

**LIFE INCARCERATION AND PSYCHO-SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF  
INMATES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MALE AND FEMALE LIFERS IN  
SELECTED PRISONS IN KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology  
of Chuka University**

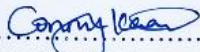
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**NOVEMBER, 2020**

## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Declaration


This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a diploma or conferment of degree in this or any other University.

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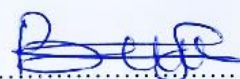
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### Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as the University supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved husband David Kibaara for his being relentless and his unequalled support, encouragement and inspiration to the conclusion of my study, and to our dearest children: Rachael Kathure, Joanne Mukami, Peace Murugi, Dan Muthomi, Stephen Mwirigi, Grace Kinya to whom I hand over this wheel of education to drive incessantly, on to greater heights; and our dearest grandchildren: Michael, Jordan, Christian, Hope, Angel and Collins Jr who will keep the light of knowledge shining continually.

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## ABSTRACT

Life incarceration is a way of confining a lawbreaker in prison, to separate them from the society. This ensures societal security, and the offender's chance of rehabilitation. Although the number of life-incarcerated inmates is on the rise worldwide, there is scanty information in records concerning the psychological and social plight of lifers, based on gender in Kenya. The total isolation from one's environment, society and family is likely to impact on the mental health and social relationship of the male and female life-sentenced inmates. The inmates may portray behaviours related to stress and rejection such as distress, withdrawal and violence, and this is likely to be influenced by gender. Therefore, this study intended to investigate the effect of life incarceration on the lifers' psychological well-being and social relationships, by a comparison based on gender. The study was guided by four objectives, and four hypotheses. The study adopted the causal-comparative research design, which allowed for the comparison of the male and female lifers. The study was carried out in selected prisons in Kenya covering four geographical regions. The prisons of study included Nyeri Main Prison, Naivasha Maximum Prison, Lang'ata Women's Prison and Kisumu Main Prison. The study population was 2816 life-imprisoned inmates in the four selected prisons. A sample size of 172 respondents was obtained from the population of study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 86 female respondents, while proportionate sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 86 male respondents for comparative purpose. The male respondents of the study were selected using simple random sampling technique. In addition to the lifers, one prison counsellor and six prison constables were purposively selected from each of the selected prisons to participate in the study. Therefore, the total number of respondents was 202. Data was collected using questionnaires and an interview schedule. A pilot study was conducted at Embu prison to establish the reliability of the research instruments. The reliability was estimated by use of Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. Reliability coefficients of 0.902 and 0.750 for lifers and constables questionnaires respectively were obtained. The validity of study tools were ascertained through the help of the expert judgment of the university supervisors and other research experts. The analysis of the data was done by use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher also used descriptive statistics to analyze qualitative data thematically. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 was used for data analysis. Research hypotheses were tested at  $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance using regression and correlation analysis. The findings of this study indicated that life incarceration influences on the inmates psychosocial wellbeing, leading to deprivation, stress, identity loss and trauma. The lifers social relationship is also influenced at the family, inter-prisoners and staff-lifers level. The study established that there was a statistically significant difference on the effect of life incarceration based on gender. It was recommended that the prisons department should provide appropriate counseling services through professional counsellors to deal with lifers psychosocial needs. The ministry of defence needs to facilitate the organization of programmes tailored specifically for the life incarcerated inmates. These programmes should also address the issues of gender in order to take care of their unique plight. The society needs to be sensitized on the plight of the lifers to expand their knowledge and understanding of their experiences. This may help restore and enhance the social relationships.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CJA:</b>	Criminal Justice Act
<b>IPP:</b>	Imprisonment for Public Protection
<b>IPT:</b>	Institutionalized Personality Trait
<b>KPS:</b>	Kenya Police Service
<b>LWOP:</b>	Life-imprisonment Without Parole
<b>NACOSTI:</b>	National Council of Sciences, Technology and Innovation
<b>PICS:</b>	Post Incarceration Syndrome
<b>PSS:</b>	Perceived Stress Scale
<b>PTSD:</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>SPSS:</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>SSD:</b>	Social Sensory Disorientation
<b>STA:</b>	Social Temporal Alienation
<b>UK:</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>WHO:</b>	World Health Organization

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Life incarceration has been perceived differently by various countries where the sentence is practiced. Depending on the nation where an individual is sentenced, life incarceration can imply a compulsory sentence on the offender (Mauer, Ryan & Young, 2004). It is further noted that in relation to the duration of time a person is likely to serve in prison, life imprisonment may be determinate, indeterminate or a whole life experience. However, as dictated upon by the nature of the prison term and the uncertainty in relation to time a lifer may be released, life incarceration is a sentence under which the convicted person remains in prison for the rest of their natural life (McCutcheon & Coffey, 2006). Thus, while a person who is sentenced to a fix-term knows the expected time of release, the life-incarcerated prisoner has no such guarantee of release (McCutcheon & Coffey, 2006). Therefore, it is likely that the life-incarcerated inmate is influenced by imprisonment in a different way from a prisoner who is serving short-term sentence. According to Mauer, et al., (2004) there is a higher probability of there being mental health complications among lifer imprisoned inmates, when equated with the overall population of other offenders serving different types of sentences. Based on the findings of Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately one out five lifer sentenced prisoners had a mental ailment in comparison to one per every six inmates in the general prisoner population (Mauer et al., 2004). The findings of Dudeck et al., (2011) showed that the prevalence of trauma is significantly higher in the case of long-term prisoners when compared with the rest of the population and with short-term imprisoned inmates. Thus, the lifers seem to be experiencing a unique and distinctive nature of imprisonment pain, comprising a kind of existential and identity crisis caused by the length of the sentence term and the uncertainty of contemporary sentences as well as the limited facilities which are available (Liebling, 2011).

Previously, life incarceration was intended to punish those who aggrieved the society, by exacting physical suffering on the offender (Tomar, 2013). In contrast to this concept, presently, life incarceration is not any longer serving as an acute method of physical penalty, but a process of working on a person's mind and body, to bring about behaviour change through punishment, deterrence and rehabilitation (Tomar, 2013).



Therefore, a prison can be perceived as a comprehensive corrective establishment that controls individuals' aspects of life and disciplines law breakers to help shape their behaviour. Tomar (2013) further observes that the prison transforms the offenders into useful and law-abiding citizens, through constructive psychological conditioning. This way, the inmate can be acceptable in their respective societies and environment. However, despite the efforts made through the prison services to rehabilitate life sentenced inmates, the numbers of lifers are continuously increasing both worldwide and, more particularly, in Western nations as noted by (Giffard & Muntingh, 2007); Home Office, 2005); Mauer et al., 2004). This growth in the number of lawbreakers serving life sentences has started to attract serious concern from international institutions (Coyle, 2005). According to Hood and Hoyle (2015), life incarceration has become the new final punishment across most of the western world. It is one of the methods through which functions such as deterrence and rehabilitation can be effected in any country. Consequently, due to this enclosed environment in which the lifers live, for unlimited period of time, they are likely to experience fear and anxiety which may impact negatively on their psycho-social well-being. The lifers go through the general stresses of prison life which are normally intensified by the indeterminate period of time which they serve. This has particularly to do with loss of contact with acquaintances out of prison and the fear that their relationships would be permanently lost.

Life sentence of modern punitive systems is the most severe sanction employed by the state in authorities where the death penalty has been abolished (Anderson, 2012). Due to the nature of its indefinite term, life imprisonment is likely to harm the inmates' social relationships and mental status. Joyce (2013) further states that depression, personality changes and psychological deterioration may be influenced by various factors inclusive of whether a convict is serving either a fixed sentence or an indeterminate one, and the duration served in prison. As noted by Crewe et al, (2017) the life imprisoned women felt acute guilt and self-hatred about the crimes they had committed more severely than the male lifers. The women described themselves as operating under duress and duly overwhelmed, leading to self-destructive feelings and actions. In the United States of America, the objective of imprisonment was for rehabilitation but this was later altered to include retribution, incapacitation and

deterrence (, Browning, Waid & Jensen, 2010). During the last 20 years, the rate of recurrence in relation to the cases of life sentences has increased significantly in the United States (Kazemian & Travis, 2015). Majority of the inmates serving life sentences in the U.S. live in establishments with exceptionally severe environments of confinement (Fleury-Steiner & Longazel, 2014). In 1976, countries such as Canada substituted the death penalty with life incarceration for everyone found guilty with murder or high sedition. Such an offender would be condemned to a sentence for life, whereby a percentage of this sentence is served in prison and the rest can be done within the society on conditional release (Howard, 1999). The released culprit is expected to live in the community under strict supervision and also ensure that they uphold high levels of discipline. Consequently, the freedom of the offender is curtailed or limited and this may lead to distress and withdrawal.

In the vast majority of European nations, life incarceration does not point toward confinement of one's entire natural life. In states such as the USA and Western European nations, a sentence of life incarceration often has a minimum number of years that may be served in prison. However, Life Imprisonment without Parole (LWOP) in the USA requires that the inmate will serve the remainder of their natural life in prison (Browning Waid & Jensen 2010). Studies dealing specifically with women's experiences of life incarceration in the United States have shown that the aspect related to coping with life in prison on an indeterminate sentence is faced by numerous challenges. According to Dye & Aday (2013) there are innumerable ways used by female lifers to adjust to prison life and these are commonly coupled with thoughts of suicide. Lempert (2016) also observes that life incarceration as experienced by women in US prisons is paralleled to a devastating experience, which is beyond what they can bear.

In Germany, persons serving life sentences are eligible to a parole hearing after 15 years. However, this waiting period is increased to 18 years for grave violations such as murder with violence and to 26 years in the case of terrorism verdict (Jensen, et al., 2010). The lifers are, therefore, exposed to a prolonged period of anxiety and uncertainty, which is likely to lead to hopelessness thus affecting their social and psychological health. Originally, in England and Wales, prisons had previously existed

as institutions to house those awaiting sentence or the execution of it. It was also meant to hold defaulters and those guilty of relatively trivial crimes (Joyce, 2013). These institutions later assumed a different purpose as institutions to dissuade crimes and reform criminals. Further, prisons became dominated by a protective attitude that emphasized secure confinement to safeguard the public from the anti-social activities of the inmates (Joyce, 2013). This eventually led to the aspect of life imprisonment in order to keep the offenders away from the society on relatively permanent basis. The prolonged confinement may eventually cause anxiety and distress to the inmate and is likely to affect their social relationships especially with the family members.

The purpose of life imprisonment in the Australian jurisdictions was retributive, to incapacitate, deterrent and denunciatory (Anderson, 2012). The aspect of life incarceration has survived historically and has general usefulness because of perceived necessity to punish atrocious crimes of dangerous offenders. Life incarceration is also used to deter the offenders and others from committing such crimes and to symbolically express the moral outrage of the community against crime (Anderson, 2012). However, when offenders are permanently rejected by the society due to their anti-social behaviour, there is a probability of suffering low self-esteem as well as social withdrawal. The very nature of total separation of the offenders from a familiar social environment might cause loneliness and a sense of rejection among the inmates.

In Africa, as purported by Nielsen and Ehlersin (2005), countries such as South Africa ruled death sentence as unconstitutional in 1995, giving way to the provision of mandatory minimum sentences for serious crimes. The aim of these sentences was to reduce serious and violent crimes, achieve consistency in sentencing and satisfying the public that sentences were sufficiently severe (Nielsen & Ehlersin, 2005). In Uganda, Namyalo and Macalesher (2012) noted that life incarceration is not mandatory since the law court have the dictate at their discretion, as to the length of sentence that can be passed to the convict. However, in the Kenyan situation, life incarceration means that the offender remains in prison throughout their life without the likelihood of a conditional release. Namyalo and Macalesher (2012) state that inmates serving life or long-term incarceration frequently experience discrepancy in treatment and inferior condition of confinement in comparison to other types of prisoners. The life-imprisoned

inmates undergo separation from the other prison's populations, insufficient living amenities and extreme use of hand-cuffing. In other cases, they are prohibited from communicating with other prisoners, subjected to extended use of solitary confinement and have limited visits entitlement (Namyalo & Macalesher, 2012). Such conditions can cause unwarranted psychological pain and suffering, trauma and worry to the lifer as a result of the prolonged stay in prison.

The number of life-imprisoned inmates in Kenya, according to Namyalo and Macalesher (2012), is growing significantly. This may be, in part, associated with the number of life sentences related criminalities that include forgery, robbery and rioting. Prisons in Kenya, as posited by Namyalo and Macalesher (2012), are generally overcrowded and this condition extends to the convicts on death penalty and the life sentenced prisoners. However, in spite of this problem being attended to partially by rehabilitation programmes designed for re-integration into society, it does not put into account those inmates on death penalty together with the ones convicted to a life-imprisonment sentence. Namyalo and Macalesher (2012) further note that the actual challenge for the Kenya Prison Service (KPS) is founded on how to efficiently handle the offender awaiting execution and those serving an indeterminate sentence, and will never be released into the society. The life-imprisoned inmates have to be helped to survive in the prison environment in a manner that upholds their rights to human self-respect and self-esteem without putting other prisoners or the life of the prison staff at risk. Life incarceration may cause problems to the inmates due to social isolation, total dependence on the prison warders and suspension of time. There is also loneliness and the rigid routine of prison life, which may be equally stressful to the inmates. Loneliness has been perceived as being a threat to the inmate's psychological and physical health. It upsurges risks in relation to mental pain, including depression and anxiety as well as suicidal ideas. Bearing this in mind, therefore, it is imperative that the influence of life incarceration on inmates' psychological well-being and social health be established, to facilitate the establishment of a pertinent system to aid in the improvement of the prisoners' social and psychological well-being while in prison.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Life incarceration is one of the significant forms of legal punishment in Kenya. It is meant to deter offenders from criminal acts as well as protect the society from rebellious individuals in relation to the law. Apart from maintaining the social tranquility within the country, life incarceration is also a tool to reform the criminal from being a social menace into a worthy citizen, respecting the Kenyan laws. However, despite the attention given to the psychosocial well-being of the lifers in order to facilitate the rehabilitation process, cases of high levels of violence in prisons and especially inter-personal conflicts are rampant among inmates in Kenya. These anti-social activities and mental instability may be indicators of unresolved psychological and social challenges experienced by lifers. The life prisoners are a unique group of inmates due to the nature of their indeterminate imprisonment term and therefore are likely to be affected differently from other populations. Several studies have been carried out highlighting the undesirable consequences of imprisonment, challenges faced by short-term prisoners, as well as psychosocial effects of female inmates in Kenya. However, there is little documentation on the extent to which life incarceration influences inmates, on issues related to their psychological well-being and social relationships based on gender. Therefore, it is crucial that the possibly detrimental aspects of life incarceration in Kenya be determined. This may ensure accuracy in implementing the therapeutic and rehabilitation goal of life imprisonment. This research, thus, intended to determine the effect of life incarceration on the lifers' psycho-social well-being by comparing male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of life incarceration on the psycho-social well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- ii. To determine the influence of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

- iii. To establish whether there exists differences in the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- iv. To establish whether there exist differences in the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

### **1.5 Hypothesis of the Study**

The study tested the following hypotheses at a significant level of  $\alpha=0.05$ .

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on the social relationship of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on inmates' psychological well-being in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on inmates' social relationship in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Findings of the present study will inform the society on the predicament of the life-imprisoned inmates, consequently informing the society's attitude and perception towards the lifers. This is likely to enhance positive social relationship, which may be therapeutic for the lifers. The prison policy makers and administrators may benefit since the study may guide them to include appropriate policies and programmes that are specially tailored for the social and psychological needs of the life-imprisoned inmates. This may ensure that effective intervention is offered to the lifers. The research findings are likely to help organize pertinent training for the prison staff assigned to supervise prisoners, to deal with difficult psychological situations and ensure that appropriate psychological support is provided to such inmates promptly. The training may further assist the prison staff to understand the effects of life incarceration; this will consequently help to improve each life imprisoned offenders' chance of rehabilitation.

The findings of the study may help the Kenya Prison Service personnel to determine whether life incarceration is an appropriate method for behaviour change for the inmates. This is by way of evaluating through the findings the extent to which the rehabilitation goal has been achieved. The findings of this study may offer significant information, which is likely to aid psychotherapists initiate and employ valid counselling services, which are targeting the individual lifer and the specific needs of each of the life-sentenced inmates. This way, the psychological services offered to the life-sentenced prisoners will be accurate and profitable. Thus, it may also help improve each offender's chance for psychological and social health and equally the prison's behaviour modification goal. The findings of the study will profit the lifers by empowering them to live on, despite the verdict to remain in prison for the rest of their lives. The research findings will fill the knowledge gap regarding the effect of life incarceration on inmates. The information will shed light on critical areas in the rehabilitation process of the lifers, which were hitherto unexplored. The findings of the study may lead to an alternative method of dealing with the life imprisoned inmates.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the present research was limited to designated prisons in Kenya, where life-sentenced inmates are incarcerated. The study area was selected purposively to involve different prisons based on gender, and also to cover four different geographical regions. The prisons include: Nyeri Main prison (King'ong'o); in the central region; Naivasha Maximum in the Rift Valley region, Lang'ata Women in Nairobi region and Kisumu Main prison (Kondiaga), which is in Nyanza region. Naivasha and Lang'ata prisons are inhabited by male and female inmates respectively, while Kisumu and Nyeri prisons have both a male and a female section each. The populations of the lifers who are detained in the prisons, together with selected prison constables and counsellors serving in the prisons were the target for the study. The content of the study was confined to establishing the effect of life incarceration on psycho-social well-being of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The psychological aspects of incarceration which were studied comprised deprivation, stress personality change, identity loss and trauma. The social aspects were inclusive of family relationship, withdrawal, and social isolation among lifers, inter-prisoner relationship and constable-lifer relationship.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

The limitation of the study may have been language barrier since the research instruments were in English and some of the lifers had challenges in comprehending the requirements of the questions. To overcome this limitation, the researcher interpreted the questions to the respondents who had problems with English, the language used in the research instrument.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

The assumptions guiding the study were that:

- i. The prison environment of the inmates serving life sentence in the different prisons in Kenya was more or less the same.
- ii. Respondents provided honest answers and interpretation of the questions was done accurately.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

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### 1.11 Definitions of Terms

In this study, the following terms were defined as follows: -

- Counsellor:** The person given the responsibility of giving advice, help and guidance on personal and psychological issues to the lifers after listening to their problems/challenges.
- Crime:** An activity in Kenya that involves breaking the law thus leading to a punishment.
- Criminal:** An individual, who has violated the law of a society or a nation, has been tried in the Kenyan court of law and convicted, thus punished by being imprisoned in the Kenyan prison.
- Deprivation:** This is where a life-imprisoned inmate is denied life's necessities such as freedom, social association or enjoyment due to the nature of their sentence, which in turn affects their psychological well-being.
- Effect:** The consequence/influence life incarceration has on the social relationships and psychological well-being of the lifers.
- Family Relationship:** It refers to the way the lifers interrelate with their kin who are out of prison in terms of visitations, involvement in family affairs/decisions and support.
- Identity Loss:** A situation where lifers are influenced by the prison environment and experiences ending up in developing certain coping mechanisms to survive and consequently losing their initial self, dignity, humanity and self-respect.
- Incarcerate/Imprison:** The actual physical restraint of a lawbreaker/criminal by detaining him in prison for a period as dictated by the law of Kenya.
- Inmates:** Individuals who have been imprisoned and are living together in the same prison.
- Isolation:** A situation where lifers lack association with other inmates and are segregated, perceived as unwanted

persons, causing anxiety, a feeling of unhappiness or loneliness to the lifers.

**Lifers:** In this study, this will refer to the prisoners who are required to serve a life term sentence without the likelihood of parole as stipulated in the Kenyan law.

**Life Incarceration/Life Imprisonment:** A sentence of punishment in jail where the convicted person is to spend the remaining time of their life in prison as stated in Kenyan law.

**Life-Sentenced Prisoner:** An individual confined in a correctional facility for the whole of their life according to the law of Kenya.

**Personality Change:** Refers to life prisoners undergoing character transformation or unusual change of behaviour contributed to by the nature of the prison sentence.

**Power:** Lifers' ability to control or be in charge of their own lives and decisions.

**Prison:** A facility run by the Government of Kenya that basically holds prisoners or offenders, for duration of time dictated upon by the law, who have already been tried in a court of law and found guilty of an offence.

**Prisoner:** A person jailed/confined in a correctional facility such as a prison, as a punishment, after a court ruling, convicting him/her of a criminal offence according to the Kenyan law.

**Psychological:** This has to do with the lifer's emotional aspect and/or mental state and the way in which it works.

**Psychological Well-being:** A state of the life imprisoned inmate enjoying general good health, comfort and happiness mentally and emotionally.

**Social Elements:** This refers to aspects which enhance lifers opportunity to interact with people within the prison environment, such as conversations, friendship and/or communal activities.

- Social Relationship:** The manner in which life imprisoned inmates interact/relate with each other in prison, towards prison officials and with other members of the society outside of prison, such as family members and friends, while the lifers are serving the life sentence term in prison.
- Trauma:** In this study, it refers to severe emotional wound, pain shock or an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds the lifers' ability to cope with, because of being life imprisoned, and may cause psychological damage.
- Constable-prisoner Relationship:** It refers to the way the lifers relate, interact and/or associate with prison constables within the prison in the course of serving their prison term.
- Withdrawal:** In this study it refers to the lifers preferring being alone or by themselves and finding no pleasure interrelating with other inmates or other persons within the prison, resulting from life-imprisonment.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Perception of Life Incarceration**

Life imprisonment is sometimes termed as a real-life sentence since offenders are sentenced to spend the rest of their natural lives in the environment of the prison (Johnson, 2008). The aspect of loss of control and disruption of the course of life are involved. Immediately the lifers get to prison, they have to accept the idea of starting a life a new away from home. They also have to prepare psychologically and physically for a transformation of the routines which they had previously held in every area of their lives. The male and female lifers are expected to manage their individuality through the loss of long held anticipation of how their lives are likely to progress (Jewkes, 2005). The lifers' direction of life is interrupted abruptly and the realization of what has been withdrawn from them may be considered as the final sanction of life. Therefore, people serving a life-sentence are forced to make prison their home while they live. Life imprisonment can also be viewed as death by imprisonment, as these individuals are, in real sense, condemned to die in prison. According to Johnson (2008) the sentence of life in prison without the likelihood of a nearly release can equally be as painful as a death punishment, though in diverse ways. It therefore becomes difficult for an offender, sentenced to life imprisonment, to easily adjust to such a situation without feeling distressed and withdrawn. The thought of living in jail for the rest of one's life and eventually dying there can be traumatizing to the inmates. Amongst the utmost challenges of the inmates serving lengthy, unspecified sentences is the overwhelming nature of the time ahead of them, which may feel incredible to contemplate (Liebling, Arnold & Straub, 2012). In an ethnographic study of a modern prison in California, Irwin (2005) found that:

For long-termers, the new situation of doing time, enduring years of suspension, being deprived of material conditions, and living in crowded conditions without privacy, with reduced options, arbitrary control, disrespect and economic exploitation is excruciatingly frustrating and aggravating. Anger, frustration and a burning sense of injustice coupled with the crippling process inherent in imprisonment, significantly reduce the likelihood (that prisoners can) pursue a viable, relatively conventional, non-criminal life (Irwin 2005 p 168).

Therefore, long term imprisonment epitomizes an intense rapture in the inmate's way of life and selfhood. It equally interferes with their course of life and triggers an intense

deep shock to their sense of what was hitherto perceived as insignificant (Aresti et al., (2010) Liebling et al. 2011). The long-term prisoners also have the challenge of finding meaning and purpose in life, as well as guarding their identity against the influence of institutional life (Liebeling et al., 2012). The verdict of a life sentence is received with shock and may be conceived as a kind of grief for oneself (Jewkes, 2005). As posited by Liebling, (2014) convicts who serve very long imprisonment terms may experience an extreme existential crisis, overwhelming by a sense of hopelessness and desolation about their difficulty situation.

The greatest basic pain inflicted by life without parole according to McGunigall-Smith (2004b) is that it is an indefinite period of tediousness, uncertainty, and anxiety. Life imprisonment is also characterized by intense instants of insight into one's short comings as an individual which causes them to live in regrets. Most of the lifers view their lives as being completely ruined and with no hope of liberation. Some of the life prisoners perceive the sentence as a fate so terrible only compared to death (McGunigall-Smith, 2004b). This depressive existence is only brought to termination when the prisoner deceases, and as Aday (2003) explains, the prisoner dies alone, without being mourned, which is a disgrace in the person's own view and also in the eyes of humanity. Life imprisoned inmates, unlike the other convicts, have no chance of being released from jail. In real sense, their life as they know it ends at the prison gate. According to the lifers, a life sentence term is an end by itself and therefore the prisoner feels as though their life is in actual fact over (Jewkes, 2005). An all-encompassing fear of the lifer incarcerated inmates is whether they will manage to live through their term and what it would cost them as persons. The life of the prisoner in the free world is seemingly concluded, however, their life as an inmate begins. This is reflected in one inmate's words who attested that:

I do not know how I am going to make it. There is a man who lives next door to me. He is about seventy years old and his crime was multiple murders back in the sixties. He has been in here ever since. . . . Sometimes I wonder if and how I am going to manage living in here that long. I think when you come to prison you stop developing, that is why he is also very childish. He got arrested at a very young age like me and I wonder. I think it is pretty obvious that I stopped developing the minute I was arrested. You do not develop in here. That stops and you are basically stuck at whatever age you were when you were arrested. So, I see this seventy-year-old man with the mentality of a twenty-

three year old and I was arrested when I was nineteen, (McGunigall-Smith, 2004b, p. 15).

It thus appears that a number of key changes take place in the lives of some long-term inmates, with many of them progressively changing their patterns of thinking, acting as well as their feelings. According to Craig (2003) the exceptional entirety of controlling the lifers' all aspects of life forces them to become totally reliant on the prison management to take charge of their survival. Prisoners eventually lose ability for self-restraint and the will power to regulate their behaviour due to extreme over-control by the institution. They are, therefore, enforced to adjust to an institutional regime that restricts practically all aspects of their behaviour. (Craig 2003). The perception of life imprisonment is likely to induce a sense of resignation to the lifer since they keep on pondering about their time of death, which is a painful condition to be in for an endless period of time. It may end up adversely affecting the lifers' psychological and social well-being. In a research carried out by Crewe et al. (2020) one of the interviewees explains their perceptiveness of the life imprisonment sanction by observing that:

All of one's plans and life-goals are very much put on hold until one's re-emergence into the light of day. Perhaps the better analogy is of a cocoon. We are trapped in a chrysalis while the outside world rushes on without us, yet within the chrysalis a metamorphosis is taking place. We change as people; we achieve certain things, removed from the real world. And so what emerges is a transformed individual, for better or worse [...] One can never be truly the same or simply take off from where we left off. [...] Whatever happens in here, I will be catching up on all those lost years of my youth. [...] Think of all the things I should be doing now: establishing my career, getting married, having a family, settling down, and amassing all the accoutrements of living.-a home, a car, etc (Crewe et al., 2020, pp. 340).

This presents life incarceration as a life-threatening experience for the inmate both emotionally and socially. It is a total denial of freedom for a limitless duration causing psychosocial pain to the lifers. The male and female lifers are made to deal with challenging issues related to self-discovery, their sense of belonging, self-reconstruction as well as the multiple losses incurred as a result of life imprisonment. According to Crewe et al. (2020), the long-term prisoners have to confront acute anxieties, coping with prison challenges and handling matters of selfhood in order to give life meaning despite the new culture in a custodial environment.

However, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) held a different view about the indeterminate time spent by the lifers in prison as they noted that long-term sentences could lead to productive time if accompanied with mature coping. This would be possible if the prisoners recognize and uses the appropriate resources accessible in prison so as to attain independence, safety and affiliation to others. In order to attain autonomy, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) observe that lifers decide to intentionally accept and thereby consent to the aspects of incarceration which are beyond their control. Consequently, it is crucial that an investigation be done to establish how life incarceration affects inmates so that the negative consequences can be avoided.

## **2.2 Nature of Prisons**

Prison is an establishment meant to lock up criminals, guard the community from crime and offenders, and transform these criminals into respectable citizens (Cherie, 2012). However, it has been reported that incarceration may intensify vulnerability and heighten the prisoner's mental ill health (Cherie, 2012). This may be as a result of the physical, social and structural environment surrounding the institution, characterized by over-congestion, violence and unhealthy relationships. World Health Organization (WHO) stated that mental disorders may advance during the jail term itself as a result of the prevailing conditions (WHO/ICRC, 2005). The factors which have the ability to enhance the poor prisoner mental health comprise overcrowding, prison ferocity, separation from previous social contacts, lack of confidence and poor relationship opportunities. Factors related to poor health and deprived mental health service provision in the course of incarceration and an overall lack of personal space or compulsory solitary imprisonment can be characteristic of prisons (WHO/ICRC, 2005). In nature, prison life is a total routine and a purely controlled, characteristic which causes prisoners to gradually lose their capability to exert power and be in charge of their future. According to Irwin (2005) the inmates spend several months and sometimes years of waking up at a particular time to specific repeated signals and experiencing each day in a monotonous manner. They are expected to respond to specific and similar commands, living with people accustomed to communicating in a exact way and doing things repeatedly. This lifestyle hardens inmates to an extremely entrenched set of unconscious behaviours and involuntary responses (Irwin, 2005). The

nature of prison life greatly contrasts life in the society with the latter being free and unpredictable.

### **2.2.1 Prison Environment in Relation to Life Incarceration**

Prison environment, denotes the social, emotional, organizational and physical features of a correctional establishment as perceived by prisoners and prison staff (Ross, Diamond, & Saylor, 2007). Depending on its presentation, the prison environment may adversely exert pressure on the mental processes of the inmates. Cooper and Berwink (2001) stated that the severity of environmental stress that exists in some correctional institutions has an important role in the levels of anxiety and hopelessness that prisoners experience while confined in them. For many prisoners, the consequences of the prison atmosphere reduce the potential for prisons to secure reform and rehabilitation (Joyce, 2013). This is likely to be the case because prisons detain people under settings which they have not chosen and in close proximity with others whose association may be undesirable. This may imply that the environment in which the life prisoners find themselves is imposed on them and is likely to cause emotional pain and psychological distress. Johnson (2008) posits that prison is often a devastating place to live in. This is more so for the lifers who remain in this place for long periods. A main feature of prison life, which may cause anxiety, is replication of events, instructions and set-ups. Therefore, each day in prison is fundamentally the same. This leads to a lifetime of infinite dullness, which is an appalling thing to endure. In a study carried out by Johnson and Toch (2000), one of the inmates observed:

I awaken with a feeling of dread. A day in prison offers nothing to look forward to. It is an existence of endless repetition, restriction, and regimentation Prison is sameness, day after day, week after week, year after year. It is total confinement of body and spirit and total separation from everything real and important. (Johnson & Toch, 2000, pp. 138-140)

All prisoners, lifers inclusive, are pulled out from an established setting with enriching social relations and familiar routines, then they are cast into a totally different hectic environment which they are unaccustomed to. The new prison set-up is characterized by tension and the organization of events is absolutely out of the inmates' control. The prison environment can contribute to psychological complications, and even for those convicts who do not have an existing psychiatric disorder, this environment can be a



cause of psychological trauma (Hamilton, 2007; Huey & McNulty, 2005). This may be contributed to by the undetermined duration in prison thus developing fear and anxiety. In the end, the psychological trauma may lead to emotive over-control, estrangement and psychological distancing.

Although the prison is meant to have a reformatory role, Goldsmith (1997) observes that it encounters conflicting and undermining environmental factors such as isolation, violence, lack of personal space, and propagation of the criminal expertise. Goldsmith (1997) further states that the prison environment can also serve as a traineeship where prisoners learn unique criminal skills therefore affecting the rehabilitative goal of imprisonment. Moreover, the prison, as an institution and an environment, is influenced by both inmates and guards, in order to help ease the passing of time and to sustain some individual identity within the institution. Should this happen, it is likely to undermine the intended purpose of the prison (Goldsmith, 1997). It is worth noting that social aspects of the inner prison environment play an important role throughout the inmate's time of incarceration.

According to Bradford (2006), the social dimension concerns such factors as inmates communicating with each other and forming relationships in the course of confinement. These can help in reducing the effects of incarceration and the length of the sentence. Social elements also allow prisoners to become involved with social groups as well as forming relations with the prison guards (Bradford, 2006). Consequently, if the environment is unfriendly and stressful, the inmates may be psychologically distressed and socially isolated. In the case of lifers, the prison environment is presented as more difficult than the rest of the inmates because of the varied set-up and treatment which they are accorded. (Barykbayeva et al., 2012) posit that life-sentenced prisoners are regularly isolated and treated more severely than other prisoners serving definite sentence terms. The life prisoners are separated from other inmates and kept under a more difficult and stringent regime based of their legal status as life imprisoned inmates. The severe and discriminatory prison regime for life-sentenced prisoners reinforces its corrective nature in the region and raises severe concerns about insensitive and degrading punishment (Penal Reforms International, 2012). The prison environment under which the lifers operate is likely to disadvantage them deep into

their life. Irwin (2005) observes that in the case of the inmates serving long term sentences, the idea of bearing prolonged years of suspension and enduring extreme deprivations including lack of privacy can lead to frustrations.

