INMATE EXPERIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

JOHN D. WOOLDREDGE

University of Cincinnati

This study examined how inmate psychological well-being is influenced by participation in institutional programs, frequency of visitation with outsiders, and experiences with victimization during incarceration. Participants were 581 adult inmates from three Ohio correctional facilities. Support was found for the hypotheses that healthier attitudes correspond with greater program participation, more frequent visitation, and no experience with victimization. The policy implications of these findings are presented.

The ability to mentally cope with confinement in prison has implications for the success of institutional treatment programs as well as for reducing the violence and illness among inmates that result from anxiety and depression (Wright & Goodstein, 1989). These concerns have led psychologists to explore the psychosocial characteristics of prison climates that affect psychological adjustment to prison settings (e.g., MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1986; Porporino & Zamble, 1984; Toch, 1977, 1984; Wright, 1985, 1993).

Researchers have found that social interaction is more difficult for inmates when they feel less safe during incarceration (e.g., Toch, 1977; Wright, 1993). In addition, inmates are more likely to become angry and disagreeable with others when they have limited assistance for self-improvement or they experience lower levels of activity and

AUTHOR’S NOTE: I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction in obtaining permission to conduct the study, of the wardens and staff of the three anonymous facilities in helping with data collection, and of the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on a draft of this article. Address all correspondence to John D. Wooldredge, Division of Criminal Justice, University of Cincinnati, P.O. Box 210389, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0389.

© 1999 American Association for Correctional Psychology

235
social stimulation. However, additional research is needed to test these observations more fully. This article examines the influences of victimization experiences during incarceration, frequency of visitation with outsiders, and levels of program participation (education, vocational training, counseling, work, and legitimate recreational activities) on the psychological well-being of male inmates (i.e., their degree of difficulty in relating to others in conjunction with their levels of depression, anger, stress, and neglect).

INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

Murray (1938) hypothesized that all persons have particular needs that interact with social environments to influence their behavior. Certain attributes of a social environment may influence a person’s ability to satisfy his/her particular needs. Needs constitute internal determinants of behavior, whereas the social environment constitutes an external press that may either help or hinder need satisfaction. Pertinent to this study, Lazarus and his colleagues (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus, Averill, & Opton, 1970; Lazarus & Launier, 1978) found that stress may occur when an individual is unable to satisfy his/her specific needs within particular social contexts (i.e., when the interaction between needs and environment prevents an individual from adapting to the environment). Others have applied these ideas to an understanding of the environmental influences on an inmate’s psychological adaptation to incarceration (e.g., MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1986; Porporino & Zamble, 1984; Toch, 1977, 1984; Wright, 1985, 1993).

Particular aspects of prison environments may help to lessen some of the negative psychological effects of confinement (e.g., depression, anxiety, alienation), but their effectiveness may depend on the unique needs of inmates (Toch, 1977). Identifying those needs, therefore, is a necessary step toward the development of strategies to facilitate adjustment to incarceration. In a study of inmate perceptions of life in prison, Toch (1977) sought to identify the concerns (needs) of inmates that are most commonly perceived. He argued that prison environments can be created to meet inmates’ needs and facilitate adaptation to confinement.
Toch (1977) identified eight central environmental concerns of prison inmates: privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, activity, and freedom. Wright (1985) used Toch’s typology to conceptualize and measure prison climate, as reflected in Wright’s Prison Environment Inventory (PEI). Six of Toch’s eight dimensions were clearly identified in Wright’s factor analysis of the items contained in the PEI, although emotional feedback and activity each did not appear to load on just one factor (dimension).

Wright (1993) used his PEI to examine the effects of climate on inmate adjustment in 10 New York state prisons for adult males. Wright measured inmate perceptions of their adjustment on three dimensions: external problems (difficulties with actually interacting with others), internal problems (internal feelings of hostility toward others), and physical problems (illness, injury, fear, and being taken advantage of). Although none of his models explained more than 5% of the variation in adjustment, he found many statistically significant relationships between his measures of climate and adjustment. Pertinent to this study, he found that external and internal problems were more likely in environments with fewer opportunities for self-improvement (Toch’s “support”) and among inmates who received less emotional sustenance. Internal problems were also more likely among inmates who (a) felt less safe (although the overall safety of a facility was not found to be related to adjustment), (b) perceived less privacy, and (c) had fewer opportunities for social interaction.

