



## **Predicting Prison Misconduct: Role of Criminogenic Cognitions of Adult Convicted Prisoners**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Prison misconduct is violation of prison rules through which prisoners are governed to regulate their behavior by the prison authorities. The aim of present study was to examine relationship between criminogenic cognitions of prisoners and prison misconduct in the Punjab, Pakistan. Conducting a survey of 363 adult convicted prisoners from the Punjab prisons, data were collected by using structured questionnaires and analyzed in SPSS-26. The study concluded that the relationship between criminogenic cognitions of prisoners and prison misconduct was found strong and positive. On the basis of these findings, criminogenic cognitions—dynamic risk factors of the prisoners may be assessed by the prison authorities at the time of prisoners' entry into custody which would help them in an appropriate and scientifically based classification. This classification would clearly distinguish the high, medium, and low risk offenders and their probability in engaging in future criminal activities inside the prisons and after their transition into society. Policies based on these conclusions derived from the classification would reduce prison misconduct as well as enhance the chances of institutional adjustment which would provide a conducive environment for prison management to run rehabilitation programs for prisoners. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that prison authorities in the Punjab, Pakistan may incorporate the assessments of criminogenic cognitions during the admission process of offenders in prisons.

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Prison misconduct is behavior which violates prison rules (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2014). The formal regulations governing inmate behavior in prisons are crucial for maintaining order and safety within correctional facilities. Instances of rule violations, or “misconducts,” are indicative of problematic behavior among inmates and are associated with continued criminal behavior both during and after incarceration (Trulson et al., 2011). Understanding the factors contributing to inmate misconduct can provide insights into the roots of criminality among high-risk individuals and help to assess the effectiveness of imprisonment and related interventions, such as vocational programs, in promoting rehabilitation and deterring future offenses. Additionally, identifying the sources of inmate misconduct is essential for correctional administrators to develop more effective strategies for managing and reducing such behavior, including the use of classification tools, structured routines, and intervention programs aimed at promoting positive change and maintaining institutional order and safety (Steiner et al., 2014).

Research has discovered that elimination of prison misconduct and prediction of institutional adjustment is important because it plays three primary roles. Firstly, this can assist in classifying prison inmate. Most of the prisons classify the prisoners focusing on only static risk factors such as criminal history. The identification and validation of additional factors enhances the efficacy of existing classification system in the prisons. Secondly, accurate prediction leads to prevention. Occurrence of less disciplinary actions in the prison reflects the environment is safe for both the staff and the inmates. Thirdly, accurate prediction benefits post-prison adjustment (Walters, 2015). As prisons have criminogenic effects on inmates and it is well documented, the inmates who live in safe environment, they participate in rehabilitation programs available in correctional facility which helps them in a positive transition back into society (Bales & Piquero, 2012).

### **1.1 Rationale of the Study**

Empirical evidence suggests that while static risk factors among prison inmates are important in predicting institutional adjustment, they may not reliably predict subsequent offending and recidivism. Therefore, this is necessary to supplement them with dynamic risk factors such as criminogenic cognitions to achieve optimal predictability, as highlighted by Abbiati et al. (2019) and Walters (2015). By combining static and dynamic factors, a more comprehensive risk profile of an individual can be obtained, and dynamic factors allow for tracking changes in an individual over time. As criminogenic cognitions are crime-promoting thought patterns and are well-established dynamic risk factors (Kroner & Morgan, 2013). These cognitions involve distorted ways of thinking and cognitive patterns that support criminal behavior by rationalizing deviant actions in the eyes of the individual engaging in criminal behavior (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Walters, 1990). Offenders may disregard the negative impact and consequences of their actions due to these negative attitudes (Tangney et al., 2012).

Criminogenic cognitions are considered one of the "big four" dynamic criminogenic needs (Duriez et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2009), yet they are not commonly used to predict institutional violence or general misconduct (Kroner & Morgan, 2013). Only a limited number of studies

conducted by Soyer et al. (2017), Walters (2015), Walters and Schlauch (2008), and Kroner and Mills (2001) have measured criminal thinking, which is often used interchangeably with criminogenic cognitions, to predict institutional misconduct. The present study intends to determine the nature of relationship between criminogenic cognitions of prisoners and misconduct within Pakistani prisons.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to investigate the correlation between criminogenic cognitions among adult convicted prisoners and prison misconduct in the Punjab, Pakistan.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Correctional systems often utilize algorithms incorporating reliable static indicators or actuarial assessments to predict misconduct within prison environments, as noted by Austin and Hardyman (2004). Previous research has consistently indicated that men exhibit a higher propensity for misconduct compared to women, while younger inmates are more prone to facing disciplinary actions than their older counterparts. These demographic variables, namely gender and age, are among the static factors integrated into such predictive models, as demonstrated in studies by Bench and Allen (2003), Gendreau et al. (1997), Steiner et al. (2014), and Steiner and Wooldredge (2008).