The nature of the prison environment, which is likely to be harsh and stressful, may take a toll on the inmates' mental and emotional well-being. The prisoners are meant to adjust to unusual living circumstances and this may conflict with their character, therefore, affecting the inmates' psychological well-being. It is possible to deduce that the environment the lifers are exposed to is coupled with difficult issues to tolerate, thus posing a threat to their psycho-social stability. This may further diminish the inmates' ability to maintain their dignity and self-esteem.

### **2.2.2 Over-Crowding in Relation to Life Incarceration**

Overcrowding in a Prison means that there is a discrepancy between prison capacity and the number of inmates to be housed within the prison. (Council of Europe, 2000). The problem of congestion in prison, in particular, has been blamed for much of the harm caused to inmates during imprisonment (Council of Europe, 2000). Overcrowding is claimed to be negatively influencing the psychological health of inmates (Stewart, 2007). The negative influence is likely to be heightened by the extended period in prison which is experienced by the lifers. According to Haney (2006), National Research Council (2014), decline of mental health among the inmates in the course of a prison sentence has been linked to congestion and solitary internment. Similarly, overcrowding remains a key factor in influencing suicidal activities according to Huey and McNulty (2005), and it is also likely to bring about harassment and self-harm amongst prisoners Lawrence and Andrews (2004) purported that deducing events as hostile, within the prison set-up, were interrelated to experiences of crowding with those prisoners involved in violent acts perceived as hostile, intentional and inhumane. A closer view of the aspect of prison crowding, according to Lawrence and Andrews, (2004) showed that crowding was associated with increased levels of provocation, anxiety, and fatigue. The aspect of violating individual private space can be a main contributor to violence and hostility as a result of close proximity. Therefore, this overcrowding is likely to cause stress to the inmates and may impact on the individual lifers differently.

### **2.2.3 Safety in Relation to Lifers' Well-Being**

Inmates' safety within the area of confinement is a main issue of concern because it affects both the prisoners and the correctional staff. This is the case because the incarceration of criminals for long periods is an extremely traumatic situation, and violent, destructive behaviour by inmates is likely to erupt.

When imprisoned, an offender may be put into prolonged closeness with other convicts who, in many cases, may have had a long history of violent or violent behaviour. It is a condition which may provoke anxiety even for the hardest of re-offenders (Santos 1995). Notwithstanding the mutual support, which may flourish in the inmate population, there are a sufficient number of offenders within this group of lawbreakers, who may deny the other inmates of the sense of security. The feelings of a long-term inmate beginning a 45-year sentence in an American prison exemplify these problems.

There will be violence. How can I escape it? I am young and I will be living in a maximum-security prison. It will be inevitable that I be tried. And I will respond in a manner appropriate for prisons. The constant companionship of thieves, rapists, killers, aggressive homosexuals, and snitches that will say or do anything to save their own hide is far from relaxing. All of these factors exacerbate the tensions of beginning a long prison term (Santos, 1995p.36-40).

The aspect of insecurity is likely to cause anxiety to the inmates, which may be detrimental to their psycho-social health.

### **2.2.4. Life Incarceration in Relation to Gender**

The experience of serving a long-life sentence has a gendered texture to it (Crewe, Hulley and Wright, 2016). While all prisoners, irrespective of the imprisonment term they are serving, feel the pain of imprisonment, gender represents a key differentiating variable in informing the incarceration experience (Crewe, et al., 2016). The influence life incarceration has on the male inmates is likely to differ from that of the female lifers. Ward and Kassenbaum (2009) observed that, in most cases, in spite of women being exposed to almost the same challenges and deprivation of confinement just as the locked up men, the female inmates may tend to suffer the loss of family roles and affectionate relations much more intensely than men.

Female prisoners are also more likely to be the targets of sexual abuse by staff (Buchanan, 2007). According to Beck et al (2013) among all the cases reported concerning staff sexual misbehavior in prison, three-quarters involved staff harassing women prisoners. In addition, female victims of sexual pressure and assault in prison are much more likely than their male complements to report that the culprits were staff members (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2006). Therefore, the women end up experiencing extreme emotional pain due to such unresolved issues encountered within the retention area.

Walker and Worrall (2000) in their study on the challenges experienced by male and female inmates concluded that women serving life incarceration suffer in different ways from the pains of indeterminacy. This was specifically, the loss of control over fertility and the loss of relationships with children. A study on effects of incarceration on inmates at Industrial Area Remand and Lang'ata Women's Prison in Kenya by Agesa (2015) found that both male and female inmates are psychologically affected by imprisonment as early as 4 years of confinement. Agesa (2015) further confirmed that the inmates suffered rejection and lonesomeness. Studies reveal that the way in which male and female inmates manage themselves while in prison differs in that the female inmates incline to forming family structures in an effort to reconstruct some of the roles they had formally followed in society before imprisonment. Nevertheless, men have a tendency to isolate themselves from the rest of the inmates and develop a habit of being more aggressive towards the other prisoners (Johnson, 2002). According to Keen (2014), female inmates experience the problems of long life incarceration more severely than male do. The problems they have to deal with include deprivations of outside relationships, emotional and physical vulnerability as well as release anxiety (Keen, 2014). Such problems may lead to a feeling of anger and frustrations and inability to control one's activities, therefore affecting their mental and social well-being.

### **2.3 Life Incarceration and Psychological Well-Being of Lifers**

Inmates serving the indeterminate sentence describe the damaging mental effects related with the severity the punishment in terms of lonesomeness, emotional pain, regret, bitterness, frustration and helplessness (Johnson McGunigall 2008). Loneliness

can be an excruciating and unbearable experience; contributed to by the absence of social relationships, belongingness or when one experiences a sense of segregation. It therefore implies that loneliness is usually a discrepancy between social needs and their availability in the environment, and when these needs are not provided for, the aspect of aloneness sets in. Therefore, for healthy social relationships, the key social requirements should be met adequately. These may comprise aspects such as friendship, acceptance, compassion and a feeling of belonging as well as social support. This will aid alleviating suffering from social isolation which is likely to lead to emotional pain. A major source of anxiety and distress for the long-time inmates has to do with the maintenance of a positive self-perception and self-worth in the middle of the challenges posed by the prison setting over an indeterminate period. According to Jewkes (2005) life incarceration is extremely disruptive since it interferes with foundations and normally tacit assumptions about selfhood and society, how the world functions and who they are. Life imprisonment also influences other matters of life such as friendship, privacy, self-identity, and self-consciousness. There is also a likelihood of one's aspect of ageing being affected as well as experiencing physical deterioration.

### **2.3.1 Conceptualization of Psychological Well-being**

The concept of well-being is perceived as a subjective feeling of happiness, self-actualization and worth in personal and social setting. It also entails accomplishment and support in diverse aspects of life (Yang, et al, 2009). It is a state of physical, psychological, emotional and social happiness as a whole. Psychological well-being of inmates, according to Wooldredge (1999), is conceptualized as reflecting inmates' perception of insecurity, anxiety, low-self-esteem and isolation felt during incarceration. When the inmates experience these emotional signs, then it may be concluded that they are psychologically unwell. According to Leigey and Ryder (2014), it is due to the length of time to be spent in prison that LWOP inmates remain in the gloom environment, and, coupled with the little chance of release; it makes it a more painful punishment than other types of prison sentences.

Lack of certainty about the course of the lifers' lives has numerous of psychological consequences on the life imprisoned inmates (United Nations, 1994). The uncertainty weighs intensely on life incarcerated prisoners, for in certain instances, the totality of

their life is continually at risk. The inmates do not have an actual insight of their own time frames (United Nations, 1994). The psychological impact may be equally because of inadequate support services from the relevant associations such as counsellors, social workers or even family members who are likely to have disowned them due to their criminal behaviour. Hamilton (2007); O'Mahony, (2000) note that provision of psychiatric care in prisons is lacking severely, resulting in many prisoners developing mental health problems which may not have existed prior to confinement. For the prisoners who already had psychiatric diagnosis, the experience of life imprisonment has been shown to worsen their condition. According to Hamilton (2007); O'Mahony (2000), one of the aspects that may worsen the prisoners' psychological health is their attitude in dealing with the issue of life incarceration. Due to its indeterminate nature, the prisoner may conceive a feeling of hopelessness at the thought of being in jail for life. The lifer might eventually adapt a method of dealing with any arising challenge by withdrawing and keeping the issue to oneself. This would be more pronounced in cases where the other fellow inmates cannot be trusted or they themselves have personal problems requiring attention. This therefore, denies the prisoners an opportunity to share out their problems and so they remain under psychological distress.

Solitary confinement is also damaging to the prisoners' psychological well-being since the freedom of the offenders is compromised. Protracted duration of isolation may have undesirable influence on inmates. The lifers are likely to be withdrawn and suffer dejection since they are deprived of the company of the people, they are close to. Howard (1999) further asserts that solitary incarceration is, for most of the lawbreakers who spend long periods in lonely environments, a mentally detrimental punishment, and such extreme isolation results in a diverse psychological symptom. These symptoms may range from memory loss, to intense anxiety, to delusions, and, under the most extreme cases of sensory deprivation, people go crazy (Howard, 1999). The nearly total loss of liberty that solitary incarceration involves is dehumanizing and may hurt the inmate's potential for rehabilitation (Howard, 1999). It is therefore, ascertained that inmates serving a life of lasting incarceration have recorded issues such as permanent separation from loved ones, ageing in ill-equipped institutions, lack of personal space, unpalatable meals and insufficient health care as part of the pains of imprisonment (ACLU 2013, George & Solomon 2008).

The severity of a life in prison may not be fully understood or appreciated by everyone because some society members fail to consider incarceration as a punishment. The sentiments fronted by the society, according to McGunigall-Smith (2004b) is that prisoners' basic needs and other amenities like recreation periods are provided for, thus making prison life appear less punitive. Additionally, since inmates do not have to toil to be fed, clothed, and accommodated, it may seem, even to the prisoners themselves, that they are being overprotected. However, the profound reality is that, the emotional, not physical, aspects of prison life, which prisoners find immensely traumatic. The emotional stress is evident as expressed by one inmate in a study carried out by McGunigall-Smith (2004b):

It may sound weird but the actual physical part of being here is really easy. It almost makes you feel like you are a baby because you are fed; all your bills are taken care of. You do not have to do anything. You do not have to get out of bed in the morning if you do not want to. ... Everything is provided. But, the emotional is hard. I hate this place with a passion. I cannot stand it. Sometimes I wake up and start looking around me and then I just lay there with my eyes closed because I just do not want to look at it. I do not want to see the concrete. I do not want to remember that I am here (McGunigall- Smith 2004b): (p. 5).

This explains the emotional turmoil the prisoners go through which is likely to lead to stress and withdrawal and may undermine the inmate's inter-personal relationship and by extension the psychological and social wellness.

### **2.3.2 Deprivation as a Psychological aspect of Life Incarceration**

Numerous features of life in prison, including material deprivations, constrained movement, and lack of meaningful activities and a nearly complete absence of personal privacy expose inmates to powerful psychological stressors that can adversely affect their emotional well-being (National Research Council 2014). Incarceration demands a considerable reduction of an individual's freedom and many other basic rights; therefore, deprivation is an inherent aspect of being imprisoned for life. According to Johnson (2008), convicts are deprived of their independence and restricted in their freedom of movement. They are also denied heterosexual relationships and relationships with family and friends. The inmates experience a loss of control and a lack of previously enjoyed goods and services as well as individual security and

protection. Johnson (2008) further asserts that jails are experienced by inmates as settings of deprivation, as exemplified by the observation that,

Locking people up means locking them away from the free world with its variety and opportunity that is now replaced with a deadening routine of lock-ins and lock-outs, of group feedings and group movements; it means locking people away from loved ones who are now replaced by strangers and keepers, few of whom even know their names let alone care about them; it means locking prisoners away from the many simple things we all enjoy, like good food eaten in good company and moments of treasured privacy. The life of the lifer is made up of many small losses, which cumulate and leave the prisoner with a sense that he or she has no dignity or worth as an individual. At the core of the prison experience, of course, is the loss of freedom (Johnson, 2008, p 328-346).

One of the areas where early-stage inmates expressed a stunted form of agency was in relation to control of their life, self-sufficiency and autonomy, which were matters of great importance to them. In a survey carried out by Leigey, Prison and Schartmueller (2019) the female participants noted that having to obey other peoples' rules and orders and harbouring a feeling of lacking control over one's own life developed a sense of hopelessness in the inmates. This was reported as the most severe problematic issue they experienced, though the male respondents in the study did not experience the same effects. However, concerning the aspect of lacking control over one's life, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) noted, the growth of personal routines afforded a sense of independence to the inmates and also assisted them in achieving safety; since these routines countered the uncertainty of life in prison. This also protected them from any dangerous prisoners therefore reducing chances of being involved in ferocity and rules of violations.

In a study carried out by Sabbath and Cowles (1992) in relation to long-term inmates, it was found out that the most serious problems for life prisoners included lack of personal space during visitation and overcrowding in the cells. This means that there was no or limited chances of discussing issues with the visiting family members and other acquaintances. These difficulties are indicative of various forms of deprivation experienced by life imprisoned inmates and are likely to cause tension and apprehension (Sabbath & Cowles, 1992). According to Johnson and Toch (2000), for the inmates, the loss of liberty is devastating since all that they had taken for granted is withdrawn, leaving the inmates without any control over their beings and with no



choices to make as well. The decision of when they take their meals and from where, matters related to work, and sleep is left in the jurisdiction of the prison administration. The prisoners' lives are affixed to instructions and codes of practice that discourage and disregard normal reactions. The inmates take in the rules unquestioningly and adjust to them, similarly; they acclimatize to the overcrowded environments, body odours and lack of private surroundings since they have no alternative (Johnson & Toch, 2000).

According to a study by Walker and Worrall (2000), the life prisoners were experiencing emotional claustrophobia and were equally disturbed by the way other prisoners abused personal disclosures. The lifers also expressed the pain they felt for being made the subject of public discourse. One of the participants in the study stated that:

I like it when that door is shut, that's you and that's your time. No one coming to your door ... no one is going to come to your door and bother you and things like that [...] I do miss that, like having that privacy and just sometimes when you just want to be by yourself, and you just don't want anyone around you (Walker and Worrall (2000, p.132).

The deprivations and restrictions, the totality of control and continued absence of any real opportunity for happiness filled many convicts with unbearable levels of frustration, anger, uncontrollable and sudden outbursts of anger (Craig, 2003). However, the proponents of deprivation and strain perspective recommend that contact with the outside world improves inmates' potential to adjust to the jail set-up or deal with deprivation. Nevertheless, feelings of aloneness and loss or other strain inducing emotions emerging from negative effects of incarceration upsurges inmates' maladaptation to prison atmosphere (Johnson & McGunigall-Smith, 2006).

### **2.3.3 Stress as a Psychological aspect of Life Incarceration**

Stress, according to Randy and David (2008), refers to a personal or subjective feeling produced by events which are irrepressible, unmanageable or threatening the persons capability, making it difficult for one to handle them. Constant stress may lead to one feeling frustrated, angry, nervous, or anxious. Randy and David (2008) further observe that when the stress is not dealt with at the appropriate time and successfully so, feelings of lonesomeness, anxiety, sleeplessness and worrying may result. Stress can be a

common aspect of imprisonment due to the very nature of the prison environment. Haney (2001), observes that the notion of being in prison, especially those serving a life imprisonment term, makes some of the inmates feel infantilized. The degraded surroundings in which the prisoners live are a constant reminder of their compromised social status as lifers as well as their stigmatized social roles. As a result, a weakened sense of self-worth and personal value may result (Haney, 2001).

Majority of the prisoners continue to harbour fundamental feelings of extreme anxiety and resentment about their difficult situation, which is worsened by the thought of their inability to alter the situation. In extreme cases of institutionalization, inmates may consider themselves as the kind of persons who deserve only the degradation and stigma to which they have been subjected, while in custody (Haney, 2001). The state of a weakened sense of self-esteem and personal worth is further enlightened by Santos (1995) in his observation that inmates serving long-term sentences often lose their sense of self-efficacy and ones' autonomy is withdrawn. This, in the final analysis may lead to deep sadness or depression and thus cause general psychological illness as well as destabilized social relationships. Therefore, the many characteristics of prison life including high levels of inter-personal suspicion, fear and distress expose inmates to mental stressors that can adversely influence their emotional health. The inmates equally live with the fear of deterioration; socially, physically and psychologically due to the challenges of endless detention. Together with the indeterminacy of their prison term, the inmates are also unprotected from the harmful aspects of the prison environment such as bullying, isolation and discrimination. The aspect of loneliness experienced by the inmates is related with low life satisfaction and low elasticity. This has, consequently, been construed as a major cause of psychological stress particularly when combined with depression.

#### **2.3.4 Personality Change as a Psychological aspect of Life Incarceration**

Life-imprisonment does not provide a homogenous experience for all long-term prisoners (Liebling & Maruna, 2005). Different lifers, based on gender and as individuals, are influenced differently by their encounter as prisoners. According to Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) long-term sentences could contribute to productive time, if the prisoners are helped to develop mature coping mechanisms. This takes place

when the life-imprisoned inmates are able to recognize and utilize the appropriate and available resources in order to get to independence and security in relation to the others who are around them. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) further explain that life-imprisoned inmates chose deliberately to accept and thereby consent to the details of imprisonment that may have been out of their ability to change. This way, the prisoners became more thoughtful, tolerant and emphatic with time. However, some of the male and female lifers may be unable to accept the sentence term and end up experiencing negative changes. According to Liem and Kunst (2013), life-sentenced prisoners experience whole personality transformation and may bear Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This condition presents characteristics that comprise emotional numbing which, according to Liem and Kunst (2013), creates a permanent distance, which is beyond bridging, between themselves and other people.

The inmates prefer to keep to themselves and totally disassociate from everyone around them. According to Toch and Adams (2002) it is acceptable to conclude that prisons are stressful and the influence their environment has on inmates is undesirable. Therefore, the prisoners make a deliberate move to look for various patterns of survival and other forms of apparently maladaptive behaviour in an effort to cope with the extreme levels of stress which are experienced in incarceration. According to a study carried out by Liebling, Arnold and Straub (2012) one of the interviewed respondents, in relation to personality transformation noted that:

“I am a totally different person from what I first came to prison.... I have lost my identity I think.” “You are just another brick in the wall, yeah.” When asked if he felt part of the society, the prisoner responded, “No no no...you don’t even feel ... part of yourself, because I feel fake, somewhere out there is my personality floating around waiting for me to recapture it.” “I just want to get out of this jail and be myself again. This place is going to take my soul.” “As I said, you are the living dead. I’m a zombie. I’m spam. I’m meat in a tin; I have no association with the real world anymore.” Liebling, et al., (2012, p. 58-80).

The early stages of incarceration have been associated with high levels of emotional pain since the inmates experience an abrupt relocation from their earlier life (Liebling et al., 2005b). The period of incarceration is likely to be stressful especially for life imprisoned inmates because they have to confront the changes they are exposed to for a lifetime. According to a study by Liem and Kunst (2013), most of the prisoners go

through significant transformation partly due to the prison environment and as a way of coping with the prison term. When a person is doing a long-time term, they are hardened by the prison and they are made to feel distant from the rest of the prisoners since there is no emotional attachment to those they are forced to live with by the virtue of their being criminals.

### **2.3.5 Identity Loss as a Psychological aspect of Life Incarceration**

The process of losing individuality among lifers, which may lead to degradation, involves the crushing of one's former identity. This happens when the convict experiences physical separation from the familiar social set up and afterwards breaking down social roles when forced to embrace the prison's environment. Indeterminate prisoners, also referred to as life-sentenced inmates, experience and suffer more than a restriction of liberty. They are denied and stripped their fundamental sense of being and may experience incarceration as a kind of social death. When this happens, it causes grief and sadness for oneself; the harm involving lost worlds, futures and identities (Jewkes, 2005). Due to the magnitude of the varied emotional and social losses that they incur, prisoners on long jail-term respond to fears of worsening and threats to identity by placing quality attention on happenings that challenge the mind and body (Jewkes, 2005). According to Walker and Worrall (2006), the feelings of loss experienced by the women lifers, were so severe and all-encompassing that they paralleled the experience of bereavement.

Identity loss has been termed as a consequence of long-term imprisonment, since the inmates are effectively separated from the outside world for a big portion of their lives. These inmates are also denied the opportunity of positive self-development since they operate under the strict surveillance of the prison staff (Crawley & Sparks, 2006). Consequently, the lifer is obliged to construct their new life within the prison set-up, since their social ties or bonds on the outside world have been severed indefinitely (Harrington & Spohn, 2007). They end up experiencing a form of transformation and personal adjustment in order to fit well in the new prison set-up. As a result, convicts can no longer be themselves (Liebling, 2004) and for the long-term prisoner it increases the danger of social withdrawal as the sentence advances.

Long-term incarceration may bring about a deterioration of an inmate's behaviour and emotional wellness. The loss of one's character may lead to the damage of their self-esteem and self-value. Life-sentenced inmates are also likely to endure defects such as emotional problems characterized by indifference and inflexibility, problems in associating with others, infantile deterioration and increased introspection. Some prisoners, who find it incredibly difficult to take in the new status, develop coping mechanisms to enable them adapt to the life imprisonment sentence (Libeling et al., 2005a). This results in a rebirth of a different person to fit in the present environment. However, it is postulated that the actual coping mechanism that is aimed at alleviating some of the pains and the challenges of life incarceration might have a secondary effect. The coping mechanism is likely also to be transformational and in some sense incapacitating (Libeling et al., 2005a).

### **2.3.6. Trauma as a Psychological aspect of Life Imprisonment**

Trauma may be perceived as the injury, pain, or shocks resulting from predicted, ongoing, or numerous unpleasant incidents over time. Certain prison factors are traumatizing and have the ability to contribute to inmate's poor mental healthiness. It is observed that trauma in prison is caused by aspects inclusive of physical internal searches, invasion of personal privacy, and oral emotional abuse. These issues can further exacerbate mental illness of the prisoners if they are not checked on time (Moloney, van den Bergh, & Moller, 2009). The findings of Dudeck, et al. (2011) showed that the occurrence of trauma is significantly higher among long-term inmates when compared with the rest of the population and with short-term prisoners. Jewkes (2006) notes that both the entry of the inmates into the prison setting together with the unexpected and enforced disconnection from one's close relations can result in severe trauma. This experience challenges a person's sense of self which is likely to lead to personality crisis. When this happens, the prisoners' aptitude to develop a consistent concept of self is challenged by the disparity between social interaction and privacy (Irwin & Owen 2005). Thus, the lifers seem to be experiencing a new distinctive kind of prison pain comprising a kind of existential and identity crisis. This is caused by length of time and uncertainty of the unspecified sentence as well as the restricted facilities available in the retention areas (Liebling, 2011).

The findings by Liem and Kunst (2013) indicated that prisoners who had experienced prolonged incarceration had a particular cluster of psychological symptoms known as Post-Incarceration Syndrome (PICS). The PICS, accordingly, are pointers of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), an indication that prolonged imprisonment is traumatic leading to deterioration in the lifers' psycho-social well-being. As identified by Liem and Kunst (2013) the clusters, which bore three additional characteristics, included the Institutionalised Personality Trait (IPT) comprising aspects such as distrusting others, finding it difficult to engage in relationships and hampered decision making. The next characteristic is Social Sensory Disorientation (SSD) including special disorientation, difficult in social interaction. Social Temporal Alienation (STA) is the other supplementary characteristic which involves the view of not belonging in social and temporal surroundings (Liem & Kunst, 2013). It thus implies that indeterminate incarceration traumatizes the inmates, leading to suspicion and severing of social interactions.

Psychological stressors such as dehumanization, denial of rights and dangers to which prisoners are exposed, can be a source of trauma (Haney, 2012). Equally, the progression of prisonization by which the lifers attempt to adjust to their conditions of confinement, can be a source of emotional pain and shock. The two conflicting prison extremes, namely; congestion and solitary imprisonment, which inmates are exposed to, make the prison experience a form of re-traumatization for the life-imprisoned inmates (Haney 2012). The entire condition seems to have direct adverse penalties on prisoners' physical and emotional well-being. De Beco (2005) examined life sentences from the perception that they mostly interrupt the basic human dignity of the prisoner. Consequently, once lifers comprehend that they may not be released, they are likely to become hopeless. As a result, they sever contact with their families and friends and become progressively reliant on the prison system. De Beco (2005) stated that this results in prisoners having no sense of meaning for their futures and that, in effect; it is simply a death sentence. This perceived loss and hopelessness may end up traumatizing the inmates which adversely impacts on their psychological wellness.

The issue of time may take on a different quality in prison. According to Jewkes (2005) for the long-term convict, the abundance of time and lack of criterions with which to

utilize it can cause severe psychological strain. It was observed that the lifers had profusion of time, since the jail term was unspecified, while on the other hand, having a sense of their lives being foreshortened (Jewkes 2005). However, Jewkes (2005) emphasized that some of the pains of incarceration, and specifically indeterminacy, can have transforming powers. Accordingly, many life sentenced prisoners can overcome the trauma of sentencing and confinement and restructure themselves and their emotions to what they were before incarceration. This can be done through activities such as education, exercises and involvement in religious matters. Such strategies enhance resistance and become an empowerment that facilitates the formation of new identities (Jewkes, 2005).

#### **2.4 Life Incarceration and Inmates' Social Relationships**

Gratifying social relationships and appropriate social integration are crucial for emotional fulfillment and growth of all human beings over the life span (Hughes 2003). Since human beings are social, they have a basic need to belong and be accepted in different social set ups. In this view, social isolation, which denies a person appropriate social contact and partnership, can be detrimental to human holistic development. A prisoner is likely to become subjected to the operation and function of the institution once he or she is enclosed within the prison walls. Johnson and Toch (2000) posit that everyday life on the inside of the prison walls is solitary. Prisoners are regularly in the company of others but feel very much alone because they are surrounded by strangers who are indifferent and hostile to their wellbeing. In a study carried out by Johnson & Toch (2000) one of the inmates rightly stated that:

Prison is coldness: no one in prison really cares about you, not like those at home do. It is a chilling feeling to realize that no one's life here would be significantly changed, if I were to die tomorrow. Loneliness breeds and thrives in the belly of the monster known as prison. It strikes constantly and insidiously and it never goes away (Johnson & Toch, 2000, p. 139).

Social relationships subtly embrace human beings in the warmth of self-affirmation and meaningfulness of belonging. They are fundamental to emotional fulfillment, behavioural adjustment and cognitive functions (Hughes et al., 2003). Consequently, any disruption leading to absence of stable social relationships results in unhealthy psychosocial conditions. Situational threats to a valued inter-personal relationship

ranging from social isolation, rejection, separation or incarceration are known to elevate the feeling of loneliness. Similarly, the nonexistence of consistent, normal interpersonal contact and any aspect of a meaningful social context create a feeling of strangeness that permeates the lifers' survival in the prisons (Craig 2003).

Lifers therefore, have to re-establish new social entities in order to manage their existence in prison. Gillespie (2003) maintains that prisons operate in a way in which they apply their influence upon the social relationships of inmates who exist within the prison's premises. Loss of family relationships and friends outside the prison is one of the most serious problems that prisoners may have encountered since being imprisoned (Gillespie, 2003). Some inmates serving long-jail-terms detach themselves from these social relationships as a means of avoiding the anxiety and despair that accompany separation (Howard, 1999).

#### **2.4.1 Life Incarceration and Family Relationship as an aspect of Social Relationships**

Long-term incarceration has a long-lasting and intense negative influence on family interactions, and isolation from loved ones is defined as a constant source of emotional pain for inmates (Grounds & Jamieson, 2003; Rokach, 2000). According to Johnson (2008), a chief fact of life imprisonment is that it is a life of unremitting loneliness. The lawbreakers are, for the better part of their lives, are cut off from family, relatives and friends. This ends up causing a painful deprivation and frustration in relation to lost emotional relationships, loneliness and boredom. Majority of the lifers' waking hours are spent within the confines of their prison cell (Howard, 1999). Therefore, time for socialization is limited due to the controlled social contact. According to Smith (2006), females have intense personal issues, while in prison, and they know that they need to rehabilitate if they want to see their children again. However, for the life-imprisoned females, there is no such motivation since there is no likelihood of reuniting with the family.

In a study carried out in the UK by Crewe, Hulley and Wright (2017) the findings indicated that life-sentenced females had a lot fewer support systems than their male counterparts. Majority of the respondents recounted that members of their family and friends had severed connection with them soon after the crime was committed and



indeterminate verdict pronounced. The women prisoners themselves also severed any associations due to previous inappropriate treatment related to historically abusive relationships with close relatives or even parental figures (Crewe et al., 2017). Equally, the women lifers referred to the weakening association with their progeny, as it became more distressful and problematic to retain the connections (Penal Reform International (2012). Female inmates excessively display a high degree of psychological health issues, which are aggravated by life incarceration as they encounter higher stigma and are excessively affected by the influence incarceration has on their families (Crewe, 2017).

The prisoner is enduringly alienated from their intimate blood-relations and other very close associations, and with this separation comes a deep and growing feeling of loss of friendship and relations. The loss can be explained profoundly by the inmates being absent from the daily events that make up family life which hits many prisoners hard (Johnson, 2008). Life sentenced prisoners miss the chance to see their children grow up. They are also denied the opportunity to enjoy the company of these children as they negotiate through the stages of life including schooling, getting married and starting their families (McGunigall-Smith, 2004). These inmates are aware that they cannot be parents in the sense the term is understood, since they cannot guide and support their children as they would have wanted to. McGunigall-Smith (2004) further states that the imprisoned parent will not be there to advise the children regarding crucial issues such as beginning a family, to pat them on the back and not being available to pick them up when they fall. The act of being absent from the family set-up to identify with the family members, yet present in another undesirable environment is the hardest part for the lifer to bear (McGunigall-Smith, 2004; Johnson & McGunigall-Smith, 2006). Lifers are aware that family bonds are likely to weaken over time and that family members, notably their parents, may die while they are still alive but away in prison. The loss of a parent can be a terrible blow, and may be probably the hardest thing they have had to deal with. This is more so if the prisoner is not able to attend the parent's funeral, or that of any other close relative (McGunigall-Smith, 2004).

Another great adversity the life imprisoned inmates may have to deal with is the knowledge that their family is away and they cannot keep in touch with them as often

as they would want to (McGunigall-Smith, 2004b). As observed, a majority of female prisoners are mothers who are forced to struggle with the challenge of being separated from their children throughout the confinement period. Some of these inmates were living with their young children at the time of being arrested (Glaze & Maruschak 2008).

The life sentenced inmate must accept the painful fact that one day he may be completely alone, bereft of outside support or concern. Therefore, this shows that life sentence causes acute familial disruption and in extreme cases, family breakdown. In order for the prisoners to survive through the emotional trauma caused by the social breakdown, they are likely to over-involve themselves with the everyday routine of prison life, and keeping their vulnerability and defenselessness to themselves. Therefore, they cannot maintain normal interpersonal relationships as they should be and this can be a drawback to the inmates' psychosocial well-being. According to Gust, (2012) imprisonment exerts an adverse impact on the family structure and living arrangements, straining family relationships, creates financial burdens, causing substantial emotional stress and leads to stigma which influences the prisoner together their family. Crewe et al. (2017) noted six times as many life-imprisoned females reported self-injury or attempted suicide since their conviction as their male equivalents.

#### **2.4.2 Life Incarceration and Withdrawal as an aspect Social Relationship**

The experience of overall social separation of the inmates may lead to absolute social withdrawal. Lifers can retreat even more deeply to themselves than the sheer physical isolation (Craig 2003). Withdrawal advances progressively as a result of being denied social contact and eventually becoming disoriented or alienated. The lifers are likely to end up being frightened by the presence of the other inmates or outsiders thus becoming anxious and apprehensive in their company. A study by Bonta and Gendreau (1990) Shows that long-term confinement can result in resentment and social introversion as well as a decrease in self-assessment and evaluations of work for some inmates. Imprisonment is also likely to cause dependency on staff members for direction and also produce weakened community relationships with time.

### **2.4.3 Life Incarceration and Social Isolation among Life Incarcerated Inmates**

Social isolation is usually an unavoidable result of long-term imprisonment. The offenders removed from their social environment tend to lose contact with their former world. In their study on the psychological experiences of life sentenced and long-term prisoners, in relation to incarceration, Grounds and Jamieson (2003) noted that avoidance and retreating from the rest of the group were commonly assumed coping devices in prison. These included self-isolation, hiding one's emotions, evasion of communication, suppressing thoughts about the future and concealing feelings of depression. Their findings also revealed that the male lifers and their family members obscured worries from each other during the visits and interaction times. This was done in order to preserve family ties (Grounds, 2003; Grounds and Jamieson, 2003). Due to the mistaken belief, the men experienced a loss of understanding and closeness with their families. In a study conducted by Zebhauser, et al. (2014) it was observed that there was a smaller social network among the inmates which was an indicator of loneliness both in male and female inmates.