Although researchers have studied several possible influences on an inmate’s psychological well-being, some policy-relevant variables have yet to be examined empirically. Some of these variables include program participation (i.e., the degree to which inmates participate in education, vocational training, counseling, work, and legitimate recreational activities), the frequency of visitation with outsiders, and an inmate’s experiences with victimization during incarceration. Perceptions of activity, support, and social stimulation may be related directly to actual levels of program participation and the frequency of visitation, and perceptions of safety may be related to actual victimization experiences. Researchers have yet to examine these particular variables directly. If they are related to the psychological well-being of inmates, then efforts to reduce institutional crime and encourage
greater participation in available programs could help to lessen some of the negative psychological effects of imprisonment and promote what Johnson and Price (1981) called a “human service orientation” toward prison inmates.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Psychological well-being is conceptualized here as reflecting inmate perceptions of insecurity, stress, depression, anger, low self-esteem, and loneliness felt during incarceration. This conceptualization overlaps with some of the ideas of Toch (1977, 1984) and Wright (1983, 1995) (discussed previously) in addition to those of Goodstein, MacKenzie, and Shotland (1984), and MacKenzie, Goodstein, and Blouin (1987) that are related to inmate adjustment. Goodstein and Wright (1989) provide a thorough summary of this conceptualization and the research related to it.

PREVENTING SPURIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

Obtaining valid estimates of the relationships between the institutional variables of interest and the psychological well-being of inmates requires controlling for variation in the background characteristics of inmates that may correlate with these variables (to prevent spurious relationships). Several researchers have suggested that the demographic and background characteristics of inmates (e.g., age, race, marital status) may also influence psychological adjustment (Carroll, 1974; Irwin, 1970; Irwin & Cresssey, 1962; Jacobs, 1974, 1976, 1977). Inmates with atypical characteristics (relative to the mainstream prison population) may be more peripheral to various inmate groups, so their adjustment may be more difficult. Extensive research by Thomas and his colleagues (Thomas, 1970, 1977; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas, Peterson, & Zingraff, 1978) has led to the most popular conclusion that both the environmental deprivations of prisons and the importation of preinstitutional characteristics are important for influencing inmate adjustment. Another observation stemming from this research is that background (imported) characteristics may influence institutional (deprivational) experiences, in turn
affecting psychological adjustment (see Wright & Goodstein, 1989, for a review of related research).

The most common demographic and background variables that have been examined in recent studies of inmate adjustment include age, race, marital status, education, prior commitments/time spent during prior prison terms, and offense for which they were incarcerated (for examinations of one or more of these variables, see Edwards & Kemp, 1995; Hancock & Sharp, 1993; Peat & Winfree, 1992; Proctor, 1994; and Van Voorhis, 1993). Psychological adjustment may be more difficult for inmates who are older, White, married, who have higher levels of education, have fewer prior institutional commitments, and/or who have committed sex crimes. These inmates are less similar to the mainstream population and may therefore possess greater social distance between themselves and other inmates. Furthermore, some of these characteristics may actually inhibit an inmate from becoming integrated into an inmate social system. In turn, these types of individuals may be more likely to experience external problems (difficulty in relating to others) as well as internal problems (depression, anger, stress, and/or neglect) during incarceration. Therefore, these variables will be included in the analysis of this study as statistical control variables.

Other institutional variables may also be important to control when examining the relationships of interest. To be specific, an inmate’s psychological well-being may be influenced by the time until an inmate’s parole hearing (or related variables such as time served or sentence length) (McCorkle, 1992; Proctor, 1994; Van Voorhis, 1993) and the physical environment of a facility (Paulus & Dzindolet, 1993). Adjustment may be more difficult for inmates who have longer to wait until a parole hearing and for those incarcerated in a facility with ranges of cells set perpendicular to long corridors (possibly enhancing perceptions of less personal space). In turn, these variables may be related to levels of program participation (if inmates further along in their sentences are more involved in programs) as well as victimization likelihoods (if inmates with less experience in prison and/or those in facilities with a linear design are more likely to be victimized by other inmates).
METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Samples of inmates were selected from three Ohio correctional facilities for adult males. Although the results can only be generalized to male inmates, Paulus and Dzindolet (1993) found that the effects of incarceration were similar for males and females. The first facility is high-close security with a linear architectural design (i.e., ranges of cells set perpendicular to long corridors). It held roughly 500 inmates at the time of the study. The second facility is also high-close security but with a podular design. There are three campuses within the second facility, housing up to 384 inmates each (1,150 inmates altogether). Inmates are assigned to a campus based on available bed space. Each campus is identical to the other in terms of inmate population size and composition as well as the physical layout of the buildings and dormitories. The third institution is a medium-security podular facility that held 450 inmates at the time of data collection. Inmates at all three facilities are housed one per cell.

