff training variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 — Frequencies and Percentages on Staff Training Variables

Staff training variable	N	%
Hours of training officers and staff receive each year		
10-19	2	5.0
20-29	6	15.0
30-39	2	5.0
40+	30	75.0
Interpersonal communications training		
Yes	37	92.5
No	3	7.5
Cultural diversity training		
Yes	35	87.5
No	5	12.5
Conflict resolution training		
Yes	30	75.0
No	10	25.0

The results of the correlations were not significant for any of the races, suggesting that there was not a statistical relationship between the overall percentages of female officers in U.S. large jails and the race of male offenders currently assigned to DHU. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

In preliminary analysis, the assumptions of repeated-measures ANOVA were assessed. The observations were independent. Three one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were conducted to assess the normality of the data corresponding to the DHU race groups. The assumption of normality was met for White males and for Black males, but the data for all other minority males was not normally distributed. However, according to Stevens (2009), the repeated measures ANOVA is robust against violations of normality with sufficient sample size. In this case there were 29 cases compared. The Mauchly's Test of Sphericity was significant, and sphericity could not be assumed and the Greenhouse-Geisser statistic was used.

The results indicated there were statistical differences among the three race groups, $F(1.27, 35.39) = 9.82, p = .002, \eta^2 = .26$. There was a medium effect size of .26. The results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 — Repeated Measures ANOVA for the Number of Males in DHU by Race

Source	Df	SS	MS	F	P	η^2
DHU males	1.26	4492.23	3554.50	9.82	.002	.260

A post hoc analysis consisting of six pairwise comparisons was conducted. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the number of White males in DHU and the number of Black males in DHU ($p = .049$). On average, there were a larger number of Black males ($M = 25.41, SD = 23.10$) as compared to White males ($M = 13.49, SD = 10.33$) in DHU.

There was a significant difference between the number of other minority males in DHU and the number of Black males in DHU ($p = .034$); on average, there were a larger number of Black males ($M = 25.41, SD = 23.10$) as compared to other minority males ($M = 8.24, SD = 12.14$) in DHU. There was a significant difference between the number of White males in DHU and the number of minority males in DHU ($p = .003$); on average, there were a larger number of White males ($M = 13.49, SD = 10.33$) as compared to all other minority males ($M = 13.49, SD = 10.33$) in DHU.

The dependent variables were the number of male offenders currently assigned to DHU in each of the racial groups. To meet the assumptions of regression, the outcome variable was collapsed from six groups to two (Whites and all minorities). Table 6 represents the descriptive statistics on these outcome variables.

Table 6 — Number of Males in DHU (White and All Minorities)

Number of males in DHU	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
White	38	0	35	11.71	9.68
All minorities	38	0	116	29.11	25.72

The linear regression model with overall percentage of minority staff predicting the number of White males assigned to DHU was not significant, $F(1, 36) = 0.91, p = .346$. The percentage of minority staff (< 30% vs. > 30%) did not successfully predict the number of White males assigned to DHU. The linear regression model with overall percentage of minority staff predicting the number of all minority males assigned to DHU was statistically significant, $F(1, 36) = 5.68, p = .023$. The percentage of minority staff (< 30% vs. > 30%) successfully predicted 13.6% (R^2) of the variance in the number of minorities assigned to DHU. The positive relationship shows that when the percentage of minority staff was 30% or larger, the number of minorities assigned to DHU increased by 0.37 units. The null hypothesis is rejected, the overall percentage of minority staff (<30% vs. >30) influences the number of minority male offenders currently assigned to DHU. Results of the two linear regressions are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 — Linear Regressions with Overall Percentage of Minority Staff Predicting Races Assigned to DHU

Dependent variable	B	SE	B	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
White males in DHU	-3.01	3.15	-0.16	-0.95	.346
Minority males in DHU	18.77	7.88	0.37	2.38	.023

The results for the training factors predicting the number of White male offenders assigned to DHU was not significant, $F(4, 33) = 0.45, p = .771$. Required staff attendance in interpersonal communication, diversity and conflict resolution training, and annual number of hours of training did not influence the number of White male offenders assigned to DHU. The results for the training factors predicting the number of all minority male offenders assigned to DHU was not significant, $F(4, 33) = 0.80, p = .533$. Required staff attendance in interpersonal communication, diversity and conflict resolution training, and annual number of hours of training did not influence the number of minority male offenders assigned to DHU. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Training factors do not influence the number of male offenders currently assigned to DHU. Table 8 below presents the results for both the two multiple linear regressions.