Social separation and loss of contact with the outside world is one of the most significant effects of lengthy imprisonment (Crewe, Hulley, & Wright, 2016). Loneliness, an aspect of social isolation, has been related with many damaging mental outcomes, depression inclusive, suicidal tendency, reduced positive emotions, general ill-health as well as physiological changes (Victor & Yang, 2012; Heinrich & Gullone, 2006). As a result of this social loss, many prisoners learn to find safety in social inconspicuousness by being unobtrusively detached from others as much as possible (Haney, 2012). The self-induced social withdrawal and separation may mean that they withdraw deeply into themselves, trust virtually no one and adjust to prison stress by leading isolated lives of quiet desperation. Haney, (2012) further posits that prisoners on long-term imprisonment are mainly vulnerable to this form of psychological adaptation as a result of diminished sense of worth and personal value. This is by resigning themselves to their conditions, a phenomenon described as situational withdrawal or specific emotional withdrawal. According to Penal Reform International (2012), life condemned inmates are often subjected to impoverished regimes compared to other prisoners, including poor living environments, restricted human contact and little or no access to meaningful activities or rehabilitation programme. Further still,

interaction with the rest of the world is often restricted for the life sentence inmates, despite its being significant for promoting their rehabilitation and protecting their mental well-being. As a result, the lifers end up being emotionally unstable and therefore psychologically unwell. However, in a study carried out by Doane (2011) aloneness has been associated with signs of social integration such as romantic relationships, perceived social support and acceptance.

#### **2.4.4 Life Incarceration and Inter-Prisoner Interactions as an aspect of Social Relationship**

According to Liebling, Arnold and Straub (2012) social relations amongst prisoners can become multifaceted and less perceptible. A lot of power flows within the prison, and among some groups of convicts, with some real dangers of serious violence. This leads to high levels of anxiety in the prison. Concerning inter-prisoner relationship, Crewe (2005a) observed that indeterminate inmates were unlikely to have strong attachment with prisoners serving other sentence terms. This aided in reducing the lifers' emotional vulnerability and being less obliged to others, thus reducing the likelihood of being involved in matters, likely to threaten the lifers' advancement towards rehabilitation and adjustment to the prison environment. Therefore, the inmates have to deal with the challenge of handling the strained and weak relationships with the other prisoners and especially handling termination of friendships. According to Crewe (2005a); Johnson and Dobrzanska, (2005), lifers separate themselves from the majority of other prisoners primarily to evade entanglement in activities that may threaten their progress. Lerman (2009b) notes, that the experience of prison may also socialize prisoners toward the entrenchment or adoption of antisocial norms, which reinforce attitudes that undermine compliance. Similarly, it may build a rift between the inmates and the staff or among the inmates themselves leading persons to feel isolated from correctional workers, law-abiding citizens, or society as a whole.

#### **2.4.5 Constable-Lifers Relationship as an aspect of Social Relationship**

Prison constables, because of their interaction with prisoners, play a fundamental role in sustaining and influencing the atmosphere within prisons. The lifers, depending on their expectation from the prison staff, are likely to view their relationships with staff as both good and undesirable. Positive interaction between the lifers and the staff on the other hand can be of significance in maintaining lifers' social and psychological

health. However, a friendly relationship may be hindered due to the difference in position and power between the lifers and the staff. In order to sustain an effective prison environment, some guards may find it fitting to exercise physical pressure in the form of physical or verbal intimidation and maintain control of inmates. Haney (2003) observes that prisons are deprived and disadvantaged environments in which prisoners are regularly denied access to potentially useful goods and services. Prison staff members can be vocally and even physically offensive in ways that are too familiar to many prisoners (Haney, 2003). In circumstances where vocal threats and physical force are used, it is likely to lead to a degraded self-worth due to humiliation. Verbal coercion leads inmates to feeling overwhelmed and ridiculed. Calavita and Jenness (2015) observe that a prisoner who dares to channel their health needs through the prisons grievance systems may suffer revenge from prison officials.

A study on Californians' grievance system established that many prisoners were unwilling to file any claim or complaints to the prison authority out of fear of retaliation (Calavita & Jenness, 2015). This is an indication that the prisoners and the inmates were not in friendship terms and that the inmates did not trust the latter. Potential barriers to filing cases go beyond individual factors which may include self-blame, stigma and the related concern about trouble, which is likely to be caused by the officers. A central aspect of the trouble the male respondents (in the study) spoke of was vengeance by officials against prisoners who file complaints (Calavita & Jenness, 2015). The implication is that the relationship between the prison officials and the inmates may be characterized by fear which may lead to tension between the two groups causing intensified emotional pain to the lifers. According to a study carried out on staff - prisoner relationships by Liebling, Arnold and Straub (2011), the relationships between staff and prisoner were generally unfriendly. Levels of trust between the two groups were low; and there were high levels of distrust and risk-thinking in the prison. The deterioration in associations and trust led to a drying up of the information flow which was key in distinguishing between trustworthiness from unreliability (Liebling et al, 2011). This sense of being scrutinized or monitored continually contributed to an atmosphere of relentless suspicion, dread, and self-conscious reflection. This had effects on individuals and their self-perception (Liebling, et al, 2012).

Constables-lifers relationship based on gender showed that in certain cases, the male lifers recognized their dependence on staff, necessitating their need to build positive relations with them. These relationships had to be maintained despite the extreme power inequity and practices (Walker & Worrall 2006). The constables occasionally performed strip searches on the male lifers which are characteristic of life in prison. The male lifers' reliance on staff and their apprehension of staffs' power over their future progress was also observed (Walker and Worrall, 2006). According to Walker and Worrall (2006), their interviews with the female lifers in their study revealed that the women lived in fear that the staff could misconstrue their actions or words leading to poor relationships.

### **2.5. Life Incarceration and Inmates' Psychological Well-being Based on Gender**

The prison may be viewed as an establishment which is an exhibition of gendered powerlessness and susceptibility (Moore & Scraton, 2014). Nevertheless, both male and female lifers are able to go through the prison system and negotiate the strains, anxieties and intrusions of punitive power and be able to find meaning in life (Moore & Scraton 2014). This is done notwithstanding that the inmates experience a myriad of shortages of significant basic needs and humiliations, causing their stay in prison quite agonizing and challenging especially more for the female than the male inmates.

Based on personal accounts, according to George (2010), women who go to prison with a sentence for life describe feelings of not being able to process the reality and the emotional shock thereof. The female lifers get hopeless and depressed easily. In a qualitative study by (Jose-Kampfner, 1990), females with life and long-term sentences reported depression, desperateness, and anger as some of the key challenges, particularly at the commencement of their sentence. The female lifers also described adjusting to prison life as a process of coming to terms with an existential death, similar to the stages of grief often associated with terminally-ill patients (Jose-Kampfner, 1990). This process also comprises continuous psychological distress over time in prison. Females with life sentences report a multitude of physical and mental health concerns particularly as they age in prison (Aday & Krabril, 2011). Those who have served longer sentences (over ten years) have re-counted more difficulties with the prison setting, such as boredom and a lack of education, as well as social opportunities

(MacKenzie et al., 1989). The more times a female prisoner serves as a lifer, the more difficulty she may have when responding to psychological issues while in prison (Kruttschnitt & Vuolo, 2008). Depression and suicide risk are specific recurring issues of concern, both early in women's stays in prison (Dye & Aday, 2013) and after longer periods of time in prison (Clements-Nolle, Wolden, & Bargmann-Losche, 2009).

According to Smith (2006) male and female inmates respond to stress differently in that, men tend to express stress which in prison produces more physical violence and confrontational behaviour. This therefore ends up in physical aggression and attacks on other inmates. Smith (2006) comparatively observes that females tend to internalize stress which may explain why female inmates are involved in self-harming behaviour. The harmful activities include cutting, curving and burning oneself. Additionally, women have more recurrent suicide attempts and use medical and mental health service more than the rate of the male prisoners. In a study on stress and depression among inmates in Peninsular Malaysia, the females demonstrated higher incidences of both stress and depression (Ahmad & Mazlan, 2014). These results showed that female inmates had higher tendency to experience stress and depression compared to male convicts. Ahmad and Mazlan (2014) concluded that the high incidence of stress among women inmates showed that they are more susceptible towards stressful situations than their male counterparts. The aspect of having to live in an almost all single-gender environment was dreadful, creating a culture laden with tension, fear and erosion of all emotional magnitudes of personal life and relationships (Crewe et al., 2017). The male inmates perceived prison life as emotionally oppressive where feelings were suppressed, while the female lifers experienced prison as an environment where the emotional intensity was stressful and overwhelming (Greer, 2002). Lack of emotional privacy was a severe challenge especially for the female prisoners and particularly their visibility to male officers during their personal activities including getting dressed or taking showers (Moran et al., 2013).

According to Heney (1990), the life circumstances of the female inmates, together with feelings of guilt, fear, anxiety, estrangement and confusion, which are intensified when they are, send to prison for life imprisonment, combine to produce a group of women with extremely low self-esteem. The condition of low self-esteem lessens a woman's

ability to cope with difficult situations and upsurges the self-destructive behaviour. This phenomenon is so predominant among federally sentenced women (Heney, 1990). In addition to contributing to the occurrence of self-injurious behaviour, a lack of self-esteem also reduces a person's ability to plan for the future. This can also hinder the female life prisoner from taking accountability for her activities and to believe that she can make meaningful choices (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990). The denial of personal space, a quiet environment and human dignity, make many women feel they have no rights or control over their lives. This leads to an overwhelming sense of hopelessness and lack of inner inspiration to live on (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990). According to Crewe, Hulley and Wright (2016), the female lifers mostly struggle with a lack of control, autonomy, trust and losing those who are close to them over their life in prison than their male counterparts.

Female prisoners excessively exhibit a high rate of mental health issues which are heightened by life incarceration since they encounter higher stigma and are excessively influenced by the effects imprisonment has on their children (Crewe, et al., 2017). In this case, more life incarcerated women had more cases of self-injury or attempted suicide than their male equivalents. The women prisoners habitually experienced a sense of doubt since they had no knowledge of, or control over the length of time they would remain in jail. Their greatest fear was that they might be forgotten by the prison authorities in whose hands the decision of release rested (UN, 1994). Women lifers were more acutely disturbed by nightmares, recollections and hallucinations related to the crimes they had committed than the male lifers (Wright, et al., 2016). This caused psychological distress and mental health problems. According to Girshick (1999) women prisoners found it more difficult to completely trust anyone in the prison environment than the male lifers did. Majority of the women had had their trust fractured by people they had hitherto trusted and had believed loved them. These included their parents, persons in authority and even spouses, making it difficult to get any attachment to the prison community. The social attachments of male lifers were habitually founded on protection and material gain (Crewe, et al., 2017). However, for the female inmates, trust was the crucial element of the relationship they desired, and that no one was going to manipulate them.



## **2.6 Life Incarceration and Inmates' Social Relationships Based on Gender**

An investigation carried out by Crewe, et al. (2017) indicated that females serving a life sentence term had very few support networks compared to their male counterparts. It was observed that the inmates' families and friends had severed the associations with them immediately the offence was committed. On the other hand, the female lifers also detached themselves as a result of previous abusive relationships with either older members of the society, family members or fellow prisoners (Crewe, et al., 2017). The female inmates also felt helpless to give help when their families needed them. Unlike most of the male inmates whose children are likely to remain in the care of their spouses or girlfriends, imprisoned women are at a very high danger of losing their children to the state. The women inmates mentioned the worsening relations with their children since it was becoming quite distressful and nearly impossible to remain connected. The separation and denial of any opportunity to associate with their children, which these female inmates experience, has been described as detrimental to their mental health (Travis, 2003). It is also apparent that as the children grew older, the mothers in prison were gradually losing touch with them. Consequently, the damaging effects of restrictive regulations accumulate over time resulting in women serving long prison sentences, tending to have the greatest impairment done to their family relationships (Kingi, 2000). The presence of parents is crucial in the establishment and maintenance of healthy family relationships, and this is denied in the case where the parents are permanently in prison. Murray, Farrington and Sekol (2012a) posit that incarceration of a father figure is a serious and critical life incident which can disrupt family relationships and contribute to negative outcome for children. Murray et al. (2012a) further observe that it can worsen material and social problems such as social exclusion.

Men and women who are imprisoned are likely face substantial challenges in maintaining their family relationships, since it is difficult to carry out intimate relationships from prison due to barriers of interaction and communication. The exclusive hardships of incarceration faced by one partner and the forced independence within the general community faced by the other can create a psychological and emotional distance between them (Harman, Smith & Egan, 2007). It has been observed that women have a range and intensity of feelings whenever they are allowed prison visits. They include feelings of intense anger, attachment, regret and resentment.

Therefore, if the women harbour negative feelings towards their partners and other close relations, the visits will be stressful and unfulfilling.

According to Carcedo, et al. (2008), female inmates present a better level of interpersonal connection and psychological health than men. However, for both genders, the consequences of fulfilling or not fulfilling interpersonal needs such as social loneliness and sexual satisfaction are associated with psychological health, making it desirable or poor accordingly. Therefore, to promote lifers' psychological health, in the context of the prison environment, where interpersonal needs are difficult to meet, can be a challenge. According to Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) men spend much of their time in solitary pursuits. Nevertheless, in cases where the inmates chose to adapt positive coping mechanisms, they become more thoughtful, tolerant and emphatic in the course of time and may end up mentoring the younger prisoners who are still in shock and disbelief. This explains the impact of life incarceration on the inmates' social relationships because of separation from normal social relationships. Inmates' relationships play an influential role in their well-being during incarceration and are important in improving their overall psychological and social wellbeing (Travis, 2003).

As a result of the indeterminate forced isolation from society, and the emotive reaction aroused by the nature of their crimes, life incarcerated inmates are a unique sub-cluster within the prisoner population (Crew, 2005a). Several reviewers have observed that life in prison by and large has been neglected by researchers currently (Crew, 2005a). Consequently, it is paramount that the experiences of prisoners be further studied (Liebling & Maruna, 2005). Most of the studies related to prisoners sought to determine the effects of incarceration as observed by (Liebling & Maruna, 2005). The sociologists came to a conclusion that psychological damages were inherent in the power of institution whereas the psychologists contended that imprisonment had insignificant permanent effect on inmates. In the recent time, an insignificant number of current studies have sought after investigating the experiences of long-term and life sentenced jailbirds (Liebling & Maruna, 2005). The long-term prisoners became an apparent focus of research consideration owing to the assumption that there was a likelihood of the damaging effects accumulating over the length of time spent in prison. Beyond the

research on the detrimental influence of life incarceration in Africa and the rest of the world, the current study will examine the extent to which the influence is gender textured specifically in the Kenyan context.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Two theories, which include Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, guided the study.

### **2.7.1 Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development (1958)**

Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory of development presents a life-span model of human growth that includes eight consecutive psychosocial phases. A healthily developing human is expected to pass from infancy to late adulthood through these stages. Each stage is related with an intrinsic conflict or crisis that the individual must encounter and effectively resolve in order to progress with development. This crisis is used in a developmental sense to indicate a turning point, a critical duration of enhanced susceptibility and heightened potential (Erikson, 1968). Erikson's psychosocial theory of development hypothesizes a situation where every psychosocial step has two conflicting forces and a successful or unsuccessful outcome will depend on the resolution of the earlier stages.

In this theory, Erikson recognizes the impact of culture and/or environment on individual development, Hoare (2002) and fully illustrates how the social world exists within the psychological makeup of each individual. Erikson (1959) posits that an individual cannot be understood away from their social background. According to Erikson (1959) the individual and society are intricately interwoven and dynamically related in continual change. Erikson's theory defines the influence of social experience across the whole lifetime. Although the psychosocial theory of development runs through eight stages, the study considered the sixth to eighth stages since these stages fall on the years (20 years and above) within which an individual may be eligible for life incarceration in case of having committed a crime. According to Jacobson and Hough (2010), life incarceration is the only sentence that can be effected on individuals who are over 21 years of age, and have been found guilty of murder.

As a theory of development, Erickson's theory posits that if the developmental stages are negotiated appropriately, positive aspects such as a sense of identity, love and intimacy, integrity and self-accomplishment are likely to be well established. The individual also emerges with a strong sense of self-worth and a feeling of independence. However, if the environment is not conducive for the development of these characteristics, the person is likely to experience isolation, stagnation and despair as well as rejection. This often leads to depression and hopelessness (Erikson, 1950).

Erikson also maintains that intimacy has a counterpart that is distantation, which is the readiness to isolate, and if necessary, to terminate those forces and people whose essence seems dangerous to our own, and whose territory seems to intrude on the extent of one's intimate relations (Erikson, 1950). If people cannot form these intimate relationships, perhaps because of their own needs, a sense of isolation may result; arousing feelings of gloom and anger. Erikson explains that a strong sense of personal identity is significant to developing friendly relationships. Those with a poor sense of self incline to having less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and intense sadness (Erikson, 1950).

If an individual perceives their life as being unproductive, or has unaccomplished life goals, he becomes dissatisfied with life and develops despair, as a result of disappointments and unachieved objectives. This often leads to depression and hopelessness (Erikson, 1950). The ones who are unsuccessful during this stage will feel that life has been wasted and will experience many regrets and a feeling of bitterness and desolation.

Erikson's psychosocial theory of development is relevant to the study since it deals with the total cross section of human psychological and social development. The theory also acknowledges the influence of culture as well as the environment on individual development. Therefore, the social world of a person is interwoven with the psychological makeup of each individual. Erickson in his theory details the importance of dealing with each developmental stage effectively so as to produce the desired human traits like love, integrity and acceptance which in turn promote psychosocial wellness. The relevance of the theory is equally in the sense that it upholds and supports

individual independence, productivity, creativity as well as bearing a broad application to family, relationship and the society at large.

### **2.7.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943)**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory was put forward by Maslow (1943) so as to enlighten on the needs of organizational behaviour. The theory indicated that individuals are inspired to achieve certain needs, and when one need is met, the individual becomes determined to satisfy the subsequent need. These needs are ranked from the lowest to the highest and they include physiological needs, safety and security needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization (McLeod, 2014). According to Maslow (1943), persons are required to meet the needs at the lower levels of the pyramid before they can effectively be motivated to handle the ensuing levels. Maslow theorized that psychological well-being was possible only when the needs were fulfilled. The more these basic needs are not satisfied, the more psychologically disturbed the person will remain.

The original Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943-1954) was a model with five stages, but has been with time extended to include cognitive and artistic needs Maslow (1970a), and later transcendence needs (Maslow, 1970b). Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that human drive is founded on people seeking fulfilment and change through personal development, would then lead to self-actualized people. According to Hoffman (1988) self-actualization is a continual process of becoming rather than a flawless state. This is the need for personal growth that is present throughout a person's life. According to Maslow (1962) a person is never inert and they finally find a meaning to life that is important to them, by achieving their potential. Essentially, each person can be accomplished and has the desire to move up the pyramid towards self fulfilment. He emphasized on the potential of every human being. Since each person is unique, the drive for self-actualization leads people in varied directions. However, progress is often interrupted by failure to achieve the needs at the lower level. An individual may thus fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy due to life experiences inclusive of family separation, imprisonment or any type of loss. Therefore, if people grew in an environment in which their needs are not met; they will be unlikely to function as psychologically healthy individuals or well-adjusted persons (Kaur, 2013).

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs can be presented in a pyramid displaying five categories of needs therein and the levels at which they occur as shown in Figure 1.

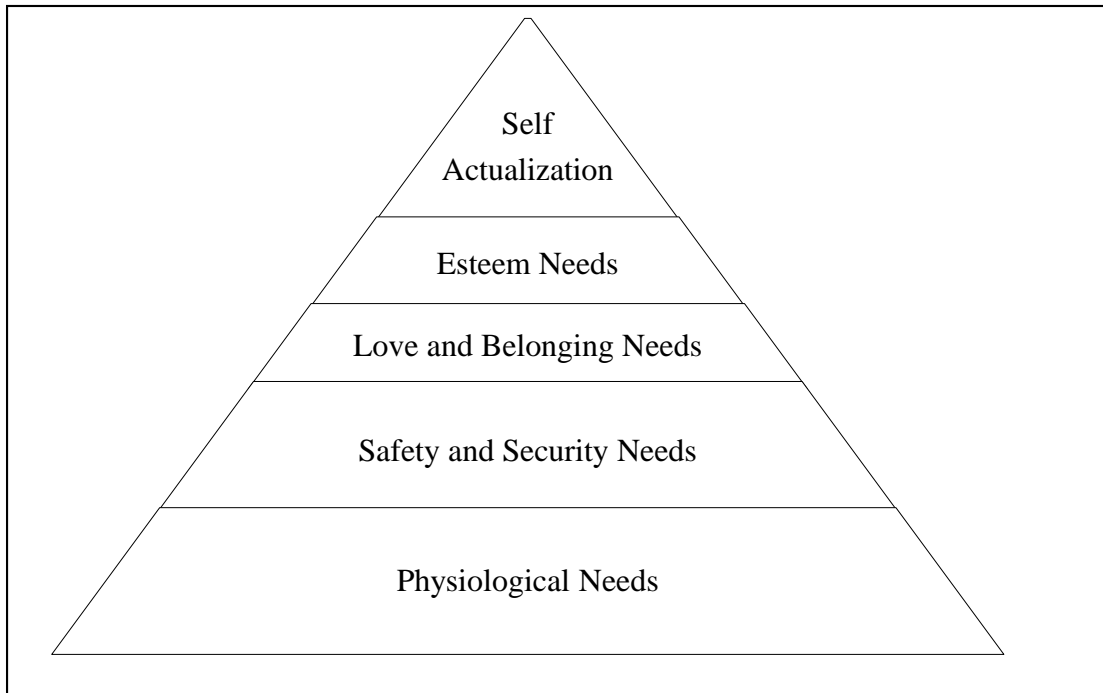


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid (McLeod, 2014)

Maslow states that people seek to overcome feelings of aloneness and alienation, in order to establish a sense of belonging, by both giving and receiving love and affection (Jerome, 2013). Offering love is seeking to fill a void by understanding and accepting others. Receiving love is a way of dealing with loneliness and rejection (Maslow, 1943). People's social competence is likely to thrive where the environment is favourable and relationships are apt. Humans have a need for a steady social relationship founded on a high level of self-worth, and admiration from others. When these needs are satisfied, the person feels self-confident and valuable. When these needs are frustrated, the person feels inferior, weak, helpless and worthless.

The ultimate rank in the hierarchy of needs is self-actualization. This is the longing, to become everything that one is capable of becoming and to realize one's full potential, capacities, and aptitudes (Maslow, 1943). People feel this unrelenting pull to maximize their potential only after they have satisfied their basic deficiency longings. These needs make themselves felt in signs of unrest. If a person is starving, insecure, not loved or

accepted, or lacking self-esteem, it is very easy to know what the person is restless about.

The Maslow Hierarchy of Needs theory is applicable to the study since it influences behaviour change and psychological evaluation. This is because the basic needs motivate people when they are unmet. Also, the need to fulfill such needs will become stronger the longer the period they are deprived of them. This will encourage the people to continue pursuing the higher needs of life and eventually attain self-achievement. Since self-actualization is progressive and endless, the life imprisoned inmates inspired to keep on the upward movement of personal fulfilment despite the nature of their term in prison and the environment around them. From this theory, the prison systems may come up with strategies beneficial to the lifers to be able to meet their individual needs thus tending towards psychosocial stability.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

The Conceptual Framework of the study shows the relationship among the independent, intervening and dependent variables as shown in Figure 2.

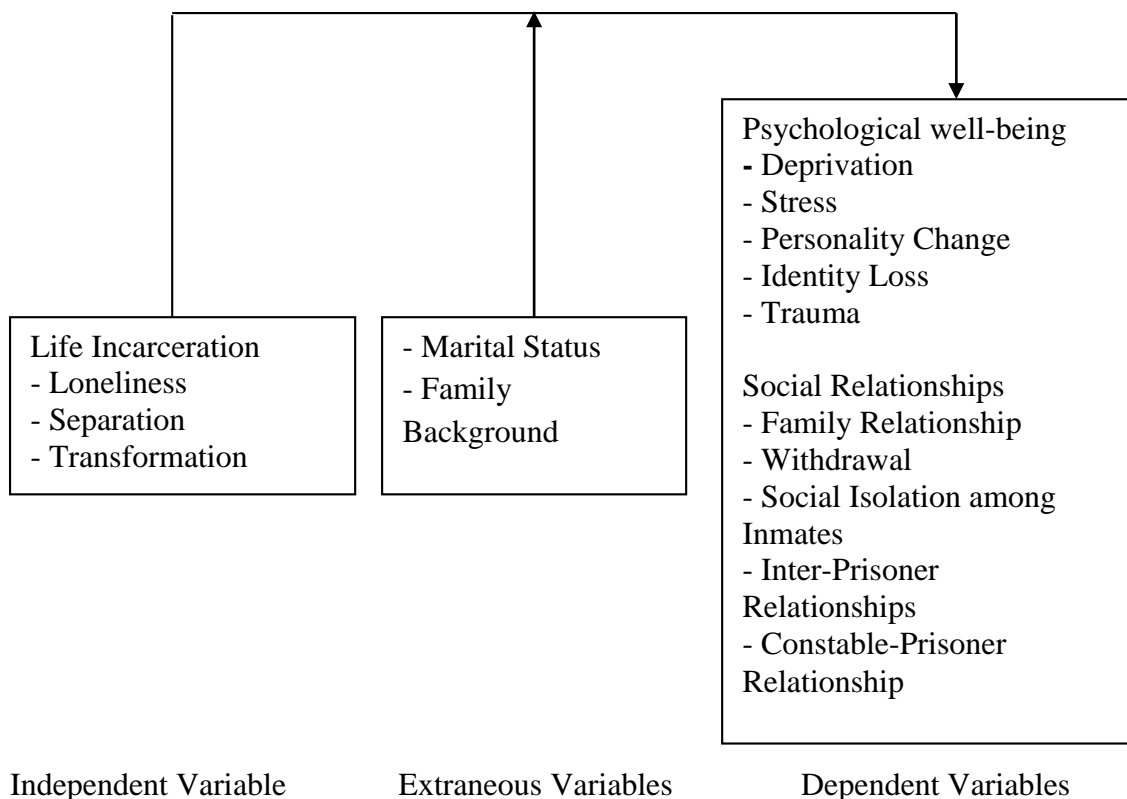


Figure 2: Relationship among the Study Variables

The current study intended to determine the influence of life incarceration on inmates' psychosocial well-being. The conceptual framework reveals how the independent variable, which is life incarceration, influences the inmates' psychological well-being and social relationships, which are the dependent variables. The psychological effects include deprivation, stress, identity loss, personality change as well as trauma. The social relationships are inclusive of family relationships, inmates' withdrawal, and social isolation among lifers, inter-prisoner relationship and constable-prisoner relationship. Apart from the independent and the dependent variables, there are the extraneous variables, which comprise the inmates' marital status and family background. These are likely to influence the expected outcome.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Location of the Study**

The present study was carried out among respondents in selected prisons from different regions in Kenya. Presently, the Kenya Prison Service operates under eight regions which include: Eastern, Central, North Eastern, Western, Nyanza, Coast Rift Valley and Nairobi. The prisons were purposively selected to comprise specifically those prisons which accommodate the life-imprisoned inmates. The selection was correspondingly based on different regions and the nature of the prison in terms of gender. These prisons included: Lang'ata Women's Prison, Nyeri main prison, Naivasha main prison and Kisumu main prison (Kondiaga). The four prisons were identified from four regions in Kenya to ensure representativeness in terms of prison environment. Further, Lang'ata women's prison was selected since it is Kenya's only maximum-security facility for female inmates and has the largest number of life imprisoned female inmates. Naivasha main prison was selected because it holds the largest number of male inmates among the Kenyan prisons. Kisumu main prison (Kondiaga) in the western region and Nyeri main prison in the central region were included in the study since they both bear two sections to accommodate male and female inmates.

#### **3.3 Research Design**

The study employed the causal-comparative research design. The design was used to establish the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables after an event has already occurred without the interference of the researcher (Brewer & Kubn, 2010). The researcher's goal was to determine whether the independent variable affected the outcome or the dependent variable. This was done by comparing two groups of individuals comprising male and female lifers. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), in this design, the researcher does not manipulate the variables under study but rather observes the variables in their current conditions. In the present study, the researcher conducted the study within the already formed groups of life-imprisoned inmates since it had already occurred. The causal-comparative research design according to Cohen and Manion (1994) allows for group comparisons, for two or more groups of individuals and one independent variable. The design was considered suitable

for the study since it allowed the researcher to compare the influence of life incarceration on the male and the female lifers.

### 3.4 Population of the Study

The study population included 2816 life incarcerated inmates from selected prisons in Kenya, where life incarcerated inmates are accommodated. Table 1 presents the distribution of the lifers' population by prison in the selected prisons in Kenya.

Table 1: Distribution of Lifers' Population by Prison

Prison	Region	Male	Female	Total
Nyeri Main	Central	580	7	587
Naivasha Maximum	Rift Valley	1300	-	1300
Lang'ata women	Nairobi	-	57	57
Kisumu Main (Kondiaga)	Nyanza	850	22	872
Total		2730	86	2816

*Source:* Kenya Prisons Headquarters' Statistics Unit (February, 2019)

### 3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Four prisons were purposively selected from the prisons that incarcerate life-sentenced prisoners in Kenya. Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select institutions with the required characteristics to inform the study. Purposive sampling also ensured that the gender aspect was taken care of. The population from the selected prisons was 2730 male lifers and 86 female lifers. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select all the 86 female inmates found in the prisons sampled for the study. The whole total number of the female lifers was used since they were few in comparison to the male lifers. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select the appropriate sample size of male respondents in each of the selected prisons. The proportionate sampling technique was appropriate since it is used when the population is composed of several sub-groups that are vastly different in number.

The formula used to obtain the sample for the male lifers was  $(x/n \times 86)$ , where

X= the total number of male lifers in each of the selected prisons

N= total number of male lifers in all the prisons under study

86= sample size of the female lifers

The sample size for the male lifers therefore, was 86, an equal number with the female respondents for comparative study purposes. Simple random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the male individual study subjects, from each prison, to include in the study. The technique was considered appropriate because each subject will have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the study. In addition to the male and female lifers, six prison counsellors, each from the sampled prisons based on gender and 24 prison constables were included in the study to give additional information. The prison counsellors were considered useful in the study because they deal with the psycho-social welfare of the lifers and therefore they were aware of the issues experienced by the inmates. The counsellors' opinion would be partly from the lifers' point of view. Additionally, the constables spent most of the time with the inmates and related with each other at different levels. Thus, they had an understanding about the lifers activities and behaviour in prison so their contribution to the study was significant. The counsellors and the constables were purposively selected. Therefore, the total number included in the study was 202 respondents, comprising 86 male lifers, 86 female lifers, 24 prison constables and 6 prison counsellors. Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' sample by prison and gender.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Sample by Prison and Gender.

Prison	Region	Male	Female	Constables	Counsellors	Total
Nyeri Main	Central	18	7	6	2	33
Naivasha Maximum	Rift Valley	41	-	6	1	48
Lang'ata Women	Nairobi	-	57	6	1	64
Kisumu Main	Nyanza	27	22	6	2	57
Total		86	86	24	6	202

*Source.* Kenya Prisons Headquarters' Statistics Unit (February, 2019)

### 3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed questionnaires and an interview schedule for data collection for the study. The employment of varied data collection tools enabled the researcher to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. According to Patton (2002) triangulation strengthens a study by giving it both a qualitative and quantitative approach.

#### 3.6.1 Questionnaires

The researcher adopted a questionnaire as a tool of data collection since it can be used to gather large amounts of information from a big number of populations. This can be

done in a short period and in a comparatively cost-effective way (Popper, 2014). The researcher used both open and closed ended questions to obtain information from the respondents. The closed questions were used to provide quantitative data and ordinal data, which can be used to measure the strength of an attitude or an emotion, according to (Mcleod, 2014). For the closed ended questions, a five-level Likert scale, a three Likert scale as well as the true/false questions were used. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to express their thoughts and ideas in details. This enabled the researcher to gather more in-depth information from the respondents (Mcleod, 2014). Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained thus ensuring the validity of the information collected. The researcher administered two questionnaires; one for the life incarcerated inmates and the other for the prison constables as shown in appendices (2) and (3) respectively. The questionnaires were structured into four parts for the purpose of capturing and analyzing all the objectives systematically and effectively. Part I of the questionnaire comprised items to enable the researcher collect demographic information of the lifers. Part II consisted of questions related to the lifers' psychological well-being. This section was further organized into sub-headings including: issues related to deprivation, stress related issues, personality change, loss of identity and issues related to trauma. The questions on stress related issues were an adaptation of Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermeistein, 1983). The PSS is an instrument with 14 items, intended to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are assessed as stressful (Cohen, et al, 1983). From the 14 items, only 11 were used for the study. The rest of the aspects related to inmates' psychological well-being and social relationships used questions adopted from Mburugu (2013) and Kamoyo (2015), after further modification by the researcher to suit the study. Questions in Part III were used to collect data on the social relationships of the respondents. The section was organized under the following sub-headings: matters relating to family relationships, lifers' withdrawal, social isolation, inter-prisoner interaction and constable-prisoner relationship.