The wardens of the three facilities determined the maximum sample sizes. To assure a representative sample within each facility, the actual cases (inmates) were selected by the principal investigator. One entire campus of the high-close podular facility was targeted for the sample, constituting 33% of the inmate population. In the high-close linear facility, all inmates from the first tier of each wing (except for the psychiatric and evaluation areas) were targeted, constituting 25% of this population. (The composition of the population does not differ across tiers within each wing of the linear facility.) Of all inmates from the medium security facility, 50% were targeted; this sample consisted of 5 of the 10 living units (including the segregation unit but excluding the psychiatric unit). The five living units were chosen to reflect the living units not selected.

Self-report data were collected for the study. Anonymous surveys were distributed individually to inmates during a single count lasting 30 minutes. At the end of the count, inmates sealed the completed surveys in envelopes and placed them in an enclosed box. The pool of completed surveys ($N = 581$) consisted of 81% of the inmates targeted at the high-close podular facility ($n_1 = 312$), 75% of those selected
TABLE 1:  Variables and Univariate Descriptives (N = 581)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Descriptives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate adjustment (range: 7-28)</td>
<td>( M = 14.69, \ SD = 4.47 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily activity hours (range: 0-16)</td>
<td>( M = 8.51, \ SD = 4.86 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of aggravated assault past 6 months</td>
<td>( f = 66 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits last month (range: 0-20)</td>
<td>( M = 1.89, \ SD = 2.22 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years to parole hearing (range: 0-30)</td>
<td>( M = 4.46, \ SD = 5.50 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-close linear design</td>
<td>( f = 99 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium podular design</td>
<td>( f = 170 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic/background variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (range: 16-61)</td>
<td>( M = 28.65, \ SD = 7.18 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>( f = 248 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>( f = 143 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than high school education</td>
<td>( f = 215 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior months served (range: 0-304)</td>
<td>( M = 20.51, \ SD = 40.17 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized for sex offense</td>
<td>( f = 43 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Dummy variables were coded 0 (no) and 1 (yes). Frequencies for dummy variables reflect the numbers of inmates in category 1 of each variable.

from the linear facility \( n_2 = 99 \), and 76% of those targeted at the medium-security facility \( n_3 = 170 \). This sample excluded all illiterate inmates and those in psychiatric units. Aggregate-level data checks (using data provided by each facility’s administration) revealed that the composition of each facility’s sample was representative of the composition of each inmate population in terms of the demographic and background variables included in the analysis.

PROCEDURE

The variables in the analysis are described in Table 1. Psychological well-being was measured as a sum of inmate responses to various statements regarding self-perceptions. Inmates were asked to indicate whether they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with each of the following:

1. It is hard for me to relate to others.
2. I often feel depressed.
3. I feel angry at the people around me quite often.
4. I have problems dealing with stress.
5. I often feel tense.
6. No one seems to care about me.
7. I often feel neglected.

Rather than create a factor that would give some of these perceptions more weight than others, these scores were summed so that each item had equal weight. Larger values on the composite measure reflected poorer well-being (more depressed, angry, tense, etc.).

An inmate’s level of program participation was measured as the total number of hours each day spent in structured activities. This included the average number of hours spent each day in education classes, vocational classes, studying in the library, counseling, working at a job, and active and inactive forms of recreation provided by the institution (aside from watching television and listening to the radio).

Inmate victimization was measured as victimization by aggravated assault. A survey question about robbery was also asked, but very few robberies occurred during the study period. Also, questions pertaining to rape were not included because of the sensitive nature of those questions. The victimization variable was a dichotomous measure of whether an inmate was victimized by aggravated assault at least once during the 6 months preceding the survey. The relevant survey questions included the following:

Please indicate how many times each of the following things happened to you since January 1, 1991 (during the past 6 months):

1. Was hit or kicked by an inmate for a reason other than because you tried to hurt him first.
2. Was stabbed by an inmate for a reason other than because you tried to hurt him first.

A ratio measure tapping the degree of victimization could not be examined because of limited variation.

Ordinary least squares regression was used for the multivariate analysis. Diagnostic tests revealed that the assumptions of linearity and random error were not violated. Despite the ordinal nature of the original measures tapping self-perceptions, the outcome measure examined is more continuous because it is a sum of several perceptions. Therefore, the dependent variable did not succumb to the
TABLE 2: Results From the OLS Analysis of Inmate Adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>16.804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily activity hours</td>
<td>-0.155**</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>-0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of aggravated assault</td>
<td>1.438**</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits last month</td>
<td>-0.333**</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>-0.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years to parole hearing</td>
<td>0.095*</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-close linear design</td>
<td>0.118</td>
<td>0.631</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium podular design</td>
<td>0.910</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic/background variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>-1.790**</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>-0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1.038</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than high school education</td>
<td>-1.741**</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>-0.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior months served</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex offender</td>
<td>-0.703</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td>-0.045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: $R^2 = 0.16$; standard error of regression = 4.23. OLS = ordinary least squares. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

problems that would have existed if each self-perception had been examined separately.