Table 8 — Multiple Linear Regressions with Training Factors Predicting the Number of Male Offenders in DHU

Source	B	SE	B	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
White males in DHU					
Interpersonal communications training	-5.66	6.59	-0.16	-0.86	.396
Cultural diversity training	4.23	5.60	0.15	0.76	.455
Conflict resolution training	-2.28	4.40	-0.10	-0.52	.607
Hours of training per year	1.37	3.93	0.06	0.35	.730
Minority males in DHU					
Interpersonal communications training	-18.34	17.16	-0.19	-1.07	.293
Cultural diversity training	4.32	14.58	0.06	0.30	.769
Conflict resolution training	-7.86	11.45	-0.13	-0.69	.497
Hours of training per year	6.52	10.23	0.11	0.64	.528

The majority (N=34, 85%) of facilities were classified as minimum, medium and maximum security (combined). A large number of facilities (N=26, 66.7%) reported an average daily population between 1,000 and 2,000 inmates. More than half reported they were *not* overcrowded (N=22, 57.9%). The difference reporting overcrowded condition is substantial (N=18, 42.1%). Although 60% *did not* use their DHU for reasons other than for discipline (N=24, 60%). The difference (N=16, 40%) is substantial and opens the door to speculate misclassification of inmates to isolation.

Summary of Results

Six research questions were tested for the predictive reliability; each variable was considered, tested and analyzed. There were some interesting findings in some of the research questions explored.

Research Question 1 explored the demographics of adult male inmates and housing in U.S large jails. It was discovered that the majority of the facilities were classified as minimum, medium, and maximum security with an average daily population of 1,000 and 2,000 inmates.

More than half of the facilities reported that they were not overcrowded and did not use their DHU for other reasons other than discipline; more than half also reported that they did not use their PCU for any other reasons than protective custody and safekeeping.

Research Question 2 explored if there was a relationship between the overall percentage of female officers in the U.S. large jails and the race of the male offenders currently assigned in the DHU.

It was found that female officers and staff were reported to be 30% of the make-up of staff in the U.S large jail system, some facilities reported to have as much as 55% female staff and officers. The results of the correlation were not significant for any race of male inmates currently assigned in DHU, suggesting that there was not a statistical relationship between the overall percentages of female staff and officers in U.S large jails.

Research Question 3 explored the number of White males in DHU to the number of Black males in DHU and to the number of all other minority males in DHU.

It was discovered that Black males were represented far more compared to White males in DHU, and that Black males make up most of the minority males when included in that population in the DHU.

Research Question 4 explored the how the overall percentages of minority staff influenced the number of each racial group of male inmates being assigned to the DHU.

It was found that a positive relationship of minority inmates being assigned to DHU, where a minority staff percentage being higher than 30%, that with minority staff percentage higher than 30%, minority groups have a higher probability of being assigned into the DHU.

Research Question 5 explored how training factors, types of training, and hours of training influence the number of each racial group of male offenders being assigned into to the DHU.

According to the data in this study, the training factors, types of training, and hours of training do not influence the number of male inmates assigned to the DHU.

Research Question 6 explored how overcrowding effects Black and minority inmates being classified to DHU.

According to the data from this study overcrowding is an issue for a large percentage of the facilities that were sampled. Close to half reported that their facility was overcrowded. The literature is well-supported in that overcrowding causes misclassification of prisoners. The data reported in this study leaves open speculation for the possibility of misclassifying inmates sent to isolation.

Conclusion

This study elaborates on the male racial demographics of inmates incarcerated today in America. The data findings from the questionnaire was intended to produce knowledge and to fill the gap in existing literature.

Solitary confinement was the premise of incarceration in the late eighteenth century. The Quakers developed a prison system where inmates would remain in solitary confinement to reflect upon the crimes or sins.

The Quakers believed that this form of punishment was the most humane, their influences initially were on prison reform; solitary confinement was a way to systematically and effectively apply treatment equally to all inmates that are incarcerated in the system, keeping in mind that the solitary confinement also included meaningful work details and rigorous religious components (Schmid, 2003). This Quaker system of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries became known as the “Pennsylvania system.” The Philadelphia Quakers were very active in prison reform and are responsible for incorporating this style of prisoner reform, which is still in use today. (Schmid, 2003, p. 547)

Mental health professionals reported in past research that many inmates housed under the Pennsylvania model suffered or developed serious mental health symptoms and problems. Under the Auburn model inmates did not suffer the same mental health symptoms, and concluded that the confinement in complete solitude either exacerbated or developed mental health problems in the inmates (Smith, 2008).

There are arguments against the use of isolation in the American prison system. Haney (2008) claims his position was validated by a Federal Court that scrutinized the practices and policies of a Texas Supermax prison. It was described as having a “misconception of the reality of psychological pain” and ‘having blind faith in the department’s policies and ‘knowingly turning the back on this most needy population.’ Haney cites this language as being from the 1999 case of Ruiz v. Johnson (p. 960).

Pew (2008) states that although Blacks make up 13% of the population in the US, they make up 46% of the incarcerated population in the United States Prisons, with a 63% being a minority of either Black or Hispanic; the racial demographics incarcerated reflect a major over representation and disparity of minority groups. 1 in 106 behind bars are White men that are 18 years or older, whereas 1 in 15 are Black men; Hispanic men are 1 in 36 (Leder, 2004; PEW, 2008).

Although a diverse staff is important, it may have more of a value in other areas other than preventing or diverting minority inmates from disciplinary housing. A diverse work force is very important as it gives the appearance of a multicultural environment and not a homogeneous White male dominated governing and incarcerating staff of officers; as the literature states, “by any means necessary” (Riveland, 1999, p. 16).