Questionnaires were administered to the male and female lifers as well as the prison constables sampled from the four prisons which were selected for the study. This was the target population in the prisons, which met the researcher's standards being considered eligible for participation in the study. The method of administering the

questionnaire varied a little from one prison to another basically due to the operational expectations of the specific institution. Characteristically, all the life-sentenced inmates, selected for the study were approached in person by the researcher who explained to them the purpose of the research. The subject on life incarceration was quite sensitive therefore the researcher spent ample time to explain to the respondents what was expected thereof, in terms of honesty on their part and confidentiality on the part of the researcher. Eventually, a verbal consent of participation was obtained. Due to the possibility of arousing the emotions of the lifers upon responding to the sensitive research questions, the respondents were encouraged to seek support from someone they could confide in after the exercise. The respondents who were not able to give answers to the items of the questionnaire independently due to the language in the questionnaire were assisted by the researcher, who interpreted the question and presented it orally to the individual respondent.

### **3.6.2. Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule was used on the prison counsellors in the sampled prisons to solicit data concerning the influence of life incarceration on lifers' psycho-social well-being. The qualitative research interview seeks to describe and explain the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. This data collection tool was incorporated in the study to enable the researcher obtain the actual details behind the respondents experience. As shown in Appendix IV, the interview schedule was divided into two sections under the following sub-titles: Section A influence of life incarceration on lifers' psychological well-being and Section B influence of life incarceration on lifers' social relationships. Data from the interview schedule was qualitatively analyzed by use of brief thematic narration to complement the data obtained from the lifers and the prison constables.

### **3.7 Validity of Instruments**

The research instruments were validated at three levels to ensure the data collected is authentic. These include; the construct validity, which is used to ensure that the test has indeed measured the intended variable and not anything else (Cozby, 2001). The construct is the initial concept that determines which data is to be gathered and how it is to be gathered. The researcher sought assistance from university supervisors and

other research authorities, who were familiar with the construct, to examine the items of the questionnaire and assess this type of validity.

In order to establish the content validity, the researcher identified the overall content to be presented. Thereafter, items were randomly selected from the content that accurately represented the information in all the areas. The researcher further consulted the university supervisors with expertise in this field of study, to help to ascertain the content validity. This therefore helped to confirm that the entire content of the construct was represented in the test. Its importance in this study was to enable the researcher to concentrate on the specific area under study. According to Dawson (2002) content validity is important and may be checked through expert opinion. Face validity is the other level of instrument validation and according to Ronald (2010) it is the degree or the extent to which a test is subjectively viewed as conveying the concept it purports to measure. Face validity was confirmed through the help of the university experts and consultations with peer members in line with Cohen; Lawrence & Marrison (2007) who affirm that peer judgments can be used as a basis for reviewing own judgments' as a validation. Additionally, the researcher ascertained that the print was in the appropriate font size, correct spacing was done and the overall appearance of the tools was suitable and appealing to the respondents. The organization of the items in the questionnaire as well as the clarity of the information was also ensured in order to aid the respondents read, comprehend and answer the questions as required.

### **3.8. Reliability**

In this study, the reliability of the tools for the study was estimated through the Cronbach's coefficient Alpha method. According to Cohen and Swerdlik (2005), this method is advantageous because it requires a single administration of the test. In the study, the items were considered reliable if a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was yielded. This figure is considered desirable for consistency levels (Frankel & Wallen, 2000).

A pilot study was conducted before visiting the sampled prisons for data collection. The pilot study was carried out at the Embu Prison, which had similar characteristics of the prisons under study but had not been sampled for the present study. The purpose of

piloting was to identify any ambiguous items in the research instrument that needed restructuring. It also aided in the establishment of clarity, comprehensibility and reliability of the research instrument. After piloting was done, a reliability test was computed which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.90 and 0.75 for the lifers questionnaire and prison constables' tool respectively.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

To prepare the respondents to answer the research questions and safeguard them from fear of victimization, the researcher gave an explanation of the purpose of the study. The respondents were also enlightened on the importance of their contribution to the study and the purpose of the gathered information. Then the respondents' consent was sought, which they gave. Therefore, the respondents participated out of self-will since voluntary participation is vital in research (Maxfield & Babbie, 2006). The respondents were required to give answers to the different instruments of data collection without disclosing their identity with the assurance that their anonymity would be maintained throughout. All the information recorded in the presence of the respondents was done after clarification that the recording was for the purpose of coherency and accuracy. The researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality regarding the shared information.

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedures**

A letter of introduction was obtained from Chuka University, Ethics Review Committee as displayed in Appendix (5). Afterwards the researcher sought a research permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), as shown in Appendix (6) in order to carry out the study. Through the Commissioner General of Prisons in Kenya, the researcher requested for a letter of introduction to the officers in charge of the prisons selected for the study as shown in Appendix (7). Thereafter, the researcher visited the offices of the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education in each of the study provinces, for clearance in order to carry out the research in the area. Using the letter from the Commissioner General of Prisons in Kenya, the researcher finally visited each of the sampled prisons and explained the purpose of the study to the relevant prison officers. This enabled the prison officers to organize an appropriate room/area, as it was appropriate in each prison, within the prison, for the

respondents to gather so that the researcher would be able to brief them. It would also guarantee the respondents' comfort and security as they completed the research questions. The researcher then gave the questionnaires to the respondents, as well as the necessary instructions concerning their completion. The purpose of the study was also explained to the respondents and only the willing respondents were allowed to participate in filling in the questionnaire. The researcher remained in the scene of the exercise and offered assistance to the respondents as need arose. The researcher also discussed with the respondents, the appropriate length of time required to fill in the questionnaires. The completed questionnaires were then collected on the time agreed upon for data analysis. The questionnaires were thereafter serialized for the purpose of follow-up.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Procedures**

The analysis method of this study was based on the information extracted from the data collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The data collected from the respondents was recorded and cleaned, which included editing, tabulation and coding. This ascertained there were no irregularities in the responses in readiness for further analysis. The data input was eventually done, after which cross checking was carried out to make certain that no items were incorrectly keyed in. Data was then categorized into qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, means and frequencies were used to describe and summarize the quantitative data which was obtained by use of measures of central tendency. The mean and standard deviation were the measures used for central tendency and reliability of the study results respectively.

Qualitative data from open-ended items and interview schedule responses were grouped in themes and analyzed in relation to the research objectives. The quantitative analysis was analyzed by the use of the computer software known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. The research findings are presented by use of tables, graphs and prose narration to describe qualitative data. For the parametric data, Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was obtained to reveal the strength of the association between the variables.



In order to quantify the amount of variation between the independent variable (life incarceration) and the dependent variables (psychological well-being and social relationships) coefficient of determination (R) was used. The estimation of the regression coefficient was done by use of regression analysis, which also helped determine the prediction level of the research model. The robustness and overall significance of the regression model was evaluated through the Analysis of Variance (F-statistic). Finally, a t-test was done in order to test the hypotheses, and the significance of the individual variables was evaluated at 5% significance level.

### 3.11.1. Data Transformation

The study used questionnaires of both a five-point Likert scale of 1-5 and a three-point Likert scale of 1-3. The points were distributed as Strongly Agree-5, Agree-4, Undecided-3, Disagree-2, Strongly Disagree-1, for the five-point Likert Scale, while for the three-point Likert Scale was, Always-3 Sometimes-2 and Never-1. This being a nominal measurement scale, it was crucial to do data transformation for appropriate interpretation of the results. The formula used for data transformation was as follows:

$$mean = \frac{\sum fw}{\sum f}$$

where:

$f$ =Frequency related to the number of responses ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree

$w$ =Weight of the responses ( $w=1, 2, 3, 4, 5$ )

Therefore, the mean is estimated to be the value between (1 and 5) and (1 and 3) for the five-point and three-point Likert scale correspondingly. This way, values of the transformed data follow an interval measurement scale for the data is continuous. For example, the following would be the computation of the mean, given the results of a specific item in the questionnaire:

Opinion	SD=1	D=2	U=3	A=4	SA=5
Frequency	3	8	5	9	5

$$mean = \frac{\sum fw}{\sum f} = \frac{1(3) + 2(8) + 3(5) + 4(9) + 5(5)}{3 + 8 + 5 + 9 + 5} = 3.167$$

The present study adopted the above propositions in analyzing the data and in the interpretation of descriptive data. Consequently, the following is the scoring used for the five-point Likert scale and the interpretation given in relation to the findings:

Likert scale	Value	Interpretation
Strongly Disagree	(SD= 1.-1.49)	extremely low
Disagree	(D=1.5-2.49)	low
Undecided	(U= 2.5-3.49)	moderate
Agree	(A=3.5-4.49)	high
Strongly Agree	(SA= 4.5-5.00)	extremely high

The three point Likert scale is scored as follows and the interpretation as stated:

Likert scale	Value	Interpretation
Never	1-1.49	low
Sometimes	1.5-2.49	moderate
Always	2.5-3.00	high

### **3.11.2. Research objectives, Hypotheses, Variables and data interpretations**

Table 3 presents a summary plot of the research objectives, hypotheses, variables and data interpretations.

Table 3: Research Objectives, Hypotheses, Variables and Data Interpretations

Objectives	Hypothesis	Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Interpretation of output of the analytical method
Objective 1 To determine the influence of life incarceration in the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya	H <sub>01</sub> : There is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya	Life incarceration	Inmates psychological well-being	- Coefficient determination (R <sup>2</sup> ) - t-test statistic - Correlation analysis - F-statistic
Objective 2 To determine the influence of life incarceration in the social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya	H <sub>02</sub> : There is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.	Life incarceration	Inmates social relationships	- Coefficient determination (R <sup>2</sup> ) - t-test statistic - Correlation analysis - F-statistic
Objective 3 To establish whether there exists differences in the influence of life incarceration inmates' psychological well-being based on gender	H <sub>03</sub> : There is no statistically significant difference on the effect of life incarceration on inmates' psychological well-being based on gender.	Life incarceration based on Gender	Inmates social relationships	- Coefficient determination (R <sup>2</sup> ) - t-test statistic - Correlation analysis - F-statistic
Objective 4 To establish whether there exists differences in the influence of life incarceration on inmates' social relationships based on gender	H <sub>04</sub> : There is no statistically significant difference on the effect of life incarceration on male and female inmates' social relationships based on gender	Life incarceration based on Gender	Inmates social relationships	- Coefficient determination (R <sup>2</sup> ) - t-test statistic - Correlation analysis - F-statistic

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Results on influence of life incarceration on psycho-social well-being of lifers are presented in this chapter. This is by comparing the psychological well-being and social relationships among male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The issues related to psychological well-being are organized under the following aspects: deprivation, stress, identity loss, personality change and trauma. Matters pertaining to social relationships are discussed under the following: family relationships, social withdrawal, and social isolation among the lifers, inter-prisoner relationship and constable- lifer relationship.

Apart from the questionnaires for the lifers and constables, data was also collected by use of an interview schedule responded to by the prison counsellors. The researcher inquired about the counsellors' assessment of the lifers in relation to their psycho-social well-being. The information from the counsellors was significant because they were the confidants of the lifers and therefore had a lot of information about the lifers' experiences and attitudes while in prison. The information was obtained through an interview schedule from the counsellors in each of the prisons under study. The interview schedule was organized under two parts each representing a specific objective of the study.

The research findings are presented by use of descriptive statistics which comprised percentages, means and frequencies and inferential statistics which were used to analyze the data with the aid of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) version 22 for windows. The findings were presented using bar graphs and tables while the implications are discussed per section. Additionally, precise thematic narrations of the qualitative data collected through open-ended questions and the interview schedules are included to supplement statistical quantitative findings. Data analysis was directed by the following four objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

- ii. To determine the influence of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- iii. To establish whether there exists differences in the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- iv. To establish whether there exists differences in the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

**4.2. Response Rate of Lifers Based on Gender**

Information on the response rate based on gender is represented in Figure 3. The information was solicited from the life incarcerated inmates, who were asked to tick appropriately on the provided space in relation to gender. The sample size for each group was 86 respondents for the purpose of comparison. However, few of the male inmates’ questionnaires were inappropriately completed bringing the male respondents total to 83. The findings are displayed in Figure 3.

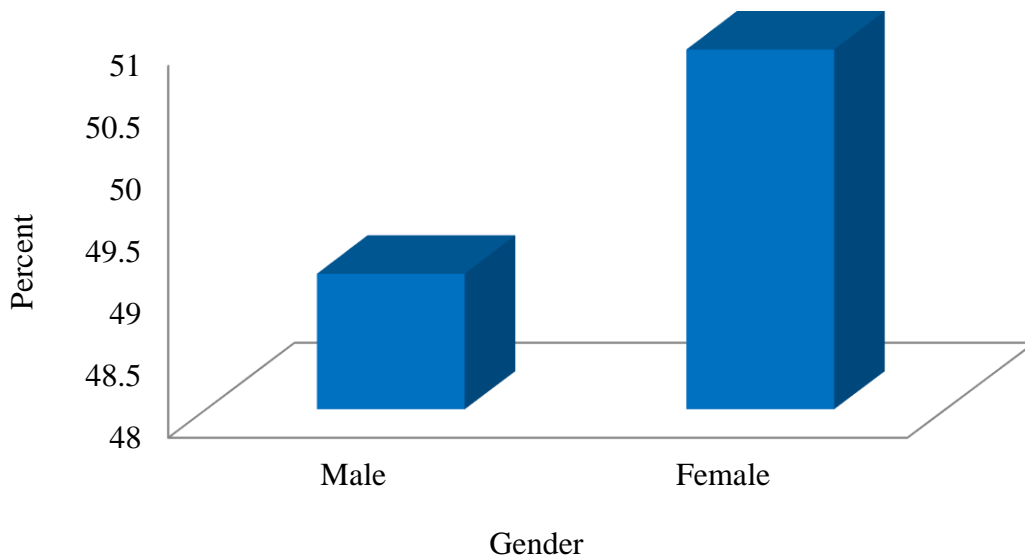


Figure 3. Response Rate of Lifers Based on Gender

As shown in Figure 3, 49.1% of the respondents were male lifers while 50.9% were female lifers. The 98.2% response rate was realized, which was made possible due to the personal involvement of the researcher, who distributed the questionnaires in person

and waited as the respondent filled them in and then collected them within the time agreed upon.

### 4.3. Demographic Details of the Respondents

This part deals with the background information of the respondents, comprising lifers and prison constables. The demographic details of the lifers were based on gender, age, length of time in prison, marital status, number of children, level of education, and occupation before incarceration. The constables' details included their duration of service as prison constables and their highest level of education. The demographic characteristics were considered significant since they aided the researcher in comprehending the nature of the respondents of the study which was vital for appropriate analysis of the study findings. The gender difference of the lifers was important for the purpose of comparison, giving the researcher the ability to discuss prison experiences related to male and female lifers. The differences in age would help the researcher to note the distribution of the inmates in terms of years, between the male and female lifers for the purpose of relating them.

#### 4.3.1. Distribution of Lifers by Age Bracket and Gender

Life incarcerated inmates were asked to indicate their age in years by ticking the appropriate age bracket in which they belonged. The information in Table 4 presents the distribution of the respondents into different age brackets in percentages and the age distribution by gender.

Table 4: Distribution of Lifers by Age Bracket Based on Gender

Age	All Inmates	Male	Female
30 years and below	(21.2%)	(24.4%)	(39.8%)
31-40 years	(32.1%)	(32.9%)	(31.3%)
41-50years	(30.3%)	(31.7%)	(28.9%)
51-60 years	(12.1%)	(8.5%)	(15.7%)
61 years and above	(4.2%)	(2.4%)	(5.8%)
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0

From the research findings, as indicated in Table 4, it emerged that 32.1% of the respondents, which was the highest percentage, ranged between 31-40 years of age, 30.3% of the lifers were between 41-50 years of age, while those with 30 years and

below formed 21.2% of the study population. The lowest number of respondents was represented by lifers with 61 years and above which was at 4.2%. This may be explained by the number of years one is likely to be sentenced which begins at above 18 years. According to Jacobson and Hough (2010), life incarceration is the only sentence that can be executed on anyone over 21 years of age, who is convicted of murder. From the recorded percentages, the implication is that most of the inmates serving life incarceration were between 31-50 years.

Table 4 further presents the different groups of female lifers based on their age in years. The highest percentage is represented by respondents aged between 31-40 years at 31.3%, followed by those aged between 41-50 years with 28.9% of the study population. An observation made on the male respondents' responses, indicates that lifers aged between 31-40 years form the highest percentage of the life incarcerated male inmates at 32.9%, followed by lifers aged between 41-50 years with 31.7%. These results show that the male lifers in the age bracket between 31-40 years is slightly higher than that of the female lifers in the same bracket, which is at 31.3%. Further observation reveals that there are more male lifers between ages 31-50 than the female lifers which stands at 64.6% and 60.2% respectively.

Additional, Table 4 presents information on the lifers with the lowest percentage of 2.4% mainly those with 61 years and above. This percentage is lower than that of the women in the same age bracket which stands at 5.8%. The difference in numbers is also noted between the lifers aged 51-60 years with the female lifers totaling to 15.7% while the male lifers represent 8.5%, a difference of 7.2%. Regarding the distribution of lifers by age bracket and gender, there is a variation in that there are more male lifers between the ages 31 and 50 years than there are female lifers. These findings may be explained by the fact that the population of male lifers is generally greater than that of the female lifers thus a bigger representation of the males in every age bracket. The findings agree with Nellis (2017) who observes that although the number of women serving life sentences is rising more quickly than it is for men; by 20% and 15% respectively, men comprise an overwhelming proportion; 97%, of the inmates in prison for life incarceration.

#### 4.3.2. Male and Female Lifers' Duration in Prison

Life incarcerated inmates were required to indicate the length of time they had served as prisoners. This information was relevant to the study since the longer the time the lifer had been in prison; the more they were exposed to the prison environment and its experiences. Therefore, this would enable them to inform the study with appropriate information, regarding its influence on their psychosocial welfare. Table 5 represents results of the data collected which indicate that 51.9% of the lifers had been in prison for the duration between 1-10 years. This group represented the highest percentage followed by the inmates who had served between 11-20 years, which was at 33.3%. The inmates who had served below one year had the lowest percentage of 4.9%.

Table 5: Inmates' Duration in Prison

Duration	All Inmates	Male	Female
Below one year	4.9%	6.1	3.8
1-10 years	51.9%	50.0	53.8
11-20 years	33.3%	31.7	34.9
Above 20 years	9.9%	12.2	7.5
Total	100%	100	100

The observation of the findings based on the results of the male and female lifers, shows that the highest percentage of the female lifers, which is 53.8%, had been in prison between 1-10 year. During the same duration, 50% of the male lifers had served a prison term of between 1-10 years. Additionally, the results reveal that male lifers who had been in prison for less than one year comprised 6.1% while the female lifers who had been in prison for a term below one year constituted 3.8%, which makes a difference of 2.3%. Therefore, there were more, nearly double, male lifers who had served the shortest duration in prison compared to their female counterparts. However, the percentage of female lifers who had been in prison between 1-10 years was greater than that of male lifers within the same number of years with about 3.8%. Only 9.9% lifers had been in prison for the duration of 20 years and above. Comparing the male and female lifers' representation in respect to the afore-mentioned duration, the percentages are 12.2% and 7.5% respectively. This shows that the percentage of male lifers who had been in prison for a period longer than 20 years was greater than that of female lifers with about 4.5%.



### 4.3.3 Constables' Working Experience

The prison constables were asked to indicate the length of time they had served as constables in the prison. This information was pertinent to the study since the length of time in prison service contributed to their experience and exposure which would be significant in informing the study. The lowest percentage (4.3%) of respondents had worked as constables in prison for less than a year while those who had worked between 1-10 years recorded the highest percentage (34.8%). Prison constables, who had served for 11 years and above, formed 60.8% of the population. The significance of these findings to the study is that a large percentage of the constables had been in the prison environment for a period of over 11 years and had intermingled with lifers for a relatively longer time. Consequently, the constables were able to give information based on their interactions with and observations of the lifers.

### 4.3.4 Lifers' Marital Status

The life-incarcerated inmates were asked to respond on an item in the questionnaire regarding their marital status. The results is shown in Table 6

Table 6: Inmates Marital Status

Marital Status	All Lifers	Male	Females
Single	(41.3%)	(44.6%)	(38.1%)
Married	(39.5%)	(45.8%)	(33.3%)
Windowed	(10.2%)	(3.6%)	(16.7%)
Divorced	(9.0%)	(6.0%)	(11.9%)
Total	100.0	100	100

The findings in Table 6 indicate that 41.3% of the respondents were single and this represents the largest group in this aspect of the lifers. The analysis also shows that the married respondents consisted of 39.5%, which is slightly lower than the percentage of the single respondents. A small percentage of 9.0% respondents, represent the lifers who had gone through divorce. The conclusion was that each of the marital status is represented in the study population, which is of significance in the entire research findings for the purpose of comparison. It also depicts the respondents' connection with the family, which is a key aspect in their social relationships.

The data analysis based on gender as presented in Table 7 shows that 38.1% of the female lifers are single while 33.3% are married. These percentages differ with the

observation made on the male lifers, where the percentage of the married respondents is slightly higher than for the single respondents, which is at 45.8% and 44.6% respectively. The observations further reveal that there are more married male lifers, with about 12.1%, than the female lifers. This difference may be explained by the distribution of the male lifers based on age, whereby 64.6% of the male lifers were between 31-50 years, which could be assumed as the appropriate age for marriage. The female lifers of between 31-50 years were 60.2%, which is less than the male lifers.

Additionally, the analysis shows that more female lifers; 11.9% were divorced compared to male lifers who were 6.0% of the study population. The implication could be that more male lifers, 5.9% may have had more family issues to deal with as life incarcerated inmates and this may have had more consequences on their psychological well-being and social relationships.

#### **4.3.5 Number of the Inmates' Children**

The lifers were asked to indicate the number of children they had and the responses are as shown in Table 7. The responses indicate that most of the life imprisoned inmates had between 1-3 children as represented by 46.8% of the respondents. It was also noted that 67.3% of the population under study had between (1-4) children. This may be explained by the high percentage of the lifers' marital status, where by the married, divorced and the widowed were 58.7%. The assumption being that their marital status had created an environment for sexual interaction with the opposite gender and thus allowing for child bearing. The issue of children is significant to the study since it has a bearing on the lifers' social relationships, specifically the family, and how it may be influenced by life incarceration.

Table 7: Inmates' Number of Children

Number of children	All Lifers	Male	Female
None	(32.7%)	(47.5%)	(17.1%)
1-3	(46.8%)	(37.5%)	(56.6%)
4 and above	(20.5%)	(15.0%)	(26.3%)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings in Table 7 further indicate that the largest percentage of the male lifers, 47.5% did not have any children while 37.5% had between 1-3 children. Further

observation on the female lifers' results indicates that only 17.1% females did not have children whereas 56.6% had between 1-3 children. The conclusion is that the percentage of male lifers without children is more than that of the female inmates without by 30.0%. The reverse is the case for the female lifers where the percentage of those with between 1-3 children is more by 19.1% than the male lifers. This may be explained by the sexual harassment the women are exposed leading to early and unwanted pregnancies.

The research findings also show that 26.3% female lifers had four or more children, while the findings on the male lifers had a lower percentage of 15.0% as noted in Table 7. Therefore, on the overall, the total percentage of the female lifers with children is a lot higher; 82.9% compared to that of the male lifers which is 52.5%. This variation in the number of children between the male and female lifers is pivotal to the entire study in establishing matters related to family relationship. The findings are also in agreement with a study by Glaze and Maruschak, (2008) who found that in 2004, 62% of women state and federal inmates, compared with 51% of male inmates, were parents. Of those female inmates, 55% reported that they were living with their minor children in the month before arrest, 42 percent in single-parent households (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008). For the male inmates who were parents, the corresponding figures were 36% and 17%. This confirms that a majority of women prisoners were mothers, who must struggle with the burden of being separated from their children during incarceration.

#### **4.3.6. Highest Level of Education of Lifers Based on Gender**

Results based on the lifers' highest level of education are represented in Figure 4. The life incarcerated inmates were asked to tick their level of education appropriately on the space provided in the questionnaire. The information was useful in the study in helping the researcher relate the lifers' intensity of self-understanding as well as their comprehension of the future vis-a-vis their life-imprisonment term. Majority of the lifers, represented by 40.7% of the population under study were at the primary school level by the time of imprisonment. Inmates at secondary school level were 37.7%, while the smallest percentage of 1.2% had attained university level of education. The deduction is that majority of the lifers were literate, except 6.0% who had never attended school. This distribution in the level of literacy informed the study

appropriately on how different respondents perceive the nature of sentence they are serving, and its implication on their lives, family and society at large.

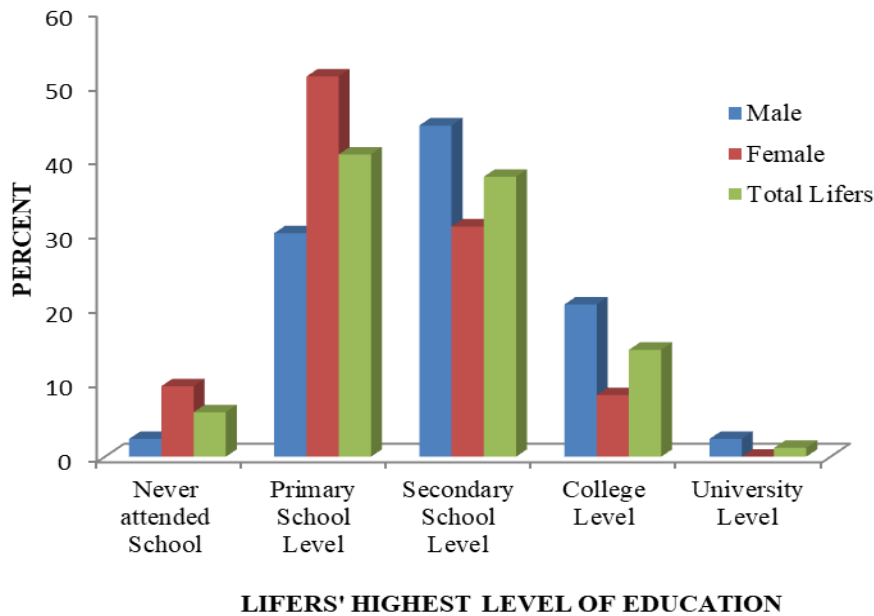


Figure 4. Inmates' Highest Level of Education

The details in Figure 4, on a comparative note, reveal that more than a half of the female life incarcerated inmates; 51.2%, had attained primary school level of education prior to their life sentence. Another 31.0% were at secondary school level while 8.3% studied up to college level. In comparison to the male lifers based on the level of education, there were more female lifers in the primary school bracket (51.2%) than the male lifers who constituted 30.1%. However, the percentage of the female life imprisoned inmates at the secondary school level is lower, at 31.0%, than that of the male counterparts in the same education level, which was at 44.6% as shown on Figure 4. With regard to this information, it can be deduced that the highest percentage of male lifers is concentrated at the secondary school level of education while that of the female lifers is concentrated at the primary school level of education. The data also record that a higher percentage of female lifers never attended school thus the level of illiteracy is higher in female than in male lifers.

#### **4.3.7 Constables' Highest Level of Education**

Information on the respondents based on the constables' highest level of was solicited from the constables by asking them to tick their level of education appropriately on the provided space. The data showed that all the constables working in the prisons were knowledgeable since the lowest level of education recorded was secondary school, which also has the lowest percentage at 21.7%. The highest percentage in the education level was the college level at 52.2%, and was slightly over half of the total study population. The university level was represented by 26.1% of the study population. The constables' level of education was relevant to the research because the constables were on a daily interaction with the lifers; therefore being knowledgeable enhances their informed contribution to the study. They are also able to implement the prisons programs appropriately thus producing the correct reflection of the lifer experiences. This way, the researcher is assured of obtaining accurate information in relation to the research objectives.

#### **4.3.8. Occupation of Inmates before Life Incarceration**

Data analysis results in Figure 5 represent some of the activities the lifers did for a living before life incarceration. From the different occupations listed in the questionnaire, lifers were asked to tick appropriately, what was relevant in their case.

The findings in Figure 5 illustrate that the largest number of life-incarcerated inmates were self-employed with 66.5% of the respondents attesting to this. Moreover, 19.5% of the respondents indicated that they did casual work for a living whereas 7.9% worked in the private sector. The lowest percentage of the lifers, 6.1%, was government employees before their sentence.

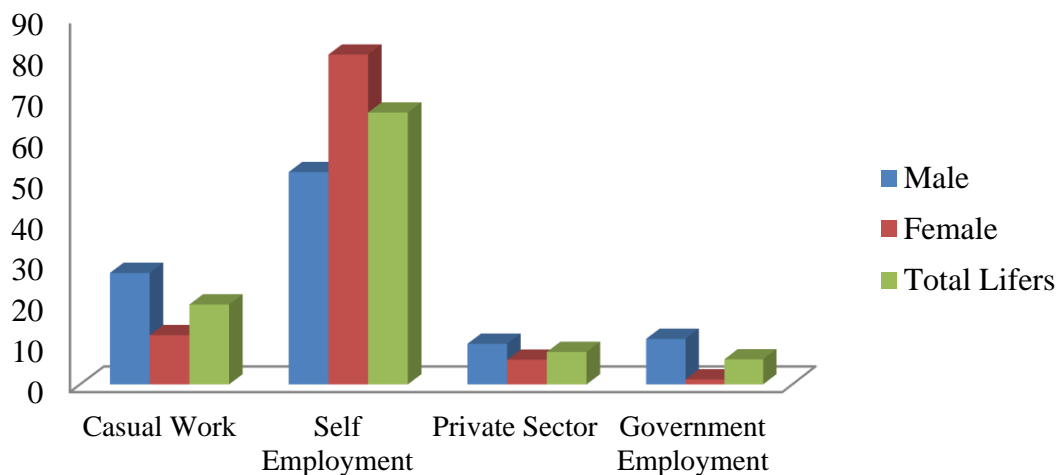


Figure 5: Inmates' Occupation Prior to Life Incarceration

With reference to the occupation of female lifers, 80.7% of the respondents were self-employed, constituting the highest number of respondents in the study, as displayed in Figure 5. The percentage of the male lifers in the same occupation stood at 51.9%, which was lower than that of the female lifers by 28.8%. Therefore, more female inmates were self-employed comparatively. This disparity could be founded on the education background of the lifers whereby, majority of the female lifers never went to school or had schooled up to the primary school level. On the contrary, more male lifers had attained secondary and college levels of education. However, with reference to those who worked as government employees, the percentage posited by the male lifers; 11.1 %, as shown on Figure 5, was higher than the female life sentenced inmates, who comprised 1.2% of the population under study. Moreover, male lifers who were working in the private sector bore 9.9% of the respondents compared to 6.0% of the female inmates. The information related to the occupation of the life-incarcerated inmates is significant to the study because it enabled the researcher to compare the nature of lifers' activities before imprisonment. It also revealed the previous economic status of the inmate in comparison to their current standing. This will thus inform the research whether this loss of economic standing influences the psychological well-being of the lifers.

#### 4.4. Life Incarceration and Psychological Well-Being of Inmates

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The psychological aspects under discussion include: deprivation, stress related issues, loss of identity, personality change and issues related to trauma. The data for analysis was obtained through questionnaires for lifers and prison constables. Open ended questions as well as the prisons counsellors' interview schedules have been discussed in order to supplement the quantitative data.