Checks for multicollinearity revealed that none of the predictors, individually or as a group, accounted for more than 33% of the variation in any one predictor. This falls below the criterion of 0.49 ($r = 0.70$), so multicollinearity was not a problem.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results of the analysis. Both institutional and preinstitutional (demographic and background) characteristics of inmates were significantly related to the outcome measure examined, which is consistent with the observations of Thomas and his colleagues (Thomas, 1970, 1977; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas et al., 1978). Both sets of variables accounted for 16% of the variation in adjustment to incarceration.

The predictors of primary interest (i.e., the number of hours spent daily in structured activities, frequency of visitation with outsiders, and whether an inmate was victimized recently by physical assault)
were statistically significant, maintaining relationships in the hypothesized directions. To be specific, inmates tended to be more depressed, anxious, stressed, and so forth when they (a) spent less time in structured activities (Beta = −0.15), (b) received fewer visits each month (Beta = −0.17), and (c) had been victimized recently by aggravated assault (Beta = 0.15).

The results for the remaining institutional variables revealed that the time until an inmate’s next parole hearing was a significant predictor of adjustment (Beta = 0.12), but the facility-type variables were not significant. All of the statistically significant institutional variables maintained relationships with the dependent variable that were comparable in strength (i.e., the magnitudes of the beta weights were not significantly different).

The findings for the demographic/background variables revealed that higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and so forth were more likely among inmates who were (a) White (Beta = −0.20), and (b) had less education (Beta = −0.19). Both of these preinstitutional variables maintained stronger relationships with the dependent variable compared to any of the four significant institutional variables separately. As a group, however, the institutional variables accounted for slightly more of the variation in the dependent variable compared to the preinstitutional variables (9% vs. 7%, respectively). The difference of 2% is statistically significant (p < .05).

**DISCUSSION**

The results of this study suggest that efforts to influence adjustment to incarceration should recognize the importance of both preinstitutional and institutional characteristics of inmates. This is consistent with results from the prisonization studies of Thomas (1977), Thomas and Foster (1972), and Thomas et al. (1978).

The significant variation in the measure of psychological well-being examined here (see Table 1) underscores the need to identify and address the institutional barriers to inmate adjustment. This may help to enhance the feasibility of treatment and to reduce the violence and illness among inmates that result from anxiety and depression. The findings of this study support the hypothesis that variation in the
psychological well-being of inmates corresponds in part with differences in their routines and experiences.

The findings are consistent with many of the findings from Wright’s (1993) research. To be specific, he found that adjustment to incarceration was more difficult for inmates who (a) were in environments with fewer opportunities for self-improvement (i.e., less activity and support, to use Toch’s [1977] terminology), (b) felt less safe, and (c) had fewer opportunities for social interaction (i.e., Toch’s [1977] social stimulation). In the study presented here, inmates tended to be more depressed, anxious, stressed, and so forth when they (a) engaged less frequently in activities for self-improvement (less activity and support), (b) had been recently victimized by other inmates (less safe), and (c) received fewer visits each month (less social stimulation). Also interesting to note, Wright’s finding that the overall safety of a facility was not related to adjustment is supported here. More specific, this study found that an inmate’s psychological well-being did not depend on the level of surveillance or the architectural design of a facility, but rather it depended on individual differences in institutional experiences.

Wright (1993) also found that none of his statistically significant models accounted for more than 5% of the variation in adjustment. The institutional variables examined in this study accounted for 9% of the variation in the outcome measure examined. There are two reasons why these findings may be consistent with Wright’s. First, the outcome measure examined in the present study had less variation compared to Wright’s measures (because of the smaller number of items used in its construction combined with a smaller sample size—581 vs. 942 inmates). Therefore, it is easier to explain variation in an outcome measure with fewer categories because there is less total variation with which to begin. Second, the fact that both figures are under 10% reinforces Wright’s observation that many factors determine how inmates adjust to incarceration. Note that the two statistically significant preinstitutional variables alone accounted for an additional 7% of the variation in adjustment.