The results for the training factors predicting the number of White male offenders assigned to DHU was not significant, $F(4, 33) = 0.45, p = .771$. Required staff attendance in interpersonal communication, diversity and conflict resolution training, and annual number of hours of training did not influence the number of White male offenders assigned to DHU. The results for the training factors predicting the number of all minority male offenders assigned to DHU was not significant, $F(4, 33) = 0.80, p = .533$.

Required staff attendance in interpersonal communication, diversity and conflict resolution training, and annual number of hours of training did not influence the number of minority male offenders assigned to DHU. This is puzzling, as it seems contrary to the assumptions that training is the key to good communication, de-escalation of conflict and conflict resolution. This begs the question whether leaders be more focused on training that speaks to the rehabilitation of inmates.

Overcrowding is a serious problem, as many times when a facility is overcrowded the facility’s classification process will start to deteriorate and break down, meaning that inmates may not be classified or housed properly. As an example, an inmate who may have a violent history or is committed for a violent crime the facility may want to classify this inmate as a maximum security. If there is no bed space in maximum security as a result of overcrowding the inmate may be placed in disciplinary housing where more serious and offenders that are institutional disciplinary problems are housed. This situation may result with an incident involving the improperly classified offender; the incident may result in the improperly classified inmate acting out.

More than half of corrections facilities surveyed did not use their DHU for reasons other than for discipline (60%). For those that reported DHU was used for reasons other than discipline, some facilities reported DHU had multiple uses, some reported DHU was used for protective custody, some reported DHU was used as a special management unit, and some used DHU for administrative segregation. A small number of respondents reported that they use their DHU for protective custody reasons, this is not a best management practice in the corrections field.

The majority of large jail facilities (82.5%) had a PCU and reported the PCU was not used for reasons other than the safekeeping and protection of inmates (81.6%). For that that used PCU for other reasons, three cited multiple reasons, two cited special management unit, and two cited disciplinary reasons. This can be problematic, since a facility should never assign inmates in the PCU as a result of violent, predatory behaviors, and disciplinary reasons. Assigning a predatory and violent inmate in a PCU could potentially place a protective custody inmate(s) at risk and is a counter to the safe keeping mission and purpose of a PCU; This type of practice would be like the 'wolf in the hen house' cliché. Although there may not be any physical assault against the PCU offender by the improperly assigned DHU offender, the DHU offender's verbal assault, torment, and harassment of the PCU offender(s) will cause mental distress and result in mental health crisis (Koerber & Luttrell, 2009). The outcome of this practice is not rehabilitative and is counter to best management corrections practices and re-entry initiatives in the US.

The research findings found that most of the large jails in the U.S do not utilize their DHUs (60%) and PCUs (82.5%) for any other reasons for their intended purposes. To avoid misuse of the DHU and PCU, consideration should be given to developing a standard for industry-wide use.

The null hypothesis cannot be totally rejected, the influence overcrowding has on classification is supported in the literature. However, the data only speculates that male offenders may be misclassified to DHU.

Training officers and staff in the areas of mental health, disorder, and disease may help officers and staff make proper decisions when assigning inmates that are behavioral problems within the institution to disciplinary housing and assigning inmate that are in mental health crisis to the acute mental health unit for treatment. Officers with this training will also be able to identify inmates that are in the DHU that are having symptoms of mental illness and crisis and have them referred to the acute mental health unit.

In this study, there was no correlation that indicated staff and officer training in conflict resolution, cultural diversity, and interpersonal communication would be a predictor of inmates being diverted from disciplinary housing.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. Examine the possible over-representation of minority and Black male inmates in isolation or disciplinary housing in all correctional facilities in the U.S. Although there was an over-representation found in this study, a much larger sample may be more appropriate to indicate a systemic issue that may need attention.
2. Determine whether certain types of training, such as diversity training, inter-personal communication training, conflict resolution, and de-escalation approaches would prevent inmates from being assigned to the DHU. Could mental health awareness and crisis intervention training, make a difference in the use of DHU?
3. Assess the hiring standards for large jails, state, and local correctional facilities. At this point, the hiring prerequisite is a high school diploma or GED. The complexity of offenders with dual diagnosis (mental illness and addiction) requires correctional officers to be better trained in these areas. It is believed that a correctional officer with an associate's degree in criminal justice, psychology, sociology, social work, or related area in the social sciences will have a better understanding of mental health, addiction, and race relations.

It may be prudent to increase the education requirements. Since most wardens start out at the entry level and work their way up through the ranks, it is rare that anyone is promoted without further education. Raising the entry-level standards could improve the quality of the officers and staff within the system and will result in a more humane, diverse, and more professional working environment. Regrettably, the study did not capture this information from the respondents. The question missing in this study is "what are your education prerequisites for hiring?"

It would also be of value to require education prerequisites for promotion, an ascent system where the officer who is interested or is competing for a vacant position at the rank of sergeant should be required to have a bachelor's degree in the areas already mentioned. It is believed that administrator positions should have a prerequisite of a graduate degree for appointment. This standard would improve the quality of correctional employee and also creates an incentive for professional development of employees in the field.

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