##### 4.4.1 Responses of Inmates in Relation to Deprivation

The study sought information on the inmates' view on deprivation as a psychological aspect of life incarceration. This was meant to inform the study as to whether life incarceration brought about deprivation of any form to the inmates serving a life sentence. In addressing the deprivation aspect of psychological well-being, the respondents were required to rate themselves using a 5-point likert scale, by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the given statements. Data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Frequency Distribution for Inmates on Deprivation

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
I have been denied my total freedom as a lifer	77 (49.0%)	32 (20.4%)	4 (2.5%)	35 (22.3%)	9 (5.7%)
I feel my rights have been violated by being life imprisoned	88 (56.1%)	34 (21.7%)	2 (1.3%)	25 (15.9%)	8 (5.1%)
Life imprisonment makes me feel like I have no future	93 (59.2%)	26 (16.6%)	9 (5.7%)	18 (11.5%)	11 (7.0%)
I feel that my life is being wasted in prison as a lifer	98 (61.6%)	37 (23.3%)	3 (1.9%)	12 (7.5%)	9 (5.7%)
I feel that I am losing the best years of my life	103 (67.3%)	39 (25.5%)	2 (1.3%)	4 (2.6%)	5 (3.3%)
I wish I had more privacy as a lifer	58 (38.7%)	48 (32.0%)	7 (4.7%)	21 (14.0%)	16 (10.7%)

\*SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Results in Table 8 indicate that the highest percentage of the in-mates (67.3%) strongly agreed that they were losing the best years of their lives in prison as lifers. The findings also show that (61.6%) of the inmates felt that their life was being wasted due to the

imprisonment while 59.2% stated that life imprisonment made them feel like they had no future. This information is in agreement with the findings of Johnson (2008) who posits that imprisonment causes a considerable restriction of an individual's freedom and many other basic rights; therefore, deprivation is an integral feature of being imprisoned for life. Prisoners, according to Johnson (2008) are deprived of their freedom and restricted in their movement within the prison. They are also constrained on matters related to heterosexual relationships, associations with family and other support groups. The inmates undergo a loss of self-control and they also experience lack of hitherto relished facilities and personal security. The life of the long-term inmate comprises numerous losses, which cumulate and leave the prisoner with no sense of self-respect or worth as an individual. According to Johnson (2008), there is the loss of freedom at the center of every prison experience, which bears a transformation role for every prisoner.

The results are similarly supported by Johnson and Toch (2000) who observes that for long term convicts, loss of freedom is devastating because the jail-birds have no power to be in charge over their lives or chances to make individual choices. The directing of the inmates' activities is placed in the authority of the prison staff, who decide what the prisoners should do and when it should be done. Therefore, lifers experience deprivation characterized by lack of freedom, violation of rights, and loss of the lifers' best years of life indeterminately. The data on inmates' deprivation was further analyzed using means and standard deviation and the findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Means Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Deprivation

Statement	N	Mean	SD
I have been denied my total freedom as a lifer	157	3.85	1.38
I feel my rights have been violated by being life imprisoned	157	4.08	1.29
Life imprisonment makes me feel like I have no future	157	4.10	1.31
I feel that my life is being wasted in prison as a lifer	159	4.28	1.17
I feel that I am losing the best years of my life	153	4.51	0.91
I wish I had more privacy as a lifer	150	3.74	1.37
Overall mean/Valid N	137	4.14	1.23

The lifers' responses as shown in Table 9 indicate that all the respondents experienced deprivation at a high level, with an overall mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of



1.23. This asserts that life incarceration bears an element of loss of freedom and personal space for the inmates. From the research findings, the lowest mean for the lifers was 3.74 while the highest was 4.51, out of the possible five (5) maximum points, placing the levels of deprivation at high and extremely high respectively. Further observation shows that a large number of the lifers felt that they were losing the best years of their lives by having been sentenced to life imprisonment as represented by a high mean score of 4.51 of the statement. The feeling that their life was being wasted in prison as lifers scored a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.17, suggestive of the fact that the lifers have been deprived of the opportunity to live to their life's expectation. The overall mean for the lifers leads to the conclusion that life imprisonment leads to lifers being deprived of the freedom and having their rights to exercise their life's full potential violated. Although this is the reason for the incarceration, to punish them for the crime committed, it ends up introducing other psychosocial challenges to the inmates.

#### 4.4.1.1 Constables on Matters Related to Lifers' Deprivation

The study sought information on the constables' opinion regarding lifers' deprivation. The constables' opinion was significant to the study since it complemented the data given by the lifers. Table 10 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 10: Responses of Constables on Matters related to Lifers Deprivation

Statement	Mean	SD
Lifers feel that most of their rights have been violated by being life imprisoned.	4.13	1.24
Lifers express a feeling of having no future while in prison	3.47	1.27
Lifers feel that their life is being wasted in prison	3.87	1.25
Lifers feel that they are losing the best years of their lives as prisoners	4.22	1.06
Inmates have no control over their day-to-day life as lifers	3.31	1.46
Lifers wish they had more privacy during their sentence.	3.09	1.30
Overall mean	3.68	1.26

Figures in Table 10 indicate that, according to the constables, the lifers were experiencing deprivation as determined by the means for each statement. The lowest mean was 3.09 and a standard deviation of 1.30 while the highest mean was 4.22 and a standard deviation of 1.06, describing the levels to be between moderate and high

respectively. Therefore, the constables' opinion is in agreement with the lifers' views that life imprisonment, leads to the life-incarcerated inmates experiencing deprivations of different types. Irwin (2005) agrees with the findings by observing that in the case of inmates serving long term sentences, the idea of bearing prolonged years of suspicion and enduring extreme deprivations including lack of privacy can lead to dissatisfaction and frustrations. The statement, 'Lifers feel that they are losing the best years of their lives as prisoners, recorded the highest mean of 4.22 with a deviation of 1.06. This observation by the prison constables agrees with the lifers' responses since the same statement had the highest mean of 4.51. This, therefore, confirms the concept that the lifers feel they have been denied the freedom and right to spend the best years of life in a more productive way rather than being in prison.

According to the constables' responses, the statement, 'Lifers feel that their life is being wasted in prison,' had a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.25, an indication of a high level of deprivation. The same statement bore the second highest mean among the lifers, which was 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.17. However, the opinion of the constables on the statement, 'Lifers feel that most of their rights have been violated by being life imprisoned,' had a higher mean than that of the lifers on the same statement which was 4.13 and a standard deviation of 1.24 and 4.08 with a standard deviation of 1.29 respectively. The opinion of inmates rights being violated is also supported by the findings of Haney (2012) who notes that psychological stressors such as dehumanization, denial of rights and dangers to which lifers are exposed, can be a source of emotional pain and trauma. In conclusion, the constables' opinion and the lifers' responses show that there is a relationship between life imprisonment and deprivation and the former can influence the lifers' psychological well-being.

In response to issues related to lifers' psychological well-being, the counsellors were asked to state if there were any cases of deprivation among the lifers. The counsellors noted that according to the inmates, there were many restrictions and freedom of self-actualization was curtailed. The lifers also stated that there was no liberty especially of movement, and the feeling that their human rights had been denied was echoed in the inmates' views. This made the lifers feel dissatisfied and sad since they had lost the opportunity to run their lives themselves. The counsellors information is in tandem with

the information given by the lifers concerning, ‘being denied their freedom’ and their rights being violated by being life imprisoned.’ From the findings of the study, these statements recorded a mean of 3.85 and 4.08 respectively, which was at a high level. The counsellors’ opinion also showed that the lifers lacked personal space and equal treatment with other inmates serving different types of sentences. Therefore, the idea of permanency in confinement was a key aspect of deprivation.

#### 4.4.2 Psychological Well-Being in Relation to Stress

The second aspect of psychological well-being under study was the stress related issues. In order to inform the study, the respondents were asked to rate themselves using a three-point likert scale. Data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages as presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Frequency Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Stress

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
Being life imprisoned makes me feel sad and miserable	98 (58.7%)	65 (38.9%)	4 (2.4%)
I have a feeling of hopelessness always at the thought of being life imprisoned	87 (54.0%)	64 (39.8%)	10 (6.2%)
I have frequent crying spells in prison as a lifer	72 (45.3%)	75 (47.2%)	12 (7.5%)
I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned	104 (67.5%)	44 (28.6%)	6 (3.9%)
I have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned	87 (56.9%)	47 (30.4%)	19 (12.4%)
I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer.	79 (51.0%)	40 (25.6%)	36 (23.2%)
The thought of being a lifer makes me to have sleepless nights.	75 (47.8%)	74 (47.1%)	8 (5.1%)
I usually have nightmares as a lifer.	57 (36.3%)	75 (47.8%)	25 (15.9%)
Being a lifer makes me feel ashamed.	97 (61.4%)	50(31.6%)	11 (7.0%)
I am worried how I will cope with life as a lifer	96 (60.8%)	45 (28.5%)	17 (10.8%)
My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.	109 (68.1%)	36 (22.5%)	15 (9.4%)
Average Score	87.36	55.91	15.1

Findings in Table 11 indicate that the largest percentage of the inmates (68%) concurred that their experience in the prison as lifers was stressful while (67.5%) agreed that they usually felt upset because of being life imprisoned. Other aspects of stress which bore relatively high percentages included “Feeling sad and miserable” (58.7%) as well as, “Feeling ashamed for being a lifer” (61.4%). These results are in agreement with the

observations of Haney (2001) that the idea of being in prison, especially those serving a life imprisonment, makes some of the inmates feel infantilized. The debased environments under which they are made to operate are an often reminder of their compromised social standing and the stigmatized social role as convicts. The view of stress as a factor of incarceration is also supported by Santos (1995) who posits that long term inmates often lose their sense of usefulness immediately self-independence is withdrawn. Finally this may lead to sadness or depression thus affecting psychological wellness of the inmates. Data based on inmates' sense of stress was further analyzed using descriptive statistics including means and standard deviation. The levels were classified as low 1-1.49, moderate 1.5 to 2.49 and high 2.5 to 3.00. Information in Table 12 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 12: Means Distribution for Inmates' Stress Related Issues

Statement	N	Mean	S D
Being life imprisoned makes me feel sad and miserable.	167	2.56	0.54
I have a feeling of hopelessness always at the thought of being life imprisoned.	161	2.48	0.61
I have frequent crying spells in prison as a lifer.	159	2.38	0.62
I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned.	154	2.64	0.55
I have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned.	153	2.44	0.70
I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer.	155	2.28	0.81
The thought of being a lifer makes me to have sleepless nights.	157	2.43	0.59
I usually have nightmares as a lifer.	157	2.20	0.69
Being a lifer makes me feel ashamed.	158	2.54	0.62
I am worried how I will cope with life as a lifer.	158	2.50	0.68
My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.	160	2.59	0.65
Overall mean score/SD		2.45	0.64

The study findings in Table 12 show that the means for all the statements responded to by the lifers were above 2.00 denoting that all the lifers were experiencing stressful issues, from a moderate level to a high level as a result of life incarceration. The overall mean score of 2.45 and a standard deviation of 0.64, points out that the lifers were in agreement that the various situations presented in the statements contributed to the stressful experience of the prisoners.

From Table 12, the statement, "I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned" recorded the highest mean of 2.64, which was a high level, and a standard deviation of

0.55 while the lowest mean of 2.20 (moderate level) and a standard deviation of 0.69 was recorded for the statement, “I usually have nightmares as a lifer.” This suggests that being life incarcerated caused distress and disappointment to a high number of lifers thus affecting their psychological well-being. Further observation reveal that being life imprisoned made lifers feel sad and miserable as represented by a mean of 2.56 and a standard deviation of 0.54. The analysis agrees with the observations made by Randy and David (2008) that if the stress is not dealt with effectively, feelings of solitude, nervousness, and sleeplessness and disquieting may result. Stress can be a common theme of prison incarceration due to the very nature of the prison environment.

#### 4.4.2.1 Constables on Matters related to Inmates’ Stress

Apart from the lifers’ information on the aspect of stress, the study collected data on the constables’ opinion concerning lifers’ issues related to stress. The constables’ input was considered significant to the study because they spend most of their time with the lifers. Consequently, they are likely to have relevant information to inform the study. Secondly, the constables’ opinion was significant to the study since it supplemented the data given by the lifers. The data analysis is represented in Table 13.

Table 13: Constables’ Responses on Inmates’ Matters Related to Stress

Statement	Mean	<i>S D</i>
Lifers have a feeling of hopelessness at the thought of being life imprisoned.	2.30	0.55
Lifers have frequent crying spells while in prison.	2.13	0.46
Lifers have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned.	2.34	0.71
The life imprisoned inmates find it difficult to cope with the thought of being a lifer.	2.21	0.59
The lifers are worried about how they will cope with life in prison as lifers.	2.40	0.66
The experience of lifers in this prison is stressful.	2.17	0.77
Overall mean score	2.25	0.62

From the data analysis in Table 13, all the means of the six statements indicate that in the constables’ opinion, all the lifers were experiencing a sense of hopelessness, crying spells, anxiety, and worry. The lowest mean as observed from the statements was at 2.13, which is a moderate level and a standard deviation of 0.46 while the highest mean was at 2.40 and a standard deviation of 0.66 out of the possible maximum of 3 points. It, therefore, means that being life imprisoned contributed to the lifers experiencing

stress. These observations are supported by McGunigall-Smith (2004b) who observes that the greatest basic pain inflicted by life without parole is that it is an indefinite period of tediousness, uncertainty, and anxiety. The statement, 'The lifers are worried about how they will cope with life in prison as lifers,' represented the highest mean of 2.40 and a standard deviation of 0.66, according to the constables' opinion, while the lifers' responses on the same statement got a mean of 2.50 representing a high level. The life incarcerated inmates found it a challenge to cope with life as lifers which is likely to impact on their psychological well-being. The aspect of being anxious and nervous was equally recorded in the lifers' experience as represented by a mean of 2.34 with a deviation of 0.71.

When asked if life-incarceration caused stress to lifers, the counsellors stated that having to spend all their life in jail made the lifers sad, and distressed. It made them feel desperate and perceive themselves as useless since they felt that they did not belong to the community. They were also not able to cope with the prison environment and did not see the need for rehabilitation since the possibility of ever leaving the jail was dim. Most of the inmates were experiencing fear of the unknown and uncertainty and wished for the reduction of term. The collected information revealed that newcomers in the prisons were hard hit by the terms of the sentence but were counselled and given spiritual support to help them cope with the verdict.

Some of the aspects that led to mental distress, and which the lifers complained about included: misbehavior of some of the inmates, arrogance to and disregard of others, violence among the inmates and separation of the life incarcerated inmates from other inmates with varied jail terms. The lifers felt that they were being devalued and segregated due to the nature of their imprisonment terms and this was reason enough to cause emotional distress. Cases of regression, deterioration of lifers' character, lack of morals, cases of self-harm and destruction, were also mentioned by the prisoners as elements of stress.

Information collected through the interview schedule revealed that a number of the lifers lived under fear especially of being transferred to distant places in which case, their people will not be able to visit them. This fear of transfer and increased separation

from the family and close relations formed the greatest basis for stress. They preferred to remain within the reach of their family members, relatives and friends, and among inmates with whom they had familiarized. Lifers expressed the fear of being deserted by their people, being killed by other inmates in case of disagreement, and fear of warranty “spoiling their records” which may hinder or delay amnesty.

#### 4.4.3 Inmates’ Psychological Well-Being in Relation to Identity Loss

In dealing with the aspect of identity loss, the respondents were asked to rate themselves using a 5-point likert scale, with a minimum of 1 point and a maximum of 5 points. Information in Table 14 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 14: Frequency and Percentage Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Identity Loss

Statement	SA	S	U	D	SD
I usually experience extreme bad temper after life imprisonment	63(42.0%)	44 (29.3%)	6 (4.0%)	18 (12.0%)	19(12.7%)
I find myself getting quite upset by minor issues since I was life imprisoned	50 (32.3%)	63 (40.6%)	7(4.5%)	24(15.5%)	11(7.1%)
I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned	86 (54.1%)	49 (30.8%)	9 (5.7%)	6(3.8%)	9(5.7%)
Being referred to as a lifer has made me lose my self-worth as a person	74 (46.3%)	37 (23.1%)	14(8.8%)	19 (11.9%)	16(10.0%)
I feel I have been alienated from myself by being life imprisoned	61 (39.6%)	44 (28.6%)	10(6.5%)	23 (14.9%)	16(10.4%)
As a life-imprisoned inmate, I am afraid of losing my mental health	81 (51.6%)	44(28.0%)	3 (1.9%)	10 (6.4%)	19(12.1%)

Results in Table 14 show that 54.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that they found it difficult to do things they had enjoyed doing before they were life imprisoned. Another 51% of the respondents were afraid of losing their mental health due to the prison experience. The results are in agreement with Crewe, et. al., (2017) who observes that female inmates excessively display a high rate of mental health issues, which are aggravated by life imprisonment as they face higher stigma and are disproportionately affected by the influence incarceration has on their children (Crewe, 2017). The

findings on inmates' identity loss are further discussed based on means and standard deviation. Table 15 shows this information.

Table 15: Means Distribution for Inmates on Identity Loss

Statement	Mean	SD
I usually experience extreme bad temper after life imprisonment	3.76	1.42
I find myself getting quite upset by minor issues since I was life imprisoned	3.75	1.25
I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned	4.24	1.09
Being referred to as a lifer has made me lose my self-worth as a person	3.84	1.38
I feel I have been alienated from myself by being life imprisoned	3.72	1.38
As a life-imprisoned inmate, I am afraid of losing my mental health	4.01	1.37
Total	3.88	1.31

The results in Table 15 show that the means for the lifers varied from 4.24 to 3.72, out of a possible minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 5, with a difference of 0.97. The means range can be interpreted as being at a high level. The statement scoring the highest mean was, "I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned," which has a mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 1.09. This gives the implication of change or transformation of the lifers' perception of life and developing disinterest on various activities. This is likely to have been influenced by life imprisonment, which might have dulled or dampened the lifers' attitude towards life and consequently their inability to appreciate life's activities as hitherto done. The findings of this study are consistent with the observations of Crawley and Sparks (2006), who posited that identity loss is an effect of long-term imprisonment since long-term prisoners are effectively cut off from the outside world for a large portion of their lives and are denied the opportunity of positive self-development. Therefore, according to Liebling (2004), prisoners can no longer be themselves. The inmates being in prison as lifers are likely to increase the chances of behavior change in order to survive or cope with the long and undefined duration in prison. The damaging of the lifers' character, due to the nature of their sentence, may further lead to the deterioration of their mental and emotional well-being. In a bid to survive in prison, they end up becoming different persons in terms of character and attitude, having lost their original self.

The issue of being afraid of losing their mental health in prison was also identified as an aspect experienced by the lifers. This statement thus had a mean of 4.01 with a



standard deviation of 1.37 indicating that several inmates were psychologically endangered mentally by being in prison. The findings are in agreement with Mauer, et al., (2004) who posit that there is a greater prevalence of mental health problems among lifers when compared with the general population of prisoners. Based on the findings of Bureau of Justice Statistics, nearly one in five lifers had a mental illness versus one in six in the general prisoner population (Mauer et al., 2004).

#### 4.5.3.1 Constables' Responses on Inmates' Identity Loss

The prison constables were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the given statements, which concerned the inmates, on the aspect of identity loss, using a five-point Likert scale. Table 16 presents the results of the findings.

Table 16: Constables' Responses on Inmates' Identity Loss

Statement	Mean	SD
Being referred to as a lifer has made the inmates lose their self-worth as persons	2.59	1.40
Lifers feel they have no sense of belonging	2.31	1.17
Lifers are worried about how they are described or referred to in prison	2.72	1.31
Lifers are afraid of losing their mental health in prison.	2.68	1.46
Total	2.57	1.33

Table 16 reveals that according to the constables' responses, lifers were experiencing identity loss at a high level as attested to by the total mean of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 1.33. The highest mean of 2.72 with a standard deviation of 1.31 shows most of the respondents were worried about how they were being described or referred to in prison. The thought of being called lifers seems to have stripped them of all their dignity and status in society. The present findings are in agreement with Jewkes (2005) who noted that the indeterminate inmates experience suffering beyond denial of freedom in that they are stripped of their fundamental sense of being, causing intense sadness for oneself. It, therefore, suggests that the lifers have lost their self-worth for being referred to as lifers, which also made them worried. The inmates are also afraid of losing their mental health in prison as lifers. However, the aspect of having no sense of belonging had the lowest mean, according to the constables, which was 2.31 and a standard deviation of 1.17.

When asked what kind of persons they had become, some of the male lifers, responded that they no longer felt worth of themselves and that their self-esteem had been eroded, leaving them unsure of their identity. This proves that the life sentence encounter had tampered with their self-esteem, personal worth as well as living in fear due to the uncertainty imposed by the imprisonment term. Some other male lifers stated that, “I am like a useless person because all the years that I have spent in prison I could have done something better in my life.” This pronouncement is supported by Crawley and Sparks (2006) in their observation that identity loss is an outcome of life incarceration as a result of enclosing the inmates behind bars throughout their lives and curtailing their chances of personal-development and self-actualization. Further responses such as, “I have become worthless, of no value as all that I possess (potentially) has been wasted,” were an indicator of the emptiness in the prisoners’ lives due to the acute degradation as a result of the new status as lifers.

#### **4.4.4 Inmates ‘Psychological Well-Being on the Aspect of Personality Change**

In order to obtain data related to the aspect of personality change, the respondents were requested to rate themselves using a five-point Likert scale, with a minimum of 1 point and a maximum of 5 points. Information in Table 17 represents the results of the data analysis.

Table 17: Frequency Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Personality Change

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
I have learnt to suppress my emotional reactions to events around me since I became a lifer.	70(44.3%)	60(38.0%)	7 (4.4%)	9 (5.7%)	12 (7.6%)
It is impossible to retain my original behaviour as a life imprisoned inmate.	35(22.3%)	24(15.3%)	14 (8.9%)	35(22.3%)	49(31.2%)
I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer.	51(33.8%)	39(25.6%)	10 (6.6%)	25(16.6%)	26(17.2%)
Being a lifer has made me to develop a feeling of committing suicide.	39(24.5%)	7(4.4%)	21(13.2%)	22(13.8%)	70(44.0%)
Being life imprisoned has made me to develop a new way of living.	78(49.1%)	43(27.0%)	12 (7.5%)	11 (6.9%)	15 (9.4%)
I never positively adjusted to the idea of being in prison for a lifetime.	57(36.5%)	32(20.5%)	14 (9.0%)	25(16.0%)	28(17.9%)

Information in Table 17 reveals that (49.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that being life imprisoned had made them to develop a new way of living while (27.0%) agreed to the same. Therefore, majority of the respondents, 76.1% concur with the fact that transformation was necessary for the inmate to be able to survive in prison environment indeterminately. The finding is in agreement with Libeling et al. (2005a), who notes that upon imprisonment, some prisoners find it extremely challenging to take in the new status, therefore, they develop coping mechanism to assist them adjust to the life sentence. This results in a rebirth of a different person to fit in the prison environment. However, the survival mechanisms may end up being transformational and debilitating instead of alleviating the pains and problems of life incarceration. The analysis also shows that (44.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they had learnt to suppress their emotional reactions to events around them since they became lifers. That information is summarized in Table 18.

Table 18: Means Distribution for Inmates Regarding Personality Change

Statement	Mean	<i>S D</i>
I have learnt to suppress my emotional reactions to events around me since I became a lifer	4.06	1.18
It is impossible to retain my original behaviour as a life imprisoned inmate	2.75	1.57
I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer	3.42	1.51
Being a lifer has made me develop a feeling of committing suicide	2.52	1.64
Being life imprisoned has made me to develop a new way of living	3.99	1.30
I never positively adjusted to the idea of being in prison a lifetime	3.42	1.54
Total	3.19	1.46

The research findings presented in Table 18 indicate that the life-incarcerated inmates were experiencing personality change since the lowest mean recorded from the statement was 2.52 and a standard deviation of 1.64, while the highest mean was 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.18. The statement related to ‘suppressing emotional reactions’ with a mean of 4.06 and ‘developing a new way of living’ with a mean of 3.99 shows that the lifers registered some personality change after being life imprisoned. This information from the study is consistent with the study by Hulley, et al. (2011) who observed that in the interviews which they had carried out, many prisoners confessed that they had experienced significant and sometimes extensive personal changes, or described traits reflective of emotional numbing. Emotional numbing, according to Liem and Kunst (2013) is a coping mechanism that generates a permanent and unbridgeable distance between themselves and other people. One of the interviewees had this to report in relation to personality change:

I think what jail does do, and it naturally does it, especially when you are doing a long time, it does harden you. It does make you a bit more distant, because it just is, that’s the life you are in [...], you are not going to see it in jail, people being all emotional and touchy feely and expressing their emotion, it doesn’t happen. So for people in this situation you see it even less, people hold it all in. People keep that to themselves. And so I think that’s just sadly a part of prison. It is who you become, and if you are hardened in the beginning then you become even harder, you become even colder, you become more detached (Hulley, et al., 2011)

The results also are in line with the findings of Leim and Kunst (2013), who attest that life-sentenced prisoners experience whole personality transformation and may bear

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) characteristics that comprise emotional numbing which, according to Leim and Kunst (2013), produces a lasting and unbridgeable distance between themselves and other people.

The research recordings further agree with a study conducted by Hulley et al (2011) where an interviewee in the study acknowledged having experienced transformation as a lifer. By stating:

“I was always there for people when they needed me (before life incarceration) and everything, and it’s, sort of, changing a bit now. I don’t want to be around people”. His friends had observed that he was not himself any more, he had changed and he was just there, existing, totally different from what he had been before life imprisonment. Asked if he thought being a long time prisoner had changed him as a person, he said that he no longer had feelings for people “Like, I do not feel safe anymore. I do not know why. I used to. This was because of the life sentence, (Hulley et al., 2011, pp 3-23).

#### 4.5.4.1 Constables on Matters of Lifers’ Personality Change

The study sought information on the constables’ opinion concerning lifers’ personality change. The constables’ opinion was significant to the study since it complemented the data given by the lifers. Table 19 shows the means and standard deviation of the constables’ responses.

Table 19: Constables’ Responses on Lifers’ Personality Change

Statement	Mean	S D
Inmates have learnt to suppress their emotional reactions to events around them since they became lifers	3.91	1.04
Lifers have been hardened by the experience in prison as lifers	3.47	1.47
Being life imprisoned make lifers come up with a new way of living.	3.95	0.87
Being a lifer has made inmates develop a feeling of committing suicide.	2.17	1.15
Overall mean score/SD	3.37	1.13

Table 19 shows that two of the four statements: ‘Learning to suppress their emotional reactions’ and ‘coming up with a new way of living’ recorded a mean of 3.91 and 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.04 and 0.87 respectively. These connote a high level of transformation on the inmates’ personality due to imprisonment in order to survive the prison ordeal. This infers that the constables’ were in agreement that lifers experienced personality change and behaviour modification as a result of life incarceration.

According to a study carried out by Hulley, et al. (2015), the lifers experience self-transformation which may be a form of coping mechanism. It also serves as a reduction of the severity of problem induced by the prison term although such a transformation may in itself be damaging. Hulley, et al., (2015) further state that the damaging aspect of life incarceration is due to the fact that, the issues which were initially encountered as problems by the lifers, were not being experienced any longer. This is because the requirements of coping and survival so profoundly reshape the prisoner's individuality. The research findings are further supported by the findings of Haney (2003) who posits that each day pains of incarceration are felt less sharply, because, in some senses, they have been internalized into the prisoner's being, and have made them become a different person. The prisoner is, therefore, lastingly changed by the prison environment (Haney 2003). However, the results of the constables showed that 'developing a feeling of committing suicide' had a mean of 2.17 and a standard deviation of 1.15 suggesting that this aspect had the lowest mean. Therefore, a minority of the inmates had not been influenced to an extent of contemplating suicide. The statement, "Lifers have been hardened by the experience in prison" scored a mean of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.47 indicating an aspect of personality transformation. The record of the means below 3.5 was also observed in the lifers' responses where the statement on, 'Being hardened by the experience in prison' had a mean of 3.42, while the statement concerning the lifers developing a feeling of committing suicide had a mean of 2.52. This shows that the opinion of the constables and the responses of the lifers correlated.

The constables' responses, as noted from the open ended questions, further revealed elements of personality change by the lifers as a result of the life sentence. Some of the lifers, according to the constables' opinion, had reformed and had been rehabilitated. They had changed their negative thoughts and perceptions and had accepted their new situation through counselling, consequently feeling accepted and appreciated both within the prison environment and by other members of the society. It thus implies that the experiences of life-imprisonment made them adjust positively and were well able to cope with the prison environment. This information is in line with Grounds and Jamieson (2002) study whose conclusion was that after a life-imprisonment experience, lifers were able to identify certain reforms such as greater insight and self-control as positive changes to the self. However, some of the lifers felt as if they had no future

because their freedom had been curtailed. Sometimes the lifers were in denial meaning they had not accepted the verdict, hence inability to adjust positively. Most of the inmates had lost hope in life and/or ever joining their families. According to the inmates' responses, they (lifers) behaved abnormally when they remembered that they had no hope of leaving prison. It was noted that life imprisonment caused the inmates to change their life's perspective and this brought about desperation. The inmates were perceived as having lost their moral values as respected men by engaging in homosexuality. Some of them, as observed by the constables, had low self-esteem and felt as though they had been abandoned and rejected.

The counsellors' view regarding inmates' personality change as the imprisonment term progressed was sought. The findings indicated that some of the lifers had reformed and had been given some responsibilities such as being in charge of mentoring other prisoners and as trustees in prison. However, some lifers had become demoralized, lost self-value and were depressed, and as the counsellors put it, "Others had become mad." The counsellors' sentiments concur with the findings of Toch and Adams (2002) who purport that life prisoners intentionally identify different ways of conducting themselves as well as various forms of maladaptive behaviour so as to handle the extreme nature of distress encountered during incarceration. This information also agrees with the data collected from the lifers as well as the constables. The lifers had learnt to suppress their emotions and reactions and come up with a new conduct of living in order to adjust to prison life as life-incarcerated inmates.

#### **4.4.5. Inmates' Psychological Well-Being in Relation to Trauma**

Information related to trauma was collected by asking the respondents to rate themselves by ticking true or false appropriately against given statements. The statements indicated some of the experiences the lifers had gone through and were likely to be causing mental disturbances to the lifers while in prison. Descriptive statistics and percentages were used to analyze the data. Table 20 presents the data analysis results.

Table 20: Percentage Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Trauma

Statement	True	False
I was shocked when I learnt that I have been life imprisoned.	(97.0%)	(3.0%)
I have been physically attacked in prison as a lifer	(54.1%)	(45.9%)
I have been sexually assaulted while in prison as a lifer.	(17.1%)	(82.9%)
I have witnessed violent incidents during my life imprisonment period.	(63.5%)	(36.5%)
I remain distressed by the memories of violence which I have witnessed in prison as a lifer.	(57.7%)	(42.3%)
I have been tortured while in prison as a lifer.	(45.9%)	(54.1%)
I have witnessed people commit suicide in prison.	(54.1%)	(45.9%)
Some lifers carry weapons in prison which makes me live in fear.	(38.7%)	(61.3%)
I live in a constant state of fear due to uncertainty of life as a lifer.	(67.9%)	(32.1%)

The information in Table 20 shows that the highest percentage of the lifers, 97%, was shocked when they learnt that they had been life imprisoned. The implication being that majority of the inmates, are dealing with issues related to shock, which is an element of trauma, as a consequence of life incarceration. This observation agrees with the study carried out by Crewe, et al. (2017) as the following quotation from the respondents' interview expresses the state of the women's mental health, and their experiences of acute distress following conviction.

I spent the first month in complete shock and I thought I would wake up and go home. It wasn't real (...). And it hurt – it felt like somebody was ripping my chest open. I saw no future, no point to tomorrow. It was the darkest time of my life (...). Because there was no going back – there was no changing this, there was no undoing it or fixing it, or making it better. And suddenly everything is ripped away from you, and feels like it's been taken to a different planet (Crewe et al 2017 p. 1359-1378).

The results are further supported by Jewkes (2005) who observed that the verdict of a life sentence is received with shock by the inmates and may be experienced as a kind of bereavement for oneself (Jewkes, 2005). Therefore, the aspect of shock among the lifers is evident and it is related to the experience of life imprisonment. When asked to respond to the statement; "I live in a constant state of fear due to uncertainty of life as a lifer," 67.9% of the lifers agreed to this experience. This suggests that the lifers are going through a period of anxiety and distress as a result of life imprisonment, which is likely to affect their mental health and psychological well-being.



As life imprisoned inmates stated, there was constant transfer of inmates to other prisons in different and distant localities after a given duration of time. This exercise sometimes took the lifers to prisons which were far away from home. This experience, according to the lifers was painful since it meant readjusting to a new environment and getting new friends. The fear of being rejected in the new set-up, being tortured and the general fear of the unknown was quite overwhelming to the lifers. Some inmates were further disturbed by the nature of crimes they had committed, which was a source of mental torture, as the memories of these acts were constantly relived, coupled with the regrets thereof. The lifers acknowledged fear of institutionalization and loss of individuality as the most outstanding concerns of their prison terms. A majority others expressed worries about their future life, and the inability to bear the loss of spending the rest of their lives in jail. The ageing long-term inmates interviewed by Crawley and Sparks' (2006) also highlighted their significant uncertainties of physical and mental deterioration. Their older age compounded their fears and many expressed a dread of passing on in prison. It thus shows that each individual lifer had their unique issues which were a source of mental disturbance. This is an indication that some of the lifers lived with a lot of fear and this is likely to cause anxiety and eventually psychological pain. Another aspect which traumatized the female lifers was the issue of losing relatives while in prison and the helplessness expressed at the inability to attend the burial.

A respondent, in response to one of the open ended questions conveyed pain and desperation in the statement, 'When my parent came to visit and told me that my aunt is dead I felt very sad and I cried a lot.' Another respondent stated that, 'When my child died in prison and I had no freedom to go and bury him, I felt devastated, helpless and heartbroken.' The lifer's assertion is also supported by Jewkes (2006) by stating that the entry of the prisoners into the confinement environment together with the forced separation from family and loved ones highly contribute to inmates being traumatized. Some of the inmates expressed how difficult it was to even explain the shock and emotional suffering brought about by these disturbing encounters.