The findings that program participation, safe environments, and visitation with outsiders are related to psychological well-being reinforces Toch’s (1977) contention that prison environments can be created to meet inmates’ needs and facilitate adaptation to confinement.
Greater opportunities for self-improvement and activity combined with a greater freedom of choice may help inmates to find an appropriate niche in prison when they can achieve greater control over their environment (Seymour, 1977, 1982; Toch, 1977). These findings have implications for research on personal control and its relevance to an understanding of adaptation to imprisonment.

PERSONAL CONTROL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

The ability to control one's environment and predict personal experiences from day to day is considered by many psychologists and sociologists to be a basic human need (Perlmutter & Monty, 1979; Phares, 1976; Rotter, 1966; Seeman, 1959; White, 1959). Related to Toch's (1977) concept of freedom, this ability is often referred to in the literature as personal control. Goodstein et al. (1984) and MacKenzie et al. (1987) argued that the concept of personal control is highly relevant to a study of inmate adaptation to imprisonment. Less personal control over one's environment during incarceration may lead to more intense feelings of depression, anxiety, and stress (MacKenzie et al., 1987; Porporino & Zamble, 1984; Ruback, Carr, & Hopper, 1986).

Variation in the institutional characteristics examined in the present study might reflect differences in an inmate's ability to control his environment. To be specific, inmates who (choose to) spend more time each day in education, vocational training, job work, and recreational programs are necessarily involved for longer periods of time in more structured activities that probably do not vary much in routine from day to day. Provided that the inmate's routine is not overly structured (because too much structure may lead to perceptions of limited choice), greater involvement could enhance feelings of security among inmates because they are better able to predict their experiences from day to day. Similar to this, more frequent visitation with familiar persons may also enhance feelings of security and control. The number of monthly visits an inmate receives could influence the element of personal control involving the opportunity to make choices (Averill, 1973; Steiner, 1979). Inmates who receive more visits each month may perceive more freedom through the regular maintenance of ties to the outside world. Conversely, inmates who are victimized by violent crime may feel less secure about what to expect from day to
day if these experiences serve to enhance an inmate’s fear of the unknown.

Even the significant finding regarding the time until an inmate’s parole hearing has implications for an inmate’s perception of personal control. To be specific, inmates who have shorter periods to wait until their first (or next) parole hearings may perceive that they are closer to their freedom to make choices.

The results of this study could therefore be interpreted as indirect support for the idea that routines and experiences that enhance an inmate’s ability to control his environment and reduce his fear of the unknown generally correspond with a healthier state of mind.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study presented here support the significance of program participation, frequency of visitation, and victimization during incarceration for predicting an inmate’s psychological well-being. Although these specific predictors have never been examined before, these results are consistent with the findings of other researchers regarding the importance of activity, opportunities for self-advancement, social stimulation, and feelings of safety for facilitating adjustment (Toch, 1977; Wright, 1993). Moreover, the findings support the idea of Thomas and his colleagues that both the characteristics of institutional environments and the characteristics of inmates upon entry into an institution are important for influencing how well inmates adapt to their environment (Thomas, 1970, 1977; Thomas & Foster, 1972; Thomas et al., 1978).

As suggested by Carroll (1974), Porporino and Zamble (1984), and Toch (1984), studies of the effects of interactions between the background characteristics of inmates and institutional characteristics (i.e., contextual effects) on adjustment would be worthwhile to see if such interactions improve our prediction significantly beyond the additive effects of each group of variables.

Cross-sectional studies of the topic, such as the one presented here, run the risk of model misspecification. This is because it is uncertain whether the variables treated as predictors actually cause or are simply
consequences of psychological well-being. For example, although
greater program participation may lead to a healthier attitude, it is also
possible that a depressed person may be less inclined to participate in
structured activities compared to an individual who is not depressed.
Unless one can guarantee a perfectly specified cross-sectional model
with no problems related to collinearity among the predictors, a longi-
tudinal research design is necessary to establish support for the causal
relationships that can only be inferred from the findings presented
here. Therefore, the significant results for the institutional variables
should be treated as significant correlates to psychological well-
being. (The results for the demographic and background variables are
more likely to reflect the proper causal order simply because these fac-
tors existed prior to inmate perceptions.) Nonetheless, this does not
undermine the findings that inmates experience their incarceration
differently, and that these differences are somehow related to institu-
tional characteristics such as program participation, victimization
experience, number of outside visitors, and time to parole. Research-
ers who examine the causal nature of these relationships directly will
provide the insight necessary to formulate realistic policies designed
to facilitate inmate adjustment to incarceration.

REFERENCES

McKenzie (Eds.), The American prison (pp. 229-251). New York: Plenum.