Earlier research, such as the work by Drury and DeLisi (2010), has highlighted a notable trend that individuals who have previously been involved in disciplinary incidents during past periods of incarceration demonstrate a heightened likelihood of engaging in similar behaviors during subsequent periods of imprisonment. This underscores a pattern wherein past behaviors serve as strong indicators for future conduct within institutional settings. In the realm of predictive research concerning institutional adjustment, there has been a noteworthy emphasis on fixed or unchanging risk factors. Among these factors, age emerges as a particularly robust and consistent predictor of potential misconduct within prison environments. Specifically, studies focusing on male populations, such as those conducted by Bench and Allen (2003) and Steiner and Wooldredge (2008), have indicated that younger prisoners tend to accumulate a significantly greater number of disciplinary reports compared to the older prisoners.

Prior institutional adjustment stands out as a significant indicator of misconduct within prison settings (Drury & DeLisi, 2010). Furthermore, DeLisi (2003) identified the criminal history of inmates as a robust and consistent predictor of prison misconduct. In particular, inmates with extensive criminal records tend to accumulate more disciplinary infractions compared to those with fewer prior offenses. Various other factors have also been identified as predictors of disciplinary infractions in correctional facilities. These include ethnicity, gang affiliation, shorter prison sentences, non-violent offenses, history of mental illness, and substance misuse, as noted in studies by Austin (2003), Cunningham and Sorensen (2007), Drury and DeLisi (2011), Flanagan (1980), Harer and Steffensmeier (1996), Jiang (2005), and Trulson et al. (2012). However, while these factors contribute to the prediction of misconduct, they do not reach the same level of significance as age, criminal history, and prior institutional adjustment.

Research conducted by Campbell et al. (2009), DeLisi (2003), Gendreau et al. (1997) has

consistently highlighted certain factors associated with disciplinary infractions among prison inmates. These factors include the type of offense committed, length of sentence, and history of mental health issues or involvement with security threat groups. For instance, individuals convicted of sexual offenses are less likely to engage in misconduct, while those serving shorter sentences, typically less than five years, and tend to exhibit higher rates of misconduct. Additionally, a history of mental health problems or affiliation with security threat groups increases the likelihood of engaging in misconduct. Collectively, these factors offer valuable insights for understanding and predicting disciplinary infractions within correctional facilities (Steiner et al., 2014).

**2.1 Research Hypothesis**

Criminogenic cognitions of adult convicted prisoners and prison misconduct has positive relationship. The increase in the level of criminogenic cognitions of adult convicted prisoners increases the chances prison misconduct.

**3.0 Methodology**

**3.1 Data and Method**

The target population for this study comprised adult convicted prisoners incarcerated in Punjab, Pakistan. As per the Pakistan Prison Rules of 1978, adult convicted prisoners are defined as individuals aged 22 years and older. A sample of 363 adult prisoners from Central Jail Rawalpindi commonly known as Adiala Jail of the Punjab, Pakistan. For the purpose of data collection regarding criminogenic cognitions of prisoners, criminogenic cognitions scale (CCS) developed by Tangney et al. (2012) was used. For collecting data regarding dependent variable of the research—prison misconduct, Reisig and Mesko’s (2009) instrument was used which taped self-reported responses of the prisoners. The data collected from the respondents were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-26) and employed correlation test for analyzing the directional relationship among variables.

**4.0 Results and Discussion**

Data were analyzed in SPSS-26. To check the normality of data, descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were measured. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were interpreted by making simple frequency table and correlation was used to examine relationship between two variables of the study: criminogenic cognitions and prison misconduct.