The information gathered from the constables through the open-ended questions revealed that lifers were disturbed by the killings of other inmates which was going on

in the prisons. Some inmates, according to the lifers, had even killed their colleagues simply because they were life incarcerated, arguing that, they could not be given a worse sentence than the one they were already serving. Cases of inmates' attempt to commit suicide were also mentioned as issues of concern among the inmates, though they were quite minimal. The constables pointed out that some lifers attempted to commit suicide using blunt objects [tools] that had been sneaked into the cells from the workshop section, in the course of the prisoners' communal work. According to the findings, some of the inmates tried to commit suicide because they did not see the purpose of rehabilitation or living on since there is no one time they expect to be released to join the other society members. The feeling of hopelessness in life also led them to commit crimes while still in detention. The other issues which were distressing the life sentenced inmates as revealed by the findings drawn from the open-ended questions were negligence by the family members, their association with the outside world being severed, denial of conjugal privileges and the idea of always being locked in the cells at night which was quite traumatizing. In extreme cases, the constables reported that the lifers felt stressed to the extent that some become insane due to thoughts of serving a life sentence.

The counsellors' comment on the relationship between life imprisonment and trauma showed that lifers experienced a feeling of hopelessness, bitterness and many regrets as they served their prison term. This situation is affirmed by Johnson McGunigall (2008) by observing that indeterminate inmates view the harmful psychological effects associated with the severity of the penalty in terms of regrets, emotional pain, bitterness and helplessness. This is because they had not foreseen the consequences of their actions which led to their present predicament. Most of them were also in denial and dissatisfied with the verdict given concerning their cases. This according to the counsellors was disturbing and shocking. Some of the inmates were going through mental distress and uncertainty since they were not able to accept the fact that their stay in jail was timeless. This thus heightened the fear of being deceased while in prison and the feeling of insecurity among the lifers. These findings are supported by Aday (2006); Snyder et al. (2009); Yates and Gillespie (2000), whose study found out that the fear of dying in prison and the experience of shame associated with dying as a prisoner are matters of concern among inmates. Aday (2006) stated that, dying in an institution such

as prison is widely considered the ultimate defeat and the ultimate punishment for an inmate.

#### **4.4.6 Regression of Life Incarceration and Inmates' Psychological Well-Being**

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. In order to evaluate the relationship between life incarceration and the psychological well-being of inmates, the following hypothesis was tested.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

The hypothesis was tested by use of a linear regression analysis at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ . The aspect of life incarceration was regressed against inmates' psychological well-being to establish the goodness of fit, the overall significance and individual significance of the model.

##### **4.4.6.1 The Goodness of Fit Model**

The information in Table 21 represents the goodness of fit model, which was used to determine how much of the total variation in the psychological well-being can be explained by life incarceration

Table 21: The Goodness of Fit Simple Regression Model

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.922	0.850	0.849	0.28903

Data analysis results in Table 21 show that there was a high degree of correlation of 0.922 between life imprisonment and inmates' psychological well-being. Indeed, 85% of variation in the psychological well-being is accounted for by life incarceration in the model. Therefore, psychological well-being is highly affected by life incarceration of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

#### 4.4.6.2 The Overall Significance of the Model

The information reports on how well the regression equation fits the data, or is able to predict the aspect of inmates' psychological well-being in relation to life incarceration. The results of the overall significance of the simple regression model are presented in Table 22.

Table 22: The Overall Significance of the Model

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	78.805	1	78.805	943.360	.000
Residual	13.951	167	.084		
Total	92.755	168			

The F- test statistic was used to assess the overall robustness and significance of the simple regression model. It was noted that the regression equation was statistically significant at 5% significance level (F-statistic of 943.360 and a p-value=0.000, which is less than .05 significant level). Therefore, the model is highly statistically significant at 5% level of significance and can be adopted for prediction purposes.

#### 4.4.6.3 The Individual Significance of the Model

The study sought to determine the influence of life incarceration on psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. A simple regression model was conducted and the results are displayed in Table 23.

Table 23: The Individual Significance of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients			
Parameters	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	sig
(Constant)	.080	.123		.654	.514
Life incarceration	1.081	.035	.992	30.714	.000

Dependent variable: inmates' psychological well-being

The t- test statistic was used to determine individual significance of the influence of life incarceration on psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The study reveals a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life imprisonment and psychological well-being of inmates, (regression coefficient=1.081; t-value=30.714; p-value=0.000 < 0.05). Basing the conclusion on these findings, it

implies that life incarceration contributes significantly towards psychological well-being of inmates. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya is not supported by the current study. The regression equation to estimate psychological well-being of inmates can be stated as follows:

$$Y_I = 1.081X$$

Where  $Y_I$ =psychological well-being,

$X$ = life Incarceration,

$1.081$ =an estimate of the expected increase in psychological well-being in response to a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

The regression coefficient of  $1.081$  indicates that for a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates, it accounts for an increase in psychological well-being by a factor of 1.081. On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that life incarceration contributes significantly to psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya

These findings are in line with a study by Hamilton (2007), and O'Mahony (2002) who observed that a major aspect that may worsen the prisoners' psychological health is their attitude in dealing with the issue of life incarceration. Due to its indeterminate nature, the prisoner may conceive a feeling of hopelessness at the thought of being in jail for life. Howard (1999) further asserts that solitary incarceration is, for most offenders who spend long periods in solitary a mentally detrimental punishment and may result in a variety of psychological symptoms. These may include memory loss, severe anxiety and delusions.

The findings of Dudeck, et al. (2011) also showed that the prevalence of trauma is significantly higher among long-term prisoners when compared with the general population and with short-term prisoners. Thus, the lifers seem to be experiencing a new and distinctive kind of prison pain consisting of a kind of existential and identity crisis. This is brought about by length and uncertainty of the unspecified sentence as well as the restricted facilities available in the retention areas (Liebling, 2011).

#### 4.5. Social Relationships of Life Incarcerated inmates

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The social relationships aspects are discussed under the sub-headings on family relationships, social isolation, withdrawal, and inter-prisoner relationship and lifer-warden relations.

##### 4.5.1 Inmates' on the aspect of Family Relationships

The study sought information on the lifers' view on matters related to family relationships. The respondents were required to rate themselves using a five-point Likert scale. Information in Table 24 represents the results of the data analysis.

Table 24: Frequency Distribution for Inmates Responses on Family Relationships

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer	61 (38.9%)	31(19.7%)	8(5.1%)	18(11.5%)	39(24.8%)
I miss my family members very much.	119(73.9%)	31(19.3%)	3(1.9%)	2 (1.2%)	6 (3.7%)
I am able to maintain meaningful contact with my family despite being life imprisoned	59 (38.1%)	49(31.6%)	5(3.2%)	16(10.3%)	26(16.8%)
My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling	104(65.0%)	41(25.6%)	4(2.5%)	3(1.9%)	8(5.0%)
I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration	18 (11.7%)	20(13.0%)	13(8.4%)	22(14.3%)	81(52.6%)

Results in Table 24 show that majority of the respondents 73.9% strongly agreed that they missed their family members very much while 65.0% strongly agreed that their relationship with family members before they were life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling. The aspect of inmates missing their family members is supported by McGunigall-Smith (2004b) whose findings established that lifers miss the chance to witness their children develop and are not able to appreciate them as they negotiate the varied milestones as they grow. They are also stripped of the power to be parents and give love and warmth to their children. This implies that life incarceration has severed

a hitherto well established social fiber between the inmates and their families. This view is also upheld by 52.6% of the respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement, “I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration.” It thus means that some of the lifers had a longing to reunite with their relatives; however, the indeterminate sentence denied them this opportunity. The findings of the present research are also supported by Johnson (2008) who found out that a chief fact of life incarceration is a life of constant solitude. The lawbreakers are cut off from family, relatives and other close associates. This ends up producing deprivation and frustration in terms of lost emotional relationships, loneliness and boredom. The data on family relationships was further analyzed to generate means and standard deviation. Table 25 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 25: Means Distribution for Inmates’ Family Relationships

Statement	Mean	<i>S D</i>
My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer	3.36	1.65
I miss my family members very much.	4.58	0.89
I am able to maintain meaningful contact with my family despite being life imprisoned	3.64	1.49
My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling	4.44	1.00
I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration	2.17	1.47
Over all mean score	3.63	1.30

Information in Table 25 indicates that, ‘Missing my family members very much,’ had a mean of 4.58, which was the highest, and with a standard deviation of 0.89. This denotes that the lifers strongly agreed that although they are life imprisoned, there is still a longing to interact with the family members. Johnson (2008) also agrees that in the case of family matters, the inmate is separated from their family and other loved ones which causes a deep sense of social loss. This separation can be explained by the total absence of the inmates during the daily events which constitute family life. This phenomenon hits the lifers extremely hard. The statement, ‘My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling’ whose mean is 4.4 and a standard deviation of 1.00 shows that the lifers agreed to having enjoyed a cordial relationship with the family members before the life sentence. However, some of the lifers no longer desired any contact with the family members since life incarceration as

indicated by the lowest mean of 2.17 and a standard deviation of 1.47. The notion of undesirable contact with the family is also mentioned by De Beco (2005) who asserts that life sentences mostly interrupt the primary human dignity of the inmate resulting in severing contact with their families and friends and they become progressively dependent on the prison system. The breaking of family relationship may also be explained by the nature of interaction survived by the inmates and the family before incarceration. In cases where the two parties had unresolved issues or the inmate had a history of torture by the family' the likelihood of severing the contact was high.

#### 4.5.1.2 Constables' Responses on Lifers' Family Relationship

Constables' opinion regarding how the lifers related with their families was sought. The significance of this information was to supplement the data from the lifers. Since the constables lived and interacted with the lifers daily, it was expected that they had information to enrich the study appropriately. Table 26 presents the data analysis of the constables' response.

Table 26: Responses of Constables' on Lifers' Family Relationship

Statement	Mean	SD
Lifers feel rejected by their family members after being life imprisoned	2.47	1.37
Lifers express lack of being involved in decision making by family members since they became a lifer	3.31	1.39
Lifers confess missing their family members very much.	4.39	1.15
Lifers are able to maintain meaningful contact with their family despite being life imprisoned	3.86	1.24
Lifers lament the loss of warm and fulfilling family relationship since they became life imprisoned.	4.04	1.02
Inmates no longer desire any contact with their family members since life incarceration	1.82	0.93
Over all mean score/ <i>SD</i>	3.31	1.18

The results in Table 26 indicate that out of the 6 statements referring to the lifers' family issues, three of them recorded means above 3.5 implying that the constables agreed to the lifers experience reflected in each of the statements. Lifers confessed to missing their family members very much, recording a mean of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 1.15. These findings are in tandem with the lifers' results on the same statement which had the highest score of 4.58. It thus confirms that lifers yearn for the family warmth and relationship. The constables' responses indicated that lifers lamented the loss of



warm and fulfilling family relationship since they became life imprisoned. This statement attained a mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 1.02. This loss of warmth and being in charge of the family is equally echoed by Johnson and McGunigall-Smith (2006) in their findings that the act of the parent being absent from the family setting, due to life imprisonment, and therefore being unable to identify with them, is the hardest part for the lifer to bear. The feeling is aggregated by the thought of being present in another totally undesirable environment: the prison. Responding to the statement, "Lifers are able to maintain meaningful contact with their family despite being life imprisoned," a mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.24 was realized. The constables' responses, in comparison to those of the lifers, display similarity in terms of the statements recording high levels of agreement as attested to by the means attained.

The prison counsellor's views on the influence of life imprisonment on the lifers' relationship with their family members were sought. According to the findings, some of the life-sentenced inmates noted that some family members were good, kind understanding and therefore they endeavored for reconciliation with the life sentenced member. However, according to the counsellors, some of the inmates acknowledged that they had not been visited by their relatives for a long time and many of them had not been visited at all. Additionally there was no communication from the family members, an indication that there was no longer any attachment amongst them. Just as stated by the lifers, the prison counsellors noted that some inmates lost relatives while in prison and they could not attend the burial, an occurrence extremely agonizing for the lifer. This experience is in tandem with McGunigall-Smith (2004) findings that one of the greatest adversities the lifers are likely to deal with is that their family is away and cannot connect with them as often as they would want to. Furthermore, the lifer has to deal with the hurting reality that at one point, he may be completely alone, bereft of all outside support. The prolonged separation from the family was painful and caused a lot of bitterness to the life imprisoned inmates. The lifers expressed their longing to help their stuck or stagnated children in matters of life as well as seek forgiveness from the family members whom they had offended. Those with young families feared that their families would break as a result of the detachment.

#### 4.5.2 Inmates' Responses in Relation to Social Isolation

An item in the questionnaire sought information on matters pertaining to lifers' social isolation, in order to establish whether other people isolated or segregated them on the grounds of their being life-incarcerated. The respondents were required to tick the appropriate response using the given statements on a true/false rating. Data analysis results in Table 27 presents the findings of the lifers in percentages.

Table 27: Frequencies and Percentages for Inmates on Social Isolation

Statement	True	False
I feel rejected by my friends after being life imprisoned	(82.7%)	(17.3%)
As a lifer, I feel I have no sense of belonging	(64.5%)	(35.5%)
I have had a hard time adjusting to this new social set-up as a lifer	(86.6%)	(13.4%)
I am worried about how I am described or referred to by my friends as a lifer	(81.5%)	(18.5%)
I am always disturbed for being separated from my friends	(89.8%)	(10.2%)

Table 27 shows that 89.8% of the lifers were always disturbed for being separated from their friends because of being life imprisoned while 82.7% felt rejected by their friends after being life imprisoned. It, therefore, implies that many lifers experience a sense of abandonment by their close associates due to life incarceration. This view correlates with what Hughes et al., (2003) found out that social relationships subtly incorporate people in the warmth of self-assertion and meaningfulness of belonging. These relationships are basic to emotional accomplishment, behavioural modification and cognitive purposes. As a result, any disruption leading to absence of consistent social interaction results in damaging psychosocial conditions. Therefore, any situational threats to an esteemed inter-personal relationship ranging from social isolation, rejection, separation or imprisonment are known to promote the feeling of loneliness. Correspondingly, the absence of reliable, normal inter-personal relationships and any feature of a meaningful social context produces a feeling of estrangement that pervades the inmate' survival in the detention center (Craig, 2003). Therefore, the aspect of being entirely separated from one's acquaintances is damaging to social health.

It is further observed from Table 27 that a large percentage, 86.6%, has had a hard time adjusting to the new social set-up as lifers. This may imply that the prison environment

does not offer a conducive climate for the lifers' socialization, therefore, creating a feeling of social isolation. The above observation is in tandem with Johnson (2008) who noted that the sentence of life in prison without a possibility of a parole can equally be as painful as a death penalty, although in different ways. It, consequently, becomes difficult for an offender, sentenced to life imprisonment, to easily adjust to such a situation without feeling distressed and withdrawn. This inability to adjust positively together with desertion by friends and other acquaintances causes the lifers to live in isolation. In support to this view, Grounds and Jamieson (2005) noted that self-isolation, blocking out of emotions, evading communications and concealing feelings of depression were some of the commonly used coping mechanisms in confinement. The research findings also indicate that 81.5% of the respondents were worried about being described or referred to as lifers by their friends. This description is an indication of segregation, placing the lifers in a separate group altogether by virtue of the nature of their prison term.

The data analysis posited that a number of respondents, 64.5%, felt that they had no sense of belonging as lifers, which may be viewed as a social loss. This was probably due to the nature of their verdict which is indeterminate, suggesting that even within the prison environment, inmates serving other types of sentences relate differently with the lifers. Therefore, being a lifer is likely to cause social isolation. Owing to this social loss, some inmates learn to find consolation by taking a low social profile and detaching from others as much as possible.

The findings are in agreement with the observations made by (Haney, 2002) who noted that the self-induced social withdrawing and separation may mean that the lifers retreat deeply into themselves, trust virtually no one and adjust to prison stress by leading isolated lives of quiet desolation. Haney (2002) further posits that long term prisoners are particularly vulnerable to this form of psychological adaptation as a result of diminished sense of worth and personal value. This is by resigning themselves to their conditions, a phenomenon described as situational withdrawal or specific emotional withdrawal.

According to the respondents, it is difficult to maintain meaningful relationships with people outside the prison due to lengthy periods of separation and the attitude of the society towards the lifers. This isolation has caused stigmatization among lifers and made them live in fear. The frequency of visitation has also decreased since people have become weary and they do not visit them anymore. Consequently, the lifers feel unwanted, lonely and misunderstood, as suggested by one of the respondents who posited that:

“They [family/society] no longer seem to understand me because of lack of communication caused by life imprisonment. I feel more and more cut off from the outside world and relationships. They [family and friends] loved me but after imprisonment, they feel they won’t see me again. Outsiders reject me. I have lost all contact and feel disconnected from the outside relationships.”

When asked to comment on the relationship between life imprisonment and inmates’ social isolation, the counsellors stated that some of the lifers preferred to resign to their individual environment, thus isolating themselves from the rest of the prison society. This was associated with a sense of guilt as a result of the criminal act. This implies that a majority of the lifers found comfort in social disconnection, while others even preferred death to spending their whole life in jail and experience complete isolation from society for the rest of their lives.

#### **4.5.3. Lifers Responses on the aspect of Social Withdrawal**

An item in the questionnaire sought information on matters pertaining to lifers’ social withdrawal, in order to find out whether the life incarcerated inmates had withdrawn to themselves on account of their being life imprisoned. The respondents were required to tick the appropriate response using the given statements on a five-point Likert scale rating. Table 28 presents the findings of the lifers in frequencies and percentages.

Table 28: Frequency Distribution for Inmates Concerning Social Withdrawal

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
I like spending time alone in prison as a lifer	42(26.4%)	24(15.1%)	10(6.3%)	33(20.8%)	49(30.8%)
I do not feel like being together with other inmates	34(21.4%)	22(13.8%)	9(5.7%)	42(26.4%)	52(32.7%)
The prisoners do not seem to understand me at any one time	40(25.0%)	33(20.6%)	12(7.5%)	32(20.0%)	43(26.9%)
I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer	40(25.3%)	15(9.5%)	1 (6.3%)	27(17.1%)	66(41.8%)

\*SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Findings in Table 28 point out that on the aspect of having no control over their day-to-day life, majority of the respondents (41.8%) strongly disagreed, therefore asserting that being life imprisoned does not totally incapacitate their independence. The findings are in line with the findings of Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) who pointed out that concerning the aspect of lacking control over one's life, the growth of personal routines afforded a sense of independence to the inmates and also assisted them in achieving safety; since these routines counteracted the uncertainty of prison life. This also kept them away from any dangerous prisoners therefore curtailing the chances of involvement in ferocity and rules of violations. The results also show that (32.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, "I do not feel like being together with other inmates" which confirms that some of the lifers cherish the companionship of other prisoners. The information on inmates' withdrawal was further analyzed using means and standard deviation. The results are presented in Table 29.

Table 29: Inmates Distribution of Means on Social Matters Related to Withdrawal

Statement	Mean	S D
I like spending time alone in prison as a lifer	2.91	1.78
I do not feel like being together with other inmates	2.65	1.56
The prisoners do not seem to understand me at any one time	2.97	1.58
I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer	2.59	1.67
Overall mean score	2.78	1.64

The analysis in Table 29 show that the highest mean of the given statements was 2.97 with a deviation of 1.58 while the lowest mean was 2.59 and a standard deviation of 1.67. The overall mean score was 2.78 and the standard deviation at 1.64. All these

figures confirm that the lifers were experiencing withdrawal but at a moderate level. However, the findings of Liem and Kunst (2013) identified prisoners, who had experienced prolonged incarceration, and had a specific cluster of psychological symptoms, referred to as post-incarceration syndrome (PICS), which had three supplementary characteristics. The characteristics included institutionalized personality behaviour with traits such as mistrusting others, difficulty in engaging in relationships and hampered decision-making. The social-sensory disorientation was the other characteristic of (PICS) with aspects such as spatial disorientation and difficulty in social interactions. Liem and Kunst (2013) also found out that the prolonged incarceration caused social and temporal alienation among the inmates. This was noted in aspects such as not belonging in social and temporal settings.

When asked to comment on life imprisonment in relation to withdrawal, the prison counsellors noted that some of the lifers were reserved and preferred to live a solitary life. They were reluctant to take part in the activities offered in prison such as trainings and communal work and prefer to be alone and idle most of the time. The findings of Craig (2003) are in line with the present findings which state that in the event of life imprisonment, lifers can retreat very deeply to themselves than absolute corporeal seclusion. It then means that they can totally keep off the presence of other inmates and create an impenetrable wall around themselves for personal emotional security. This information was in agreement with the lifers and the constables' responses, an indication that the male and female lifers were retreating to their inner self in a bid to keep off from the rest of the society. This reaction was a result of life incarceration experience which seems to have caused a rift between the lifers and their close acquaintances.

#### **4.5.4 Lifers on Issues of Inter-Prisoner Relationship**

An item in the questionnaire sought information on matters relating to inter-prisoner relationship, notwithstanding the sentence type. This would help to establish whether being a lifer influenced the quality of relationship among the varied the prisoner groups. Data analysis results on Table 30 presents the findings of the lifers in percentages.

Table 30: Analysis of Inter-Prisoner Relationship in Percentages

Statement	True	False
Being a life incarcerated inmate, I consider having any friends among the inmates a very difficult thing	(46.8%)	(53.2%)
I have no interest in relating with other prisoners as a lifer	(69.8%)	(30.2%)
Being a lifer, I do not like discussing my issues with any other inmate in prison	(50.6%)	(49.4%)
As a lifer, I feel safe from being bullied by other inmates in prison	(62.8%)	(37.2%)

Results showed that 69.8 % life incarcerated inmates', forming the majority, had no interest in relating with other prisoners. This observation is also reflected in the findings of Johnson and Toch (2000) who posit that everyday life on the inside of the prison walls is solitary. Inmates are often in the midst of other prisoners but feel very much alone because they are surrounded by others, who are apathetic, indifferent, and hostile, to their well-being. Probably, due to lack of conjoint interests between different inmates and as dictated by their varied prison term, the lifers keep to their own environment thus limiting the inter-personal association. The data analysis further reveals that 50.6 % of the respondents do not like discussing their issues with any other inmate in prison since they are lifers. This is in comparison to 49.4% of the inmates, who do not seem to mind discussing personal matters with other inmates. The slight differences in the percentages infer that being a lifer may hamper freedom of association and is likely to curtail disclosure among the lifers. The results of the study are in tandem with the findings of Crewe (2005a), who explored the social life and culture of prisoners in terms of inmates' relations and found that lifers were unlikely to have strong bonds with other offenders. It enabled the lifers to be less emotionally susceptible, less obligated to others and less likely to be involved in issues likely to hamper their future progress.

#### 4.5.4.1 Constables' Responses on Inter-Prisoner Relationship

The constables' opinion was sought concerning the relationship between the lifers and inmates serving other different types of sentences. The data analysis is presented in frequencies and percentages. Table 31 presents the frequency distribution for constables' responses on inter-prisoner relationship.

Table 31: Frequency Distribution for Constables' Responses on Inter-prisoner Relationship

Statement	Frequency	True	Frequency	False
Lifers see no need to love others since life imprisonment	3	(13.0%)	20	(87.0%)
Inmates feel no need to be loved as a life sentenced prisoner	2	(8.7%)	21	(91.3%)
Most lifers are never happy in the company of other inmates	6	(26.1%)	17	(73.9%)
Lifers do not like discussing their issues with any other inmate in prison	8	(36.4%)	14	(63.6%)
Lifers fear being bullied by other inmates in prison	6	(26.1%)	17	(73.9%)

Table 31 indicates that a greater percentage of the constables did not agree with the presented statements concerning the lifers' relationship with other inmates, which is contrary to the lifers' responses. When asked if lifers fear being bullied by other inmates in prison, 21.6% stated that it was true while 73.9% said it was false. It thus implies that according to the constables' view, most of the lifers were at ease with other inmates, an indication that they related well with each other. The assertion is inconsistent with the observation of Crew (2005a) who noted that concerning relationships between the lifers and other inmates, they were unlikely to have strong attachments with each other in order to evade emotional susceptibility and to afford for being less constrained to the other inmates. The recordings of the lifers were in agreement with Crew (2005a) since they showed that 62.8% feared being bullied by other inmates in prison while 37.2% had no fear of being harassed by other inmates. The implication is that the lifers experience bullying to some extent and therefore live in fear of being attacked, wounded or maimed by the bully-inmates. This can cause mental disturbance thus affecting the lifers both emotionally and in their social welfare. Referring to the statement, 'Most lifers are never happy in the company of other inmates,' 26.1% of the constables affirmed to the statement while 73.9% said it was false. Therefore, the constables' opinion was that most of the lifers enjoyed the company of the rest of the inmates. On the contrary, the lifers' responses revealed that 69.8% were never happy in the company of other inmates while 37.2% had no problem.



Regarding the social relationships among the lifers and prisoners serving other types of jail sentence, the respondents' opinion from the open-ended questions were analyzed. The inmates cited aspects such as being mocked and feared by other people both within the prison as well as other prisoners, as some of the aspects that characterized relationships among prisoners. According to the respondents, other inmates viewed lifers as failures, dangerous, and as having committed worse crimes than the short-term inmates. The lifers were perceived as being of no consequences since all they were waiting for was death. This attitude of the inmates with determinate sentence term towards the life imprisoned inmates usually led to disagreements and isolation, consequently affecting the inter-personal relationship of the inmates.

In comparing themselves with the inmates serving other types of sentences, the lifers noted that the short-term prisoners felt more comfortable and confidence for they were certain of the duration they were serving in prison but the lifers were uncertain of the length of their term which made them feel dejected. This difference thus created a rift between the short-term inmates and the life-incarcerated inmates making inter-prisoner interaction difficult as rightly stated in one of the lifers' responses that:

Sometimes it is hard to relate with other inmates. There is no more interaction or sharing of ideas, we are different as our prison terms dictate...it makes me want to spend time by myself, alone, especially after having been in prison for 22 years serving life sentence.

In describing the inter-prisoner rapport amongst lifers and between lifers and inmates serving other types of sentences, the counsellors noted that those inmates serving similar sentences related quite well with each other and that they easily trusted each other. They also enjoyed working together during communal work, since they had a lot in common to share. The findings of Crawley and Sparks (2006), agree with the lifers' assertion by affirming that the accommodating of life-prisoners in the same premises allowed for commonality and mutual support. The counsellor thus asserted that the inmates with varied terms of imprisonment lived in suspicion and distrust due to the feeling that the short-term prisoners were more advantaged than the life-imprisoned inmates. Therefore, in prison, the inmates do not trust each other with personal issues; consequently, there is an element of suspicion.

Concerning bullying of the lifers, the counsellors observed that this was minimal and instead, lifers tended to comfort each other. According to the constables' opinion, regarding the aspect of bullying, 26.1% acknowledged it was true while 73.9% stated it was false. This was a close reflection of the counsellors' findings. These findings, when compared to the lifers' responses reveal that 62.8% of the lifers affirmed they were safe from being bullied while 37.2% were not safe. It thus confirms that the percentage of lifers who feel safe from being bullied was higher than those who felt unsafe.

#### 4.5.5 Inmates-Constable Relationship as an aspect of Social Relationship

An item in the questionnaire sought information on matters relating to lifer-constable relationship. This would help the researcher to establish how the lifers interacted with the constables and if this relationship had a bearing on the nature of the inmates' sentence. Table 32 presents the findings.

Table 32: Frequency Distribution for responses on Inmates'-Constable Relationship

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
The prison constables are friendly and social to me as a lifer	47 (29.7%)	93 (58.9%)	18 (11.4%)
I can easily share my issues and feelings as a lifer with the prison constables.	38 (24.5%)	75 (48.4%)	42 (27.1%)
As a lifer, I feel relaxed in the presence of the constables.	30 (19.6%)	78 (51.0%)	45 (29.4%)
The guards have mistreated me several times on the account of being a lifer.	30 (19.7%)	74 (48.7%)	48 (31.6%)
The guards use threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers.	33 (20.9%)	75 (47.5%)	50 (31.6%)

Results in Table 32 show that majority of the inmates (58.9%) felt that the constables were sometimes friendly and social to them while (51.0%) acknowledged feeling relaxed in the presence of the constables. However, (48.7%) of the respondents stated that the guards had mistreated them several times on the account of being lifers. This information is in line with Arnold and Strub (2012) who note that staff-prisoner relationships were mostly unfriendly and detached. Levels of trust between staff and inmates were low, and there were heightened levels of tension and fear in prison due to the prevalent distrust between the two groups. Additionally, Haney (2003) notes that prison staff members are likely to be verbally as well as physically offensive in ways

that many prisoners are accustomed to. In cases of verbal threats, the inmates' self-worth is eroded as a result of humiliation. When the inmates are mistreated and coerced in any manner, a feeling of intimidation overwhelms them therefore rendering them incapable of upholding healthy social relationships. The data on inmates'-constable relationship was also analyzed using means and standard deviation. The results are presented in Table 33.

Table 33: Distribution of means on Inmates'-Constable Relationship

Statement	Mean	S D
The prison constables are friendly and social to me as a lifer	2.18	0.61
I can easily share my issues and feelings as a lifer with the prison constables.	1.97	0.72
As a lifer, I always feel relaxed in the presence of the constables.	1.90	0.69
The guards have mistreated me several times on account of being a lifer	1.88	0.70
The guards use threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers	1.89	0.71
Over all mean score	1.96	0.68

The information in Table 33 indicates that the overall mean score was 1.96 and a standard deviation of 0.68. Majority of the inmates acknowledged that the prison constables were friendly and social to them, at a moderate level, as lifers as shown by the highest mean of (2.18) and a standard deviation of (0.61). Therefore, according to the inmates, the constables treated them with compassion and were a source of guidance rather than a power in control over them. However, the observation contrasts the findings of Liebling, et al. (2011), who noted that the relationship between the prison staff and the inmates was strained and that there existed suspicion and mistrust between the two parties. The information gathered from the open-ended questions showed that according to the constables, the lifers' willingness to share their experiences with the constables varied from one person to another. Some of the lifers shared quite willingly especially when the right approach towards the issue was given. However, some were uncooperative therefore declined to disclose their issues unless the lifers created trust towards the constables. This would happen through having time to listen to them and not being judgmental. The findings of the present study agree with Calavita and Jenness (2015) in their observation that the prison officials often caused trouble or retaliated against inmates who filed grievances against them. This stigmatized the prisoners who

in turn withheld information from the constables, whether personal or concerning prison matters.

Some of the lifers attested to having developed dependency and total reliance on the constables, confessing that they could not do anything without them. This was contributed to by the flow of power, where the lifers had no opportunity to decide on how to handle their daily programmes. Most of the activities were dictated on the lifers and were mandatory. This shows that life incarceration had greatly affected the relationship between the lifers and the constables.

In response to the open-ended questions based on constable-prisoner interactions, the constables noted that the relations were friendly especially for those who had accepted their sentence term and were ready to change their attitude towards their predicament. In addition, according to the constables, the prisoners and staff operate on a teamwork bases for the purpose of rehabilitating the latter. However, some of the respondents observed that there existed poor relationship between lifers and constables particularly those lifers who were not willing to reform or keep to the prisons code of conduct.

The constables were asked to mention some of the issues the lifers were eager to disclose to them. This was significant because it would inform the research on some of the problems the lifers were going through. The constables' responses revealed that the inmates had problems related to family matters. Their concern was in relation to their property which had been left in the hands of the family, expressing fear of losing it to the family members. The constables' view agreed with the male lifers' opinion in matters of losing their property, an indication that this was a major concern for the inmates. Another issue of concern had to do with the type of offences they had committed, the circumstances that led to their sentence, as well as the nature of their sentence. The lifers expressed regrets for the offence they had been involved in which landed them in prison. They were also eager to disclose matters related to their appeal for freedom, and the progress of their cases in courts particularly their frustrations and disappointment in case their appeal was turned down. They were always eager to know whether they will one day be released to go home. Their health problems, specifically their HIV status was a concern to most of the lifers.

The counsellors' opinion, as obtained from the interview schedule, with regard to lifer-constable relationship showed that the two groups lived as a team and a relatively large percentage of the lifers related well with the constables. However, concerning confiding their issues to the constables, this happened only in cases of mutual trust. Wherever the lifers perceived the staff as untrustworthy, they refrained from disclosing their personal issues. The lifers were also selective on whom to confide in on the basis of whether the constable will offer the desired assistance. Some lifers did not want to open up to anyone thus they preferred to keep both personal and even official matters issues to themselves. However, those who had been helped after opening up encouraged the latter to seek for help.

The other reason the lifers did not disclose their personal information to the staff mostly was because they were in uniform thus this created the fear of betrayal or punishment. As to whether the constables used coercion on the lifers, this would be necessary only in case of indiscipline on the lifers' part. Some of the acts which called for discipline were in case of a threat to an officer by the lifer, resisting the commands of a staff member, fighting and endangering their lives or those of the officers as well as contraband matters. The lifer may be confined in a cell for a while as a way of discipline. However, according to the counsellors, there was no verbal abuse applied on the lifers.

#### **4.5.6. Regression of Life Incarceration and Inmates' Social Relationships**

The second objective of the study was to determine the effect of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. To evaluate the correlation between life incarceration and the social relationships of inmates, the following hypothesis was tested.

*H<sub>02</sub>*: There is no statistically significant effect of life incarceration on the social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

The hypothesis was verified by use of a linear regression analysis at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ . The aspect of life incarceration was regressed against inmates' social

relationships to establish goodness of fit, the overall significance and individual significance of the model.

#### 4.5.6.1. The Goodness of Fit Model

The results in Table 34 represents the goodness of fit model, which was employed to determine how much of the total variation in the psychological well-being can be explained by life incarceration.

Table 34: The Goodness of Fit Model

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.845	0.714	0.712	0.41701

There was a high degree of correlation of 0.845 between life imprisonment and inmates' social relationships. As indicated, 71.5% of variation in the social relationships is accounted for by life imprisonment in the model. Consequently, social relationships are highly affected by life incarceration of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

#### 4.5.6.2. The Overall Significance of the Model

The results of the overall significance of the simple regression model are presented in Table 35. The information reports on how well the regression equation is able to predict the issues related to inmates' social relationships in relation to life incarceration.

Table 35: The Overall Significance of the Model

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	71.493	1	71.493	411.117	0.000
Residual	28.693	165	0.174		
Total	100.186	166			

The F- test statistic was used to assess the overall robustness and significance of the simple regression model. It was noted that the regression equation was statistically significant at 5% significance level (F-statistic of 411.117 and a p-value=0.000, which is less than .05 significant level). Therefore, the model is highly statistically significant at 5% level of significant and can be adopted for prediction purposes.

#### 4.5.6.3. The Individual Significance of the Model

The study sought to determine the effect of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. A simple regression model was conducted and the results are displayed in Table 36.

Table 36: The Individual Significance of the Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Parameters (Constant)	-0.247	0.178		-1.385	0.168
Life incarceration	1.033	0.051	0.845	20.276	0.000

Dependent variable: inmates social relationship

The t-test statistic was used to determine individual significance of the effect of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The results show a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life incarceration and social relationships of inmates, (regression coefficient=1.033; t-value 20.276; p-value=0.000 <0.05). Basing the conclusion on these findings, it implies that life imprisonment contributes significantly towards social relationships of inmates. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant influence of life incarceration on social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya is not supported by the current study. The regression equation to estimate social relationships of inmates can be stated as follows:

$$Y_1 = 1.033X$$

Where:  $Y_1$ =social relationships,

$X$ =life incarceration,

1.033=an estimate of the expected increase in social relationships in response to a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.

The regression coefficient of 1.033 indicates that for a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates account for an increase in social relationships by a factor of 1.033. On the basis of these findings, we conclude that life incarceration contribute significantly to social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The findings of the current study are in line with a study by Gust (2012), who observed that imprisonment exerts

an adverse impact on the family structure and living arrangements. It also creates tensions in family relationships, causes financial burdens, produces substantial emotional stress and leads to stigma (shame and disgrace) which influences the prisoner as well as their family. It is further observed that social isolation and loss of interaction opportunities with the outside world is one of the most significant effects of lengthy imprisonment (Crewe, Hulley, and Wright, 2017). Triggered by this social loss, majority of the prisoners learn to find security and protection by being socially inconspicuous and by becoming unremarkably disconnected from others as much as possible (Haney, 2012). The self-induced social withdrawal and isolation may mean that they recoil greatly into themselves, have no confidence virtually on no one and adjust to prison stress by leading lonely lives of quiet desperation (Haney, 2012).

#### **4.6 Life Incarceration and Psychological Well-Being of Male and Female Lifers**

The third objective of the study was to establish whether there existed differences in the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. Five psychological aspects were analyzed and compared based on gender. These aspects included; deprivation, stress, identity loss, personality change and trauma.

##### **4.6.1 Deprivations of Male and Female lifers as an Aspect of Psychological Well-being.**

The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the various statements based on deprivation as an aspect of psychological wellness. Table 37 presents the data which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.



Table 37: Frequency Distribution of Male and Female Lifers' Responses on Deprivation

Statement	G	SA	A	U	D	SD
I have been denied my total freedom as a lifer	M	46(58.2%)	18(22.8%)	2(2.5%)	10 (12.7%)	3(3.8%)
	F	31(39.7%)	14(17.9%)	2(2.6%)	25(32.1%)	6(7.7%)
I feel my rights have been violated by being life imprisoned	M	49(61.3%)	21(26.3%)	2(2.5%)	6 (7.5%)	2(2.5%)
	F	39(50.6%)	13(16.9%)		19(24.7%)	6(7.8%)
Life imprisonment makes me feel like I have no future	M	56(69.1%)	12(14.8%)	3(3.7%)	8 (9.9%)	2(2.5%)
	F	37(48.4%)	14(18.4%)	6(7.9%)	10(13.2%)	9(11.8%)
I feel that my life is being wasted in prison as a lifer	M	52(65.0%)	22(27.5%)	1(1.3%)	4 (5.0%)	1 (1.3%)
	F	46(58.2%)	15(19.0%)	2(2.5%)	8 (10.1%)	8 (10.1%)
I feel that I am losing the best years of my life	M	55(69.6%)	21(26.6%)	1(1.3%)	1(1.3%)	1(1.3%)
	F	48(64.9%)	18(24.3%)	1(1.4%)	3 (4.1%)	4 (5.4%)
I wish I had more privacy as a lifer	M	36(46.2%)	24(30.8%)	4(5.1%)	7 (9.0%)	7 (9.0%)
	F	22(30.6%)	24(33.3%)	3(4.2%)	14(19.4%)	9(12.5%)

\*G-gender, Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree

Results in Table 39 indicate that 69.6% of the male lifers, which is the highest percentage, agreed that they felt they were losing the best years of their lives as prisoners while 64% of the female lifers held a similar opinion. Therefore, more male lifers were affected in this area than the female inmates. These findings are in agreement with Jewkes (2005) who observes that indeterminate prisoners are usually stripped of their fundamental sense of being and when this happens, it causes grief and sadness for oneself; the loss involving lost worlds, lost futures and lost identities. Due to the extent of the different emotional and social losses that they incur, long-term prisoners respond to fears of deterioration and threats to identity by placing quality devotion on undertakings that challenge the mind and body Jewkes (2005). According to Walker and Worrall (2006), the feelings of loss experienced by the female lifers, were so severe and all-encompassing that they were equated to the experience of grief.

The data on deprivation were also analyzed using means and standard deviation. The results are displayed in Table 38.

Table 38: Means Distribution for Inmates in Relation to Deprivation

Statement	N	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
		Mean	SD	Mean	S D
I have been denied my total freedom as a lifer	157	3.50	1.47	4.19	1.19
I feel my rights have been violated by being life imprisoned	157	3.78	1.47	4.36	1.02
Life imprisonment makes me feel like I have no future	157	3.79	1.46	4.38	1.10
I feel that my life is being wasted in prison as a lifer	159	4.05	1.39	4.50	0.85
I feel that I am losing the best years of my life	153	4.39	1.08	4.60	0.70
I wish I had more privacy as a lifer	150	3.50	1.42	3.90	1.30
Overall mean/Valid N	137	3.83	1.38	4.33	1.02

From the information in Table 38 the overall mean score for the male lifers was (4.33) and a standard deviation of (1.02) while the female lifers scored a mean of (3.83) and the standard deviation was at (1.38). The findings point out that the respondents were in agreement that deprivation is an aspect of life incarceration. Majority of the male lifers (mean score = 4.39, SD= 1.08) asserted that they felt they were losing the best years of their life, which was higher than the female lifers whose mean score was at (mean=4.39, SD=1.08). The second rated statement was the lifers feeling that their lives were being wasted in prison with (mean score=4.50, SD=0.85) for the male lifers and (mean score = 4.05, SD=1.39) for the female lifers. The means reflected in the two statements show that more male inmates were feeling deprived by being lifers, in comparison to the female lifers whose mean was lower. The findings are in agreement with a study on effects of imprisonment on inmates at Industrial Area Remand and Lang'ata Women's Prison in Kenya by Agesa (2015) who found out that both male and female inmates are psychologically affected by life-imprisonment as early as 4 years of confinement. However, the areas in which they were influenced and the degree thereof varied depending on gender.

The statement, "I wish I had more privacy as a lifer" recorded the lowest mean between the male and female lifers; 3.96 with a deviation of 1.30 and 3.50 with a deviation of 1.42 respectively. This suggests that in comparison to the other aspects related to

deprivation, lack of privacy was not a first on the list item. However, more male lifers wished they had more privacy than the female did, an indication that the males felt their privacy was denied by their being lifers. However, concerning privacy, Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990), asserts that when women prisoners are denied privacy, quiet and dignity, it makes them feel they have no rights or control and this leads to an overwhelming sense of desperation, depression and lack of inspiration.

Information gathered from the open-ended questions concerning the male and female lifers' psychological wellbeing reveal how each of the gender perceived the experience of life imprisonment. On matters related to deprivation, the male lifers indicated that they lacked freedom to be themselves as it were before being life imprisoned and that they were denied time for social activities. A response from one of the male inmates read, 'Lifers are treated abnormally by other prisoners because they cannot go home, have no privileges and no friends to themselves.' The implication is that life-incarcerated inmates suffer for lack of both social and psychological freedom since they cannot relate with other prisoners freely and they are also not able to be themselves.

The female lifers indicated that they lacked freedom to see their children, and that some areas were restricted for the women lifers to go to. Due to restriction of movement, the lifers were not able to meet some of their friends from other wards. This reveals that freedom to move freely is curtailed which presents a possibility of distress thus affecting the lifers, psychological health. In matters of freedom, the inmates expressed the feeling that the prison community does not understand when one needs their own space to meditate on personal matters. Lack of this personal space causes hatred and jealousy among the lifers which may contribute to emotional pain.

As observed in the open-ended questions, one of the disturbing experiences of the male lifers which were linked to deprivation was insufficient and poor-quality food, poor health programmes and lack of freedom to control the daily activities. The lifers were also disturbed by the idea of being, 'Separated from other prisoners and being placed under special watch.' Such deprivations of association are likely to cause distress and a feeling isolation and rejection to the lifers if they are experienced for a long time as it is in the case of the life-incarcerated inmates.

#### 4.6.2 Lifers' Psychological Well-being in Relation to Stress based on Gender.

Table 39: Frequency Distribution of Male and Female Lifers Responses on Stress

Statement	Gender	Always	Sometimes	Never
Being life imprisoned makes me feel sad and miserable	M	52 (63.4%)	28 (34.1%)	2 (2.4%)
	F	46 (54.1%)	37 (43.5%)	2 (2.4%)
I have a feeling of hopelessness always at the thought of being life imprisoned	M	47 (58.8%)	29 (36.3%)	4 (5.0%)
	F	40 (49.4%)	35 (43.2%)	6 (7.4%)
I have frequent crying spells in prison as a lifer	M	38 (48.1%)	33 (41.8%)	8 (10.1%)
	F	34 (42.5%)	42 (52.5%)	4 (5.0%)
I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned	M	55 (70.5%)	21 (26.9%)	2 (2.6%)
	F	49 (64.5%)	23 (30.3%)	4 (5.3%)
I have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned	M	46 (59.7%)	22 (28.6%)	9 (11.7%)
	F	41 (53.9%)	25 (32.9%)	10 (13.2%)
I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer.	M	36 (45.6%)	25 (31.6%)	18 (22.8%)
	F	43 (56.6%)	15 (19.7%)	18 (23.7%)
The thought of being a lifer makes me to have sleepless nights.	M	40 (50.6%)	37 (46.8%)	2 (2.5%)
	F	35 (44.9%)	37 (47.4%)	6 (7.7%)
I usually have nightmares as a lifer.	M	33 (41.8%)	36 (45.6%)	10 (12.7%)
	F	24 (30.8%)	39 (50.0%)	15 (19.2%)
Being a lifer makes me feel ashamed.	M	48 (60.0%)	28 (35.0%)	4 (5.0%)
	F	49 (62.8%)	22 (28.2%)	7 (9.0%)
I am worried how I will cope with life as a lifer	M	46 (58.2)	25 (31.6%)	8 (10.1%)
	F	50 (63.3%)	20 (25.3%)	9 (11.4%)
My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.	M	55 (68.8%)	20 (25.0%)	5 (6.3%)
	F	54 (67.5%)	16 (20.0%)	10 (12.5)

Results in Table 39 show that majority of the male lifers (70.5%) agreed that they usually felt upset because of being life imprisoned while (64. %) of the female lifers consented to the same idea. When asked to rate themselves on the statement, “My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful” (68.8%) of the male lifers agreed they always experienced stress while 67.5% female lifers attested to the same view. Therefore, the aspects of being saddened and distressed were a psychological challenge

to the inmates. The information on inmates view on stress was further analyzed using means and standard deviations and the findings are presented in Table 40.

Table 40: Means Distribution for Male and Female lifers on Stress related Issues

Statement	N	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
		Mean	S D	Mean	S D
Being life imprisoned makes me feel sad and miserable	167	2.52	.54	2.61	.53
I have a feeling of hopelessness always at the thought of being life imprisoned	161	2.42	.63	2.54	.59
I have frequent crying spells in prison as a lifer	159	2.37	.58	2.38	.66
I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned	154	2.59	.59	2.68	.52
I have felt nervous anxious and for being life imprisoned	153	2.41	.71	2.48	.70
I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer.	155	2.33	.83	2.23	.80
The thought of being a lifer makes me to have sleepless nights.	157	2.37	.62	2.48	.55
I usually have nightmares as a lifer.	157	2.12	.70	2.29	.62
Being a lifer makes me feel ashamed.	158	2.54	.65	2.55	.59
I am worried how I will cope with life as a lifer	158	2.52	.69	2.48	.67
My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.	160	2.55	.71	2.62	.60
Total		2.43	0.65	2.48	0.62

The study findings in Table 40 show that the overall mean score for the female lifers was 2.43 and a standard deviation of 0.65 while the male lifer had 2.48 with a standard deviation of 0.62 denoting that the male and female lifers acknowledged they were experiencing stress due to life incarceration. This information is in tandem with the findings of McGunigall-Smith (2004b) who explains that although inmates are provided with basic needs, the deeper reality of incarceration is psychological, not corporeal. It is this emotional aspect of life in the prison environment that is extremely traumatic for the inmates. This observation was further supported by information gathered from the open-ended questions as a male respondent described life incarceration as an extremely painful experience, in the statement:

“Life incarceration gives mental torture, it is unpromising and for me prison is a non- reforming institution. It ignites helplessness and exposes a person to a

miserable life. Life imprisonment in itself is degrading and gives no hopeful future because it is demoralizing.”

A comparison between the male and female lifers indicates that more male lifers usually felt upset because of being life imprisoned than the female lifers as pointed out by the means 2.68 and a standard deviation of 0.52 and 2.59 with a standard deviation of 0.59 respectively. It thus implies that the males harbor feelings of disappointed and being wounded emotionally more than the females do. This could be explained by the idea that men may not be able to deal with the aspect of degradation and humiliation to which they have been subjected as life imprisoned inmates. According to Smith (2006) who is in agreement with the current findings, male and female prisoners act in response to stress in a different way in that, men are likely to communicate stress which in prison creates more physical hostility and provoking behaviour. This therefore culminates in up in physical violence and assault on other convicts. Additionally, Smith (2006) comparatively observes that women are inclined to internalize trauma and anxiety which may detail why women prisoners are occupied in self-harming activities. The injurious behaviour includes wounding and burning oneself. Additionally, women have more recurrent suicide attempts and use medical and psychological health service more than the rate of the male convicts. The difference is additionally noticed in the varying means of males (2.62) and a standard deviation of (0.60) and females (2.59) with a standard deviation of (0.71) when responding to the statement, “My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.” The male lifers mean is higher than that of the female lifers proposing that in these afore-mentioned experiences, more males are affected than the females. This finding is contrary to Keen (2014) who found that women experience problems of long life imprisonment more severely than men do. It is further noted that the problems women have to deal with include deprivations of outside relationships, emotional and physical vulnerability as well as release anxiety (Keen 2014).

However, the respondents’ rejoinder on the statement, “I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer” showed that more females found it difficult to cope with this idea of being a lifer than the males as attested to by the means of 2.33 and a standard deviation of 0.83 and 2.23 with a standard deviation of 0.80 correspondingly. This tendency is equally replicated in the varied means of 2.52 and a standard deviation of 0.69 (female) and 2.48 with a standard deviation of 0.67 (males) in response to the statement that they

were worried how they would cope with life in prison as lifers. The implication is that the female lifers are more strained and anxious than the males in relation to the mentioned aspects, as they express their worry about coping and further inability to cope with the state of life imprisonment. The findings compare well with George (2010) who's study, based on personal accounts, showed that women who go to prison with a sentence for life describe feelings of not being able to process the reality and the emotion shock involved in the sentence. The female lifers become desperate and miserable by far. The observations of the present study are also in line with a study on stress and depression among inmates in Peninsular Malaysia, where the females confirmed higher incidences of both stress and depression (Ahmad & Mazlan, 2014). The results showed that female prisoners had a higher tendency to suffer from anxiety and hopelessness compared to male inmates. Ahmad and Mazlan (2014) conclude that the high existence of stress among female inmates showed that women are more vulnerable towards stressful environments than their male counterparts are. This, in the final analysis may lead to unhappiness, downheartedness or misery and thus cause general psychological ill-health as well as worn-out social relationships. The study results also support the findings by Smith (2006) in his observation that male and female prisoners respond to stress differently in that; men incline to externalize stress which in prison produces more physical aggression and combative behaviour. Smith (2006) further observes that women tend to internalize stress which may explain why female inmates engage in self-harming behaviour.

The researcher sought more information on lifers' psychological wellbeing in relation to stress through open-ended questions. The responses from the male lifers revealed that life imprisonment had made them become hopeless, miserable, frustrated and meaningless. Others mentioned they were baseless; meaning they no longer had a foundation or purpose for their lives; unproductive, and feeling as useless parents. One of the male lifers wrote, 'How do I have hope and yet I will be in prison for my life time?', while another expressed resignation by stating, 'I feel like a madman, struggling to overcome this life imprisonment.' This is indicative of a sense of hopelessness contributed to by the indeterminate prison term. Expressions such as, 'I have become a stressed-up person throughout my life of life imprisonment,' 'helpless and unthinkable,' 'a psychologically tortured person and abandoned' were noted by some

of the lifers. These expressions lead to the conclusion that some of the male lifers have been acutely affected psychologically and therefore they are not healthy emotionally.

The women lifers, in response as to how life imprisonment had affected them in relation to stress, conveyed a feeling of having become useless in life, 'feeling ashamed of myself, family and children' and viewing themselves as useless beings to their family. Some of them also mentioned having, 'degraded myself', 'afraid of doing bad things again and fears to hurt anyone', 'lost hope as well as feeling miserable, hopeless, stigmatized and a failure' because of the life sentence. Other views expressed by the female lifers included: being stressed, being fearful of people and their characters and 'crying always when I think that my life is being wasted. One of the lifers mentioned that, 'I have experienced extreme physical and psychological torture as a lifer', while another noted that, 'When searches are conducted, it is very humiliating, dehumanizing and degrading. This sentiment is in line with the findings of Moran, et al., (2013) in the assertion that lack of emotional space to yourself was an acute challenge particularly for the women prisoners and chiefly their visibility to male officers during their personal activities including getting dressed or taking showers (Moran et al., 2013). This also included the body searches which were common phenomena during the imprisonment. To others life imprisonment, 'Gives me depression by seeing my fellow inmates serving the same sentence and also I have nightmares because of seeing prisoners suffer as a result of this sentence.'

When asked to describe a disturbing event or experience likely to cause stress on them as lifers, the male inmates recorded that the thought of having an undetermined date of release was quite disquieting and oppressive. As noted by Greer (2002), the male inmates viewed life in the detention center as emotionally repressive where feelings were concealed while the female lifers experienced prison as an environment where the emotional intensity was traumatic and devastating. The lifers stated, 'Stigmatization is a norm' meaning they had learnt to live with shame, humiliation, dishonor and disgrace. One of the lifers noted that, "To be in prison as a lifer makes one to be lonely and can be affected by stress and even die." The experience shows that the lifers were distressed and troubled throughout by being life incarcerated. Other concerns which caused the male lifers distress included: 'feeling emotionally wounded', 'not being listened to



when you have a genuine problem' and 'lots of tension.' All these aspects are a source of hopelessness and therefore make the lifers to be psychologically tortured.

#### 4.6.3. Lifers Psychological Well-Being in Relation to Identity Loss Based on Gender

The respondents were required to indicate their rate of agreement with the given statements related to identity loss as a psychological aspect of life incarceration. Information in Table 41 presents the data which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 41: Frequency Distribution for Male and Female Lifers and Identity Loss

Statement	Gender	SA	A	U	S	SD
I usually experience extreme bad temper after life imprisonment	M	33(43.4%)	24(31.6%)	2(2.6%)	13(17.1%)	4(5.3%)
	F	30(40.5%)	20(27.0%)	4(5.4%)	5 (6.8%)	15(20.3%)
I find myself getting quite upset by minor issues since I was life imprisoned	M	24(30.4%)	34(43.0%)	5(6.3%)	10 (12.7)	6(7.6%)
	F	26(30.6%)	29(38.2%)	2(2.6%)	14(18.4%)	5(6.6%)
I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned	M	46(57.5%)	21(26.3%)	5(6.3%)	4 (5.0%)	4 (5.0%)
	F	40 (50.6%)	28 (35.4%)	4 (5.1%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)
Being referred to as a lifer has made me lose my self-worth as a person	M	43(53.1%)	18(22.2%)	7(8.6%)	8 (9.9%)	5 (6.2%)
	F	31(39.2%)	19(24.1%)	7(8.9%)	11(13.9%)	11(13.9%)
I feel I have been alienated from myself by being life imprisoned	M	36(46.2%)	23(29.5%)	6(7.7%)	8 (10.3%)	5 (6.4%)
	F	25(32.9%)	21(27.0%)	4(5.3%)	15(19.7%)	11(14.5%)
As a life-imprisoned inmate, I am afraid of losing my mental health	M	44(55.7%)	23(29.1%)	2(2.5%)	3 (3.8%)	7 (8.9%)
	F	37(47.4%)	21(26.9%)	1(1.3%)	7 (9.0%)	12(15.4%)

Table 41 indicates that the majority of the male lifers (53.1%) strongly agreed that being referred to as a lifer had made them lose their self-worth as human beings while 39.2% of the female lifers had a similar view. This indicates that more males felt they had lost their original personal titles which gave them credit and boosted their self- esteem and

were now bearing a demeaning identity. The inmates' information on identity loss was further analyzed using means and standard deviation. The results are presented in Table 42.

Table 42: Means Distribution for Male and Female Inmates' Responses on Identity Loss

Statement	Female lifers		Male Lifers	
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D
I usually experience extreme bad temper after life imprisonment	3.61	1.56	3.91	1.27
I find myself getting quite upset by minor issues since I was life imprisoned	3.75	1.28	3.76	1.23
I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned	4.22	1.09	4.26	1.11
Being referred to as a lifer has made me lose my self-worth as a person	3.61	1.47	4.06	1.25
I feel I have been alienated from myself by being life imprisoned	3.45	1.48	3.99	1.24
As a life-imprisoned inmate, I am afraid of losing my mental health	3.82	1.49	4.19	1.23
Overall Mean Score/SD	3.74	1.39	4.02	1.22

As presented in Table 42, the overall mean score for the female lifers was 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.39. The score is lower than that of the male lifers which was at 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.22; however, there was an overall consensus that being life incarcerated had an influence on personal identity at a high level for the female lifers and extremely high for the male lifers. In comparing the male and female lifers' responses as displayed in the data analysis, three out of the given six statements scored a mean of 4 and above in the case of male lifers while only 1(one) statement had above the mean of 4 in the case of female lifers. It shows that more male lifers were experiencing identity loss than the female lifers. The shared statement: "I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned" bears the highest mean score in the case of gender, although it also displays a disparity between the two. The means of 4.22 (females) and a standard deviation of 1.09 and 4.26 (males) with a standard deviation of 1.11 depict that the number of males finding it difficult to enjoy things as before is higher than the females. Therefore, the males find it more challenging to find pleasure in doing things or being involved in activities which they had hitherto done with enjoyment, before facing the life sentence.

Apart from the quantitative information drawn from the questionnaires for both the lifers and constables, the researcher also used the open-ended questions to supplement the given data. Referring to psychological issues related to identity loss, 58 of the total women respondents agreed that they felt they were no longer the person they were before they became lifers. This indicates that 67.4% had undergone some transformation prompted by the nature of their sentence. Another 18.6% of the women respondents represented by the 16 'no' responses had not experienced any change while 12.8% were non-committal. The male lifers responses showed that 60 out of the 83 total population, constituting 72.2% felt they were no longer the same persons after the prison experience as lifers. The information from the lifers concurs with what was established by the quantitative data recorded by the constables. The conclusion is that more male lifers had experienced a 'loss of their original self' than their female counterparts.

The female lifers on the other hand stated that they had lost their identity as parents, and also become irresponsible parents who could not make available basic needs to their children and family. Women lifers felt that they had lost the opportunity to contribute to their family's lives. Some of the female respondents also mentioned that, they had forgotten what they knew about life before because the indeterminate life was so hard and it had made them lose their self-esteem and develop a feeling of rejection. The feeling of always being ashamed of themselves, their criminal act and the nature of punishment meted on them as well as viewing themselves as failures was a common response by the female lifers. The analysis of the responses reveal that both male and female lifers had lost their self-esteem and self-worth, therefore life imprisonment brought identity loss. As to whether life imprisonment led to loss of identity among the male and female lifers, the counsellors noted that there was a loss of self-worth and a feeling of demoralization.

#### **4.6.4. Male and Female Lifers on Personality Change**

The respondents were required to indicate their rate of agreement using the given statements related to personality change as an aspect of life incarceration. Information in Table 43 presents the data which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 43: Frequencies and Percentages on Lifers Personality Change based on Gender

Statement	G	SA	A	U	D	SD
I have learnt to suppress my emotional reactions to events around me since I became a lifer	M	42(53.8%)	23(29.5%)	3(3.8%)	4 (5.1%)	6(7.7%)
	F	28(35.0%)	37(46.3%)	4(5.0%)	5 (6.3%)	6(7.5%)
It is impossible to retain my original behaviour as a life imprisoned inmate	M	17(21.5%)	12(15.2%)	7(8.9%)	24(30.4%)	19(24.1%)
	F	18(23.1%)	12(23.1%)	7(9.0%)	11(14.1%)	30(38.5%)
I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer	M	22(28.6%)	21(27.3%)	4(5.2%)	14(18.2%)	16(20.8%)
	F	29(39.2%)	18(24.3%)	6(8.1%)	11(14.9%)	10(13.5%)
Being a lifer has made me develop a feeling of committing suicide	M	16(20.3%)	6 (7.6%)	10(12.7%)	12(15.2%)	35(44.3%)
	F	23(28.7%)	1 (1.3%)	11(13.8%)	10(12.5%)	35(43.8%)
Being life imprisoned has made me to develop a new way of living	M	45(54.9%)	25(30.5%)	6 (7.3%)	1 (1.2%)	5 (6.1%)
	F	33(38.4%)	18(23.4%)	6 (7.8%)	10(13.0%)	10(13.0%)
I never positively adjusted to the idea of being in prison a lifetime	M	27(35.1%)	19(24.7%)	9 (11.7%)	8 (10.4%)	14(18.2%)
	F	30(38.0%)	13(16.5%)	5 (6.3%)	17(21.5%)	14(17.7%)

\*G-Gender, SA Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

The results in Table 43 show that majority of the male lifers (54.9%) in comparison to (38.4%) of the female lifers strongly agreed that being life imprisoned has made them to develop a new way of living. This is in a bid to adjust to the new prison environment and be able to survive through the prolonged prison term. The findings are in tandem with Johnson & Toch (2000) who note that when prisoners are put to custody, their lives are affixed to rules and codes of practice that discourage and disregard normal reactions. They accept the rules and adjust to them, just as they do to the overcrowded conditions, body smells and lack of personal space. The move towards adjustment is likely to influence the inmate personality and behavior as the only alternative to keep to the surrounding systems and programmes. The data on personality change was further analyzed using means and standard deviation as presented in Table 44.

Table 44: Means Distribution for Male and Female Lifers' Responses on Personality Change

Statement	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
	Mean	<i>S D</i>	Mean	<i>S D</i>
I have learnt to suppress my emotional reactions to events around me since I became a lifer	3.95	1.15	4.17	1.21
It is impossible to retain my original behaviour as a life imprisoned inmate	2.71	1.64	2.80	1.50
I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer	3.61	1.46	3.25	1.54
Being a lifer has made me develop a feeling of committing suicide	2.59	1.70	2.44	1.59
Being life imprisoned has made me to develop a new way of living	3.70	1.46	4.27	1.07
I never positively adjusted to the idea of being in prison a lifetime	3.35	1.58	3.48	1.51
Overall Mean score	3.37	1.49	3.40	1.40

Results in Table 44 show that the overall mean score for the male lifers was higher than the female lifers as indicated by the means; (mean score=3.40, *SD*=1.40) and (mean score=3.37, *SD*=1.49) for the male and female lifers respectively. All the respondents were in agreement that life imprisonment contributed to their personality change at a moderate level. The results in addition disclose that the intensity of personality change between the male and the female lifers varied. The female lifers agreed to three statements related to suppressing their emotional reactions to events around them, which had a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.15 showing a high level of change. Hulley, et al (2011) also attests to the notion of lifers suppressing their emotions in the observation that in the prison environment, inmates are emotionally detached and they do not freely express their feelings. The inmates have learnt to hold their emotion in and to suppress them, thus keeping everything to themselves. The statement, "I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer" had a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.46 while the statement, "Being life imprisoned has made me to develop a new way of living" attained a mean score of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.46. This is compared to the male lifers whose statements; "suppressing emotions" obtained a mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 1.21, while "developing a new way of living" was at 4.27 mean and a standard deviation of 1.07. The conclusion is that the female lifers have had more areas of transformation in relation to personality than the male lifers.

To supplement the quantitative data, the researcher analyzed the information gathered from the open-ended questions based on lifers personality change. Responding to the statement on the kind of a person they had become after life incarceration, some of the male lifers' responses showed that they had been hardened by the prison experience. One of the rejoinders read, 'Hardened-I have learned much experience in crime such as defilement, robbery and murder; life imprisonment can make one a hard core.' This information is in agreement with the lifers' quantitative data where the statement on being hardened scored a mean of 3.42 and the constables were of the same opinion with a mean of 3.47 on the same statement. The aspect of being hardened is supported by Hulley (2011) in a study where one of the respondents affirmed that when one is doing a long time sentence, jail naturally hardens an individual making them a bit more emotionally distant from the rest. Several male lifers also expressed the view that prison life facilitated interaction between hardened criminals and petty offenders. In some cases, the latter left the inmates equipped with skills and ideas which were likely to enable them engage in greater crimes than those committed earlier. Thus, some convicts are not able to reform due to their newly formed personality. This information is in agreement with the findings of Lerman (2009b), who notes that, the experience of prison may also socialize prisoners toward the entrenchment or adoption of antisocial norms, which reinforce attitudes that undermine compliance to the law. Similarly, it may also build an attitude which creates a gap between the lifers and the rest of the community which leads individuals to feel isolated from correctional workers, law-abiding citizens, or society as a whole." Expressions such as, 'I no longer feel guilty of the felony committed', 'I have become an introvert' as rejoined by some male respondents is evidence of personality transformation contributed to by the indeterminate jail term. Another aspect which was noted as an indicator of in the lifers' individuality was that of becoming dependent. Therefore, they were at the mercy of other people within the prison in order to live on or survive in this environment. One of the lifers stated, 'I have become a person who keeps asking for help (dependent on others for sustenance and survival).

The women's responses on the aforementioned statement regarding the kind of a person they had turn out to be since life imprisonment showed that some of the women had become suspicious and less trustful of those they had to deal with on daily basis. This

view is consistent with Grounds and Jamieson (2002) as observed in their study that the experiences of life incarceration can cause both desirable and undesirable change to the inmates. Some of the participants in the study carried out by Jamieson and Grounds (2002) identified their reduced emotional capacities for trust, intimacy and sociability as negative changes in themselves. On the other hand, education, intellectual development and the ability to judge situations and people were considered positive changes. These are emotional losses contributed to by life imprisonment. Many of the women respondents attested having adopted traits such as being bitter, mean, impatient with others, very unkind and rough. The responses also recorded matters related to lifers being hardened, an observation noticed in the male lifer responses, rude and hateful as well as developing a feeling of mental confusion/mix-up and turning out to be very talkative in comparison to when they were out of prison. The experience of lifers personality transformation is further evidenced by Hulley, et al.,(2011) findings who notes that some prisoner who have spent lengthy periods in prison end up detesting the company of human beings and having no human feelings for the same. They no longer felt safe in the presence of people, a thing they had cherished hitherto. Therefore, the study established that both male and female lifers experienced personality change, however, the nature of the transformation differed from each group.