**Table 1: Data Normality**

Predictors	Mean	Std.	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Deviation Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender	1.1129	.31697	2.456	.128	4.053	.255
Age	1.9284	1.00295	1.284	.128	1.628	.255
Education	3.0496	1.11631	.393	.128	-.706	.255
Marital Status	1.4490	.58007	.883	.128	-.211	.255

Family Type	1.6970	.46020	-.861	.128	-1.266	.255
Nature of Crime	1.2755	.44737	1.009	.128	-.987	.255
PCC_1	3.6446	1.11390	-.265	.128	-1.278	.255
PCC_2	3.2920	.98195	.021	.128	-1.145	.255
PCC_3	3.4187	1.09286	-.200	.128	-.956	.255
PCC_4	3.6006	1.01791	-.417	.128	-.410	.255
PCC_5	3.8457	.88161	-.569	.128	-.259	.255
PCC_6	3.0909	1.33999	-.236	.128	-1.186	.255
PCC_7	3.6006	1.27998	-.221	.128	-1.419	.255
PCC_8	3.5124	1.12320	-.049	.128	-1.369	.255
PCC_9	3.8182	1.09997	-.449	.128	-1.133	.255
PCC_10_R	3.2810	1.05031	-.050	.128	-.902	.255
PCC_11	3.6446	1.08627	-.324	.128	-1.179	.255
PCC_12_R	3.4022	1.15782	-.238	.128	-.884	.255
PCC_13	3.6529	1.08514	-.332	.128	-1.169	.255
PCC_14	3.6804	.98459	-.424	.128	-.817	.255
PCC_15	3.2782	1.04709	-.054	.128	-.896	.255
PCC_16	3.4766	1.05190	-.002	.128	-1.198	.255
PCC_17_R	3.6749	.95715	-.678	.128	.178	.255
PCC_18	3.6281	.85849	-.152	.128	-.599	.255
PCC_19	3.8760	.84327	-.512	.128	-.202	.255
PCC_20_R	3.7521	.80001	-.402	.128	-.161	.255
PCC_21	3.7796	.90787	-.152	.128	-.891	.255
PCC_22_R	3.4518	.99710	-.547	.128	.064	.255
PCC_23	3.3223	1.01002	-.243	.128	-.787	.255
PCC_24	3.7521	1.01873	-.339	.128	-.996	.255
PCC_25	3.4242	1.15948	-.205	.128	-1.188	.255
PM_1	4.1791	.77131	-.319	.128	-1.255	.255
PM_2	4.3223	.75672	-.613	.128	-1.011	.255
PM_3	4.1763	.70263	-.693	.128	.724	.255
PM_4	4.0275	.93685	-.785	.128	.585	.255
PM_5	4.2755	.77326	-.844	.128	.166	.255
PM_6	4.2011	.71356	-.727	.128	.639	.255
PM_7	4.1983	.84048	-1.399	.128	3.134	.255
PM_8	4.2231	.79175	-.419	.128	-1.287	.255
PM_9	4.1983	.84376	-.639	.128	-.652	.255
PM_10	3.9972	.77424	.005	.128	-1.329	.255

PCC is prisoners' criminogenic cognitions

PM is prison misconduct

R is reverse question

Table 1 illustrates the assessment of data normality. The results of the normality test indicate that the skewness values for both prisoners’ criminogenic cognitions (PCC) and prisoners’ misconduct (PM) items are within the range of -2 to +2, suggesting a reasonable level of symmetry. Furthermore, the kurtosis values for PCC and PM items fall within the acceptable range of -7 to +7, indicating an appropriate level of peakedness or flatness in the distribution. The skewness and kurtosis values for Gender, Age, Education, Marital Status, Family Type, and Nature of Crime also meet acceptable criteria, implying relatively symmetrical and appropriately peaked distributions. Additionally, the mean scores and standard deviations are in line with expectations. Therefore, based on the favorable normality values observed, it is inferred that the data related to both PCC and PM items demonstrate characteristics of normal distribution (Hair et al., 2010).

**Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

<b>Predictors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	351
	Female	12
	Total	363
<b>Age</b>	22 - 30	142
	31 - 40	144
	41 - 50	53
	51 - 60	9
	61+	15
	Total	363
	Total	100.0
<b>Education</b>	Below Primary	16
	Primary	112
	Middle	130
	Matric	48
	FA and above	57
	Total	363
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	216
	Married	131
	Widowed	16
	Total	363
<b>Family Type</b>	Nuclear	110
	Joint	253
	Total	363
<b>Nature of Crime</b>	Violent Crime	263
	Nonviolent Crime	100
	Total	363

Table 2 reveals demographic determinants adult convicted prisoners. Descriptive results depict that sample contained 351 (96 %) male respondents and 12 (4%) are female prisoners the information of respondents regarding their gender, age, marital status, family type, and nature of

crime. Among all 263 respondents 351 (96.7%) are male and 12 (3.31%) are female respondents out of total 363 respondents. More than one-third (142, 39%) prisoners were of the age 22-30 years, and more than one-third (144, 40%) were of the age 31-40 years, while 53 (15%) prisoners were of the age 41-50 years, and only 9 (3%) and 15 (4%) prisoners of the age of 51-60 years and 61 and above respectively.

Findings reveal that most of the respondents 130 (36%) had the education of middle level. 128 (35%) respondents had the education of primary and below. Among all 363 respondents, only 48 (13%) had matric level education, and 57 (16%) had Intermediate and above. More than of the respondents 216 (60%) were unmarried, and 131 (34%) were married, and 16 (4%) were widowed. Majority of the respondent 253 (70%) belonged to joint family system whereas 110 (30%) were residing in nuclear family system. In total sample of 363, 263 (72%) of the respondents were incarcerated in violent crime, and 100 (28%) had committed nonviolent crime before their incarceration.

**Table 3: Reliability and Correlation**

	<b>Criminogenic Cognitions</b>	<b>Prison Misconduct</b>
<b>Criminogenic Cognitions</b>	(0.817)	
<b>Prison Misconduct</b>	.643**	(0.746)

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

Reliabilities are in parenthesis

Table 3 shows the values of reliability of both data collection instruments for independent variable and dependent variable; values of Cronbach’s alpha are 0.817 and 0.746 respectively. Proving the reliability of instruments this study revealed the correlation regarding relationship between criminogenic cognitions of prisoners and prison misconduct. The value of correlation (0.643) shows that the relationship between criminogenic cognitions of prisoners and prison misconduct is strong and in positive direction; increase in the level of criminogenic cognitions of adult convicted prisoners increases misconduct in prisons. These results align with prior research findings, such as those by Tangney and her colleagues (2012), who established a connection between criminogenic cognitions and inmate misconduct. Similarly, Walters (2015) demonstrated in his study that criminal thinking, which is interchangeably used term with criminogenic cognitions, serves as a robust predictor of inmate misconduct. He concluded that the presence of criminal thinking—criminogenic cognitions—among prison inmates correlates positively with their misconduct. In line with these findings, the current study corroborates that criminogenic cognitions play a predictive role in prison misconduct. More recently, Duwe and colleagues (2023) determined that the overall Criminal Thinking Style (CTS) score significantly forecasts misconduct, although the strength of this relationship was relatively moderate (AUC = 0.62)

## 5.0 Conclusion

On the basis of all these results, it is concluded that those prisoners who are younger have more criminogenic cognitions and those prisoners who have less income also have more

criminogenic cognitions. Furthermore, it has been observed that those prisoners who live in nuclear families also have higher level of criminogenic cognitions and those prisoners who have committed violent crimes also have higher level of criminogenic cognitions. Along with all these, this research has also proved that there is a strong and positive relationship between criminogenic cognitions and prison misconduct, as criminogenic cognitions of prisoners increase, prison misconduct also increases. The conclusion of this quantitative study has both implications— theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this is the addition in literature produced regarding the understanding of prison misconduct and the role of criminogenic cognitions of adult convicted prisoners in the Punjab, Pakistan. These findings and conclusions may be used for academic purpose in subfields of sociology especially prison sociology, criminology, penology, and social psychology. Practically, this may be used in making the policy for improvement of prison system especially prison management for better classification of prisoners during incarceration.

### 5.1 Recommendations

1. Prison management should make a mechanism for assessment of criminogenic cognitions—dynamic risk factors of the prisoners at the time of admission and subsequently at the time of their release from the prisons.
2. Interventions should be made focusing on reformation—attitudinal change of prisoners aligned with rehabilitation programs.
3. Prison staff should be trained professionally for managing the prison population by using appropriate and evidence-based classification considering dynamic risk factors of prison misconduct and recidivism.

**Javed Iqbal:** Problem Identification and Literature Research,

**Farhan Navid Yousaf:** Data Analysis and Supervision

**Khalil Ahmad:** Methodology

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