#### **4.6.5. Lifers' Psychological Well-Being on Trauma based on Gender**

The respondents were required to indicate their rate of agreement using the given statements related to trauma as an aspect of psychological well-being. Information in Table 45 presents the data which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 45: Percentage Distribution for Male and Female in Relation to Trauma

Statement	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
	True	False	True	False
I was shocked when I learnt that I have been life imprisoned	(97.6%)	(2.4%)	(96.3%)	(3.7%)
I have been physically attacked in prison as a lifer	(51.2%)	(48.2%)	(57.1%)	(42.9%)
I have been sexually assaulted while in prison as a lifer	(19.0%)	(81.0%)	(15.2%)	(84.8%)
I have witnessed violent incidents during my life imprisonment period	(42.3%)	(57.7%)	(84.6%)	(15.4%)
I remain distressed by the memories of violence which I have witnessed in prison as a lifer	(42.5%)	(57.5%)	(73.7%)	(26.3%)
I have been tortured while in prison as a lifer	(38.5%)	(61.5%)	(53.2%)	(46.8%)
I have witnessed people commit suicide in prison	(41.8%)	(58.2%)	(66.3%)	(33.7%)
Some lifers carry weapons in prison which makes me live in fear	(25.6%)	(74.4%)	(51.9%)	(48.1%)
I live in constant state of fear due to uncertainty of life as a lifer	(60.8%)	(39.2%)	(75.3%)	(24.7%)

The information in Table 45 shows that the aspect of the inmates being shocked when they learnt that they had been life imprisoned cuts across the female and male lifers with percentages of 97.6% and 96.3% respectively. This statement recorded the highest percentage. The percentages depict that more female lifers experienced shock than their male counterparts which is in line with Walker and Worrall (2000) who in their study on the problems experienced by male and female inmates concluded that women serving life sentences suffer in special ways from the pains of indeterminacy.

A comparison between the female and male lifers reveal that the traumatizing experiences they were going through varied in each group, in terms of population and nature of the incident. When responding to the statement; “I live in constant state of fear due to uncertainty of life as a lifer,” 60.8% of the female lifers said it was true while a higher percentage of the male lifers, 75.3% concurred with the statement. The issue of having witnessed violent incidents during their life imprisonment period had similar trend with females scoring a lower percentage of 42.3% while the males had 84.6% of the population agreeing to the statement. This tendency points to the notion that although the lifers were experiencing mental disturbances due to diverse



experiences encountered in prison as lifers, the male lifers had a greater representation in percentage than their counterparts. The statement, “I have been sexually assaulted while in prison as a lifer” represented the lowest percentage of the respondents where 19.0 conceded with the statement and 81.0% stating it was false. An observation on the male respondents shows that only 15.2% had been sexually assaulted while in prison as lifers and 84.8% had not been assaulted.

On matters pertaining to trauma, the male and female lifers were asked to describe any other disturbing events or experiences which they had encountered in prison as lifers. Some of the male lifers mentioned that, “When I was in prison I have seen several people being killed by another inmate,” “sick people who were dying for lack of proper medication” and “prisoners being tortured to death.” The lifers also mentioned the aspect of torture where for example, “A prisoner when found in the wrong side of the law, he would be taken to the cell and sleep there for more than two weeks in a cold environment and without blankets or a mattress.” There were also matters related to sexual behavior and sexual assault, which was disturbing, such as homosexuality and sodomy which were rampant, as well as cases of HIV/AIDS infection. The issues related to sexual matters were also reflected in the quantitative data where 19.0% females and 15.2% males agreed to being sexually assaulted while in prison as lifers.

The thought of dying without children, one’s property being taken away by outsiders, relatives and land grabbers was mentioned as a source of trauma by the male lifers. The length of time they had spent in jail served as a disadvantage for them thus denying them the opportunity to accomplish their life’s expectation, which is in itself traumatizing. This is proved as an inmate in the study observed, “My disturbing moment or event is just wondering within myself every day how long a life sentence is”. This overwhelming feeling that the confinement was likely to consume their lives was a disturbing issue for the lifers.

Therefore, life imprisonment does not allow for self-actualization since they are detached from the rest of the society and the activities thereof. Another area causing worry according to the male life incarcerated inmates was the subject of drug abuse, cybercrime and trafficking of contrabands inside the prison by some members of staff

and among the long term serving prisoners. Hardening and socialization into new anti-social skills is an aspect of prison life as noted by Lerman (2009b) practice was likely to cause a lot of fear among the lifers as well as suspicion. Living in fear can cause a lot of anxiety as well as psychological pain. The findings through the open ended questions moreover revealed that the male lifers were being disturbed by memories of violence every now and then as well as violent searches of inmates, which caused lots of tension and making the environment unpleasant for their psychological well-being.

In analyzing the disturbing experiences among the female lifers, the researcher noted that the women lived under fear because some inmates carried weapons in prison and were likely to cause them harm. There was also fear of being beaten on suspicion that one had mingled with inmates with contrabands. The female lifers also dreaded being punished for the things; they had not done themselves that made them angry. This indicates that the lifers have many cares which are source of trauma contributing to their living in fear and uncertainty.

The practice of conducting personal search while stripped naked was identified as causing psychological disturbance among the female lifers. It was perceived as an act of degradation therefore lowering their self-esteem. The results are supported by Moloney, van den Bergh, and Moller (2009) who state that traumas in prison are caused by aspects such as physical inner searches, privacy invasion of the inmates' privacy, and verbal emotional abuse and can further intensify mental illness. Walker and Worrall (2006) further observe that the constables occasionally performed strip searches on the male lifers which was a characteristic of life in prison. The male lifers' dependence on staff and their apprehension of staffs' power over their future progress was also observed. According to the counsellors, the suicidal men were traumatized when their children took a long time without visiting them, leading to the feeling of rejection.

#### **4.6.6. Test for Equality of Means**

The third objective of the study sought to establish whether there exists a significant mean difference between life incarceration and psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The hypothesis which was tested stated:

**$H_{03}$ :** There is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on lifers' psychological well-being based on gender.

The hypothesis was tested by use of a linear regression analysis at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ . The aspect of life incarceration was regressed against inmates' psychological well-being to establish the goodness of fit, the overall significance and individual significance of the model.

#### 4.6.6.1 Group Statistics on Psychological Well-being of Male and Female Lifers

This model was intended to assess the equality of means between male and female lifers in relation to life imprisonment. Three aspects of life incarceration: deprivation, identity loss and personality change were observed. The results of the findings are presented in Table 46.

Table 46: Group Statistics on Psychological Well-being.

Parameter	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Diff	t-value	P-value
Deprivation	Male	83	4.319	0.765	0.084	0.459	3.294	0.001
	Female	85	3.860	1.021	0.111			
Loss of Identity	Male	82	4.020	0.905	0.100	0.198	1.304	0.194
	Female	85	3.821	1.052	0.114			
Personality Change	Male	83	3.422	0.812	0.089	0.031	0.216	0.829
	Female	85	3.391	1.024	0.111			
Psychological Well-being	Male	83	3.920	0.630	0.069	0.245	2.167	0.032
	Female	86	3.675	0.824	0.089			

The results in Table 46 show that there is a significant mean difference in male and female lifers at 5% significance level, with (t-value 3.294; p-value  $0.001 < 0.05$ ). The results suggest that males are more affected in deprivation as an aspect of psychological well-being, than their female counterparts. This is attested to by the means: (mean score=4.31, SD=0.76) and (mean score=3.86, SD=1.02) for the male and female lifers respectively. The findings also indicate that the overall psychological well-being at (p-value=  $0.032 < 0.05$ ) therefore, life incarceration was verified as affecting the male and female lifers psychological well-being.

The findings of the present study are in tandem with the report of the National Research Council (2014) which stated that there are numerous aspects of prison life including material deprivations, restricted movement, lack of a meaningful activity and a nearly total absence of personal privacy which expose prisoners to powerful psychological stressors. These characteristics can adversely impact on the inmates' emotional well-being. Consequently, deprivation is an inherent typical of life incarceration. According to Aday and Krabril (2011) women with life sentences report a multitude of physical and mental health concerns especially as they age in prison. Depression and suicide risk are particular recurring factors for concern, both early in women's stays in prison (Dye & Aday, 2013) and after longer periods of time in prison (Clements-Nolle, Wolden, & Bargmann-Losche, 2009). In a study by Smith (2006) male inmates tend to externalize stress which, when done in a prison environment produces more physical violence, aggression and confrontational behavior.

#### 4.6.6.2 Goodness of Fit Models.

The information in Table 47 represents the goodness of fit model, which was used to determine how much of the total variation in the psychological well-being can be explained by life incarceration.

Table 47: Goodness of Fit of Models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Male	.904 <sup>a</sup>	.817	.815	.27079
Female	.932 <sup>a</sup>	.869	.868	.29945

The information in Table 47 indicates that there was a high degree of correlation of 0.904 for the male lifers and 0.932 for the female lifers, between life imprisonment and inmates' psychological well-being based on gender. Certainly 81.7% males and (86.9%) females of variation in the psychological well-being is accounted for by life incarceration in the model. The results also show that there is a disparity on the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female lifers. Therefore, the model for male and female lifers shows that the female lifers are affected more, at 86.9% than the male lifers at 81.7%. Consequently, the psychological well-being of the female lifers is more highly influenced by life incarceration than their male counterparts in selected prisons in Kenya.

#### 4.6.6.3. Overall Significance of the Models

The study sought to establish the effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being on male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The findings are presented in Table 48.

Table 48: Overall Significance of the Model

Model	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Male	Regression	26.595	1	26.595	362.691	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.939	81	0.073		
	Total	32.534	82			
Female	Regression	50.152	1	50.152	559.293	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7.532	84	0.090		
	Total	57.684	85			

The F-test statistic was used to evaluate the overall strength and significance of the linear regression model. Data analysis results in Table 48 indicate that the regression equation was statistically significant at 5% significant level with (F-statistic value of 362.691; p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ) for the male lifers and (F-value of 559.293; a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ) for the female lifers. This implies that the linear model is highly statistically significant at 5% level of significance and can be adopted for prediction purposes.

#### 4.6.6.4. Individual Significance of the Model

The study sought to establish whether there exist differences in the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. Information in Table 49 presents the individual significance model statistics data analysis results.

Table 49: Individual Significance of the Model

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Male	(Constant)	.318	.191		1.662	.100
	Life incarceration	1.027	.054	.904	19.044	.000
Female	(Constant)	-.032	.160		-.198	.844
	Life incarceration	1.100	.047	.932	23.649	.000

Dependent variable: inmates psychological well-being

A t-test was used to establish the individual significance of the influence of life incarceration on psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. As indicated in Table 49, the study shows a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life incarceration and psychological well-being of male and female inmates. This implies that once you increase life imprisonment, the psychological effect increases. The data indicates that life incarceration was considered to be statistically significant with (a regression coefficient of 1.027; t-value=19.044 and p-value=0.000<0.05) for the male lifers. The female lifers attained: (a regression coefficient of 1.100; t-value 23.649 and a p-value=0.000<0.05). Basing the conclusion on these results, the deduction is that life incarceration contributes significantly towards psychological well-being of male and female lifers. As a result, the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on inmates psychological well-being of inmate in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender is not supported by the current study. The regression equation to estimate psychological well-being of male and female lifers can be stated as follows:

$$Y_1=1.027X \text{ (male), } 1.100X \text{ (female)}$$

Where-  $Y_1$ =psychological well-being

$X$ =life incarceration

(1.027) and (1.100) = an estimate of the expected increase in psychological well-being for the male and female lifers respectively, in response to a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya, based on gender.

The regression coefficient of (1.027= males) and (1.100= females) indicates that a unit increase in life incarceration of inmates, accounts for an increase in psychological well-being by a factor of 1.027 for the male lifers and 1.100 for the female lifers. Therefore, on the account of these findings, we conclude that life incarceration contributes significantly to psychological well-being of lifers in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender. Another implication is that life incarceration has more effect on the psychological well-being of female lifers in comparison to the male lifers. These findings are in line with Smith (2006) who posits that men and women respond to stress

differently in that, men tend to externalize stress which in prison produces more physical aggression and confrontational behavior. This therefore ends up in physical violence and attacks on other inmates. Smith (2006) comparatively observes that women tend to internalize stress which may explain why female inmates engage in self-harming behavior. The harmful activities include cutting, curving and burning oneself.

#### 4.7 Life Incarceration and Social Relationships of Male and Female Lifers

The fourth objective of the study was to establish whether there existed differences in the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. Five aspects based on social relationships were analyzed and compared based on gender. These aspects included; family relationships, social isolation, withdrawal, inter-prisoner relationship and lifer-constable relationship.

##### 4.7.1 Male and Female Lifers on Family Relationships

The respondents were required to indicate their rate of agreement using the given statements related to family relationship as an aspect of life incarceration. Information in Table 50 presents the data which was analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 50: Frequencies and Percentages for Male and Female on Family Relationships

Statement	G	SA	S	U	D	SD
My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer	M	39(50.6%)	15(19.5%)	3(3.9%)	7(9.1%)	13(16.9%)
	F	22(27.5%)	16(20.0%)	5(6.3%)	11(13.8%)	26(32.5%)
I miss my family members very much.	M	62(78.5%)	11(13.9%)	3(3.8%)	1 (1.35)	2 (2.5%)
	F	57(69.5%)	20(24.4%)		1 (1.2%)	4 (4.9%)
I am able to maintain meaningful contact with my family despite being life imprisoned	M	28(35.9%)	21(26.9%)	4(5.1%)	10(12.8%)	15(19.2%)
	F	31(40.3%)	28(36.4%)	1(1.3%)	6 (7.8%)	11(14.3%)
My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling	M	60(76.9%)	11(14.1%)	2(2.6%)	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.1%)
	F	44(53.7%)	30(36.6%)	2(2.4%)	2 (2.4%)	4 (4.9%)
I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration	M	13(16.9%)	6 (7.8%)	8(10.4%)	14(18.2%)	36(46.8%)
	F		14(18.2%)	5 (6.5%)	8 (10.4%)	45(58.4%)

\*G-Gender, SA Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Findings in Table 50 show that majority of the male lifers (78.5%) strongly agreed that they missed their family members very much. Responding to the same statement, the female lifers' percentage was lower at 69.5% implying that more male lifers were missing their family members than their female counterparts. The analysis of male and female lifers in mean scores and standard deviation is presented in Table 51.

Table 51: Means Distribution for Male and Female Lifers on Family Relationships

Statement	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D
My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer	2.96	1.66	3.78	1.55
I miss my family members very much.	4.52	0.95	4.65	0.83
I am able to maintain meaningful contact with my family despite being life imprisoned	3.81	1.41	3.47	1.55
My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling	4.32	1.00	4.56	1.00
I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration	2.04	1.40	2.30	1.53
Overall mean score/ <i>SD</i>	3.53	1.28	3.75	1.29

Results in Table 51 indicate that the overall mean score for the female lifers was 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.28. The mean score for the male lifers was slightly higher than the females at 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.29, meaning both genders acknowledged that life imprisonment influenced family relationships. The analysis based on gender further reveals that the means for the women lifers ranged from 2.04 to 4.52 out of a possible maximum score of five. The means for the male lifers oscillated between 2.30 to 4.65. For the two genders, 'missing my family members very much' scored the highest mean for each group. However, the mean for the male lifers was slightly higher at 4.65 than that of the female lifers which was 4.52 though both were rated as being extremely high. This response denoted that both male and female inmates strongly agreed they were missing family members. However, due to the nature of the sentence, some lifers were not able to keep close contact with the family and this has the potential of affecting a hitherto healthy relationship. The concept of more male lifer missing family members than the females, according to Crew, et al., (2017) could be explained by the findings that the female inmates serving a life sentence term had very few support systems in contrast to their male complement. On the other hand, the women lifers also isolated themselves as a result of earlier abusive dealings with either



older members of the society, family members or fellow prisoners (Crewe, et al., 2017). As a result, they have just a few members of the immediate family members to count on. Grounds and Jamieson (2002); Rokach (2000) in support to life imprisonment influencing family relationships posit that long-term incarceration has a lasting and intensely negative impact on family relationships and isolation from loved ones is described as a constant source of emotional pain for prisoners. Therefore, the lifer serving a long term sentence goes through separation of lengthy periods marked with loneliness and a feeling of abandonment.

Responding to the statement, 'My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer,' the male lifers agreed to this as evidenced by the scored mean of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 1.55, while the female lifers were at a moderate level as attested to by the mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 1.66. This illustrates that majority of the male life incarcerated inmates felt rejected, isolated and abandoned by the family members on the basis of their predicament. The family treats them as outcasts and that their involvement in family issues is non-consequential. From the findings of the study, it was observed that a few lifers disagreed with the statement, 'I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration.' This is confirmed by the male and female lifers' means of 2.30 and 2.04 respectively. It thus means that some lifers have a longing or yearning to keep contact with their family members, nonetheless, this is incapacitated by the type of their sentence. The means disparity of the statement confirms that more female lifers, in comparison to males disagreed with the idea of not having interest in family members. This is in tandem with Heney (1990) who posited that women who are serving life imprisonment sentence express their intense pain and anxiety caused by the separation from their children. They also bear a feeling of powerlessness when their children are placed under other people's care or in foster homes. Additionally, the findings are supported by McGunigall-Smith (2004b) in his conclusion that one of the great hardships the life imprisoned inmates may have to face is the knowledge that their family is away and they cannot keep in touch with them. The life sentence inmate must face the painful fact that one day he may be entirely alone, bereft of outside support or concern

Information collected from the open-ended questions gave more details about the lifers regarding family interaction. When asked to describe any disturbing experiences they

had gone through while in prison, the female lifers were concerned with matters relating to death particularly of close family members. A few of their recordings included; 'When my child died in prison and I had no freedom to go and bury him', 'If your relative dies at home you cannot attend their funeral', 'When my parent came to visit and told me that my aunt is dead I felt very sad and cried.' The female lifers felt traumatized by the inability to handle some of the issues taking place in their lives in connection to family. The second concern of the women had to do with their children. A number of them expressed the pain of being denied by their own child, 'When my child came and said that I am not her mother'. This was triggered by the duration of the mother's absence in the child's life caused by the mother being in prison as a lifer. This means that the longer the lifers remained in jail, the greater the possibility of severing the family ties totally. This view is consistent with the findings of Walker and Worrall (2000) in their study which concluded that women serving life imprisonment agonized in distinctive ways from the pains of indeterminate incarceration. This was specifically, the loss of control over fertility and the loss of relationships with children. Thus life imprisonment contributes to family break-ups. This is further echoed by one lifer's response by observing that, 'I am afraid of what is going on with my family, children and friends since I became life imprisoned.' Most of them lamented that they were living far away from their families and were spending so much time thinking about their life and children.

The male lifers were also asked to describe any disturbing events they had encountered in prison as lifers. The information obtained showed that just like the female lifers, they were distressed by issues touching on the family. One of the respondents noted, 'All relatives have lost hope about me and therefore are not visiting me in prison. This causes my life to be more difficult in prison. Other respondents mentioned that, 'There is no good relationship between my family members and me. Family members have taken all my property at home and the other people will not value me anymore. They have discontinued communication'. The male lifers felt totally cut off from family association that heightens the psychological pain social detachment. Some of the respondents lamented that, 'Since I was a husband and a father to someone, life imprisonment has made my relationship with them very poor since I am of no help to them. I cannot help my parents either.' 'It has made and tainted my personality since

children who were born after my imprisonment do not know who I am to them in the family’. All these reactions from the inmates explain the extent of their misery due to the indeterminate confinement. There is limited opportunity or no face to face interaction for important matters or proper sharing of ideas in family matters. The lifers confessed that life incarceration had greatly affected their relationship with relatives and friends, how they are doing things without their concern; ‘Sometimes it is as if they are not aware of my existence. I feel like I am not part of the family’.

#### 4.7.2 Male and Female Lifers in Relation to Social Isolation

To obtain the data on social isolation, the respondents were requested to indicate the degree of agreement with the various statements pointing to lifers’ social isolation as a result of life incarceration. Table 52 presents the results, which were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 52: Frequencies and percentages for Lifers on Social Isolation

Statement	Female lifers		Male Lifers	
	True (%)	False (%)	True (%)	False (%)
I feel rejected by my friends after being life imprisoned	83.3	16.7	82.1	17.9
As a lifer, I feel I have no sense of belonging	64.6	35.4	64.5	35.5
I have had a hard time adjusting to this new social set-up as a lifer	88.6	11.4	84.6	15.4
I am worried about how I am described or referred to by my friends as a lifer	80.7	19.3	82.3	17.7
I am always disturbed for being separated from my friends	83.5	16.4	96.2	3.8

Table 52 shows that majority of the male lifers (96.2%) stated that they were always disturbed for being separated from their friends due to being life incarcerated. Comparatively, the female lifers had a lower percentage of (83.5%) on the same notion. The results also indicate that majority of the female lifers (88.6%) admitted having had a hard time adjusting to the new social set-up in prison as lifers. On the other hand, (84.6%) of the male lifers agreed with the afore-mentioned view of having a difficult time adjusting to life in prison. This leads to the conclusion that more female lifers found it challenging to fit in the prison environment and to mingle freely with other prisoners within the prison setting, and those people in the society often discriminated

upon them for the reason of being lifers. Consequently, they felt rejected, and lacked a sense of true belonging which eventually culminated in social isolation.

Life incarceration had affected lifers' relationship with people outside the prison leading to isolation as verified by the findings based on the open-ended questions. According to the male lifers' responses, several of them felt that they had been socially isolated by friends and relatives, thus denied freedom of interacting with them. The male lifers expressed the feeling of being labelled as outcasts and unwanted by the society. The following rejoinders, attests to this:

**Respondent (A)** It [life incarceration] has made me seem as a very bad person thus I have become an outcast, experiencing a sense of complete separation from my people outside of prison.

**Respondent (B)** I am rejected because of being in prison and I have lost most of my properties.

**Respondent (C)** I feel lonely in prison because I cannot see my friends or my family members and the thought that they cannot trust me anymore.

**Respondent (D)** We (my family and I) cannot do anything together and I am sidelined in making decisions or participating in the family affairs. It is apparent that my family and friends forgot me a long time ago.

**Respondent (E)** The society outside feels that a lifer should not be given a chance even in decision making in the family and views them as very dangerous people.

**Respondent (E)** People outside of prison perceive lifers as monsters while other family members have abandoned them completely feeling that it would be better if they died in prison. The people have developed some kind of fear and sympathy towards lifers while others are scared of them.

The reactions of the women lifers verified that they too had been abandoned and left out uncared for by those whom they had hitherto valued and trusted. The female lifers were experiencing social isolation from the people outside the prison. Expressions such as stated below, which were gathered from the female lifer’s open-ended responses, confirmed the lifers’ view:

**Respondent(A)** Relatives lost hope in us [me] because they know a lifer cannot go back home therefore we will never be part of them again—have forgotten me—looked down upon me.

**Respondent (B)** I am rarely visited. They do not want to hear from me because they think I will never be out. I feel rejected by family members.

#### 4.7.3. Lifers on Social Withdrawal based on Gender

The data on social withdrawal was obtained by asking the respondents to indicate the degree of agreement with the several statements pointing to lifers’ social withdrawal as a result of life imprisonment. Table 53 presents the results, which were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 53: Frequencies and Percentages for Lifers Responses on Social Withdrawal based on Gender

Statement	G	SA	A	U	D	SD
I like spending time alone in prison as a lifer	M	21(26.9%)	13(15.7%)	6(7.7%)	16(20.5%)	21(26.9%)
	F	21(25.9%)	11(13.6%)	4(4.9%)	17(21.0%)	28(34.6%)
I do not feel like being together with other inmates	M	16(20.3%)	14(17.7%)	3(3.8%)	20(25.3%)	26(32.9%)
	F	18(22.5%)	8 (10.0%)	6(7.5%)	22(27.5%)	26(32.5%)
The prisoners do not seem to understand me at any one time	M	20(25.6%)	11(14.1%)	7(9.0%)	13(16.7%)	27(34.6%)
	F	18(22.5%)	22(26.8%)	5(6.1%)	19(23.2%)	16(19.5%)
I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer	M	20(25.6%)	6 (7.7%)	6(7.7%)	13(16.7%)	33(42.3%)
	F	20(25.0%)	9 (11.3%)	4(5.0%)	14(17.5%)	33(41.3%)

\*G-Gender, SA Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Uncertain, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Findings in Table 53 reveal that majority of the male lifers (42.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement, “I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer,” while 41.3% of the female lifers had a similar view. The results are contrary to the findings by Craig

(2003) who posits that the exceptional totality of monitoring the lifers' units forces prisoners to become totally reliant on the institution to organize their survival. Prisoners eventually lose ability for self-control and self-initiation of behaviour due to extreme over-control by the institution. They are, therefore, forced to adapt to an institutional regime that limits virtually all aspects of their behaviour (Craig 2003). According to Johnson (2008), prisoners are deprived of their independence and restricted in their movement and also experience a loss of control as well as personal security and safety. In a survey carried out by Leigey, Prison and Schartmueller (2019) it was also noted that the female participants felt that having to follow other peoples' rules and orders and having a feeling that you have no control over one's own life developed a sense of hopelessness in the inmates. This was reported as the most severe problem they experienced, though the male participants in the study did not experience the same effects. The data was further analyzed using means and standard deviation and the findings are presented in Table 54.

Table 54: Means for Male and Female Lifers on Matters Related to Withdrawal

Statement	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D
I like spending time alone in prison as a lifer	2.75	1.65	2.97	1.89
I do not feel like being together with other inmates	2.63	1.57	2.67	1.57
The prisoners do not seem to understand me at any one time	3.13	1.50	2.79	1.64
I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer	2.61	1.68	2.58	1.67
Overall Score/ <i>SD</i>	2.78	1.60	2.75	1.69

Table 54 points out that out of the four statements, both male and female lifers recorded means between 2.58 and 2.97. The overall mean scores were (mean score= 2.75 SD= 1.69) and (mean score=2.78, SD=1.68) for the male and female lifers respectively. This denotes that the male and female inmates were in agreement that the experiences described by the statements were as a result of life imprisonment and they were affecting some of the lifers. Therefore, majority of the male and female lifers liked spending time alone in prison, as depicted by the mean of (M=2.97, SD=1.89) and M=2.75, SD=1.65) respectively. The information also shows that the female inmates felt that the other prisoners do not seem to understand them at any one time as shown by the means of (M=3.13, SD=1.50)while the male lifers scored (M= 2.79, SD=1.64) The results of the present study agree with the findings of Haney, (2002) who posits

that some prisoners learn to find safety by withdrawing socially and detaching as much as possible. Consequently, they are not easily noticed by the other inmates and they have to live with this social loss. Haney (2002) further explains that the self-imposed social withdrawal and isolation may mean that the lifers retreat deeply into themselves, trust practically no one and adjust to prison stress by leading isolated lives of quiet desperation. Haney (2002) also posits that long-term prisoners are particularly susceptible to this form of psychological adaptation as a result of deteriorated sense of worth and personal significance. This is by resigning themselves to their conditions, a phenomenon described as situational withdrawal or specific emotional withdrawal.

Additional information was obtained from the open-ended questions regarding social relationship of the female and male lifers. In an effort to explain the kind of a person they had become, in terms of withdrawal, or pulling out from the rest of inmates, some of the women lifers stated that they had become hot-tempered persons who do not like talking to anyone, therefore, they were always alone. Another female lifer confirmed that:

‘I used to talk to many people but nowadays I can’t talk to anyone I feel like they are making me tired and angry. I just have become more reserved when it comes to sharing my most intimate issues.’

Concerning how life imprisonment had affected their relationship with people outside the prison, one of the female life incarcerated inmates responded that:

“I don’t associate so much with them, since they regard me as an outcast. They are not interested with me anymore. They have no business with me. They feel that I have become a burden to them since I depend totally on them, to do for me what I should be doing, but now I am held in prison.”

The lifers acknowledged feeling lonely, dejected and lived with fear to even encounter their neighbor in case they appear in the prison compound visiting other people. According to some of the female lifers, the people (society) no longer trust or even understand them.

#### **4.7.4 Male and Female Lifers in Relation to Inter-prisoner Relationship**

The data on inter-prisoner relationship was obtained by asking the respondents to indicate the degree of agreement with the given statements addressing the relationship between the life-imprisoned inmates and inmates serving other types of prison terms.

This was meant to inform the study on how the relationship was likely to be influenced as a result of life imprisonment. Table 55 presents the results, which were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

Table 55: Proportion of Lifers on Inter-Prisoner Relationship based on Gender

Statement	Gender	True	False
Being a life incarcerated inmate, I consider having any friends among the inmates a very difficult thing	M	36 (47.4%)	40(52.6%)
	F	38(46.3%)	44(53.7%)
I have no interest in relating with other prisoners as a lifer	M	55(71.4%)	22(28.6%)
	F	56(68.3%)	26(31.7%)
Being a lifer, I do not like discussing my issues with any other inmate in prison	M	41(53.9%)	35(46.1%)
	F	39(47.6%)	43(52.4%)
As a lifer, I feel safe from being bullied by other inmates in prison	M	45(59.2%)	31(40.8%)
	F	53(66.3%)	27(33.7%)

A comparison between the male and female lifers reveals that 71.4% of the former and 68.3% of the latter have no interest in relating with other prisoners. Therefore, more male lifers preferred to keep to keep away from inmates serving determinate prison terms than the female lifers. When responding to the statement, ‘Being a lifer, I do not like discussing my issues with any other inmate in prison,’ 47.6% female lifers said it was true while 53.9% of the male lifers agreed to the statement. The male lifers had their majority having an inclination towards closing up rather than disclosing their personal matters to other inmates.

This could have been contributed to by the nature of their fellow inmates, who either could not be trusted or had problems of their own thus sharing with them would not add value to the disturbed inmates. Similarly, family members may not be preferred as an alternative to offer emotional support since majority of them have severed their relationship with the lifers and institutional staff were viewed as being unconcerned with the lifers affairs. This thus left the lifers with no option but to withdraw and deal with their issues at an individual and personal level. Observing the two statements; ‘Having no interest in relating with other prisoners’ and ‘I do not like discussing my issues with any other inmate,’ it is evident that majority of the male lifers were less desirous of inter-relating with other inmates than the female lifers. Therefore, female lifers were seemingly keen in relating with other inmates and discussing their matters with others. The findings support a study done by Carcedo et al. (2008) who concluded that women present a better interpersonal state and psychological health than men. This



may explain why, female inmates form surrogate families while in prison, which are for social more than sexual contact. However, such families are not seen in male facilities. This explains the impact of life incarceration on the inmates' social relationships because of separation from normal social relationships. Inmates' relationships play a seminal role in their well-being during incarceration and are important in improving their overall health (Travis, 2003).

In discussing the social relationships among the lifers and prisoners serving other types of jail sentence, the respondents' opinion from the open-ended questions were analyzed. When requested to state how life imprisonment had affected their relationship with other people within the prison, the women respondents felt that as lifers, they were isolated from the rest because other prisoners as well as constables thought that the lifers are depraved people. The female lifers' opinion concurs with the findings of Namyalo and Macalesher (2012) stating that prisoners serving life or long-term imprisonment often experienced differential treatment and worse conditions of detention compared to other categories of prisons. One of the female respondents noted that:

“Since I am a lifer others think I will remain in prison forever. Such utterances affect me mentally and they don't like to associate with me. It thus becomes very hard to cope with prisoners serving other types of sentences since they regard lifers as outcasts. Their inability to understand my situation has become a burden to them so we cannot relate amicably. We are perceived as people of low value.”

The feeling of a strained relationship was also echoed by another inmate who stated that, ‘It is very shameful to serve a life imprisonment term and it is very difficult to have any relationship with other inmates, since they do not understand what I am going through. I do not have any friends.’

Through the open-ended questions, when asked to describe any other disturbing events or experiences they had encountered in prison as a lifer, the women respondents stated that they were usually isolated by other prisoners, bullied and neglected. This information supports the hitherto assertion by the 33.8% women who pointed out that they feared being bullied by other inmates in prison. The women lifers also mentioned that they were disturbed by the idea of segregation, especially when the prison holds

events and the lifers are not allowed to attend some of the occasions. Namyalo and Macalesher (2013) agree with this observation by positing that the life-imprisoned inmates suffer severance from the rest of prisons populations, inadequate living facilities and excessive use of handcuffing. Another aspect noted by the female lifers was that the inmates serving short-term sentence always rejected the lifers because the former's countdown was on and a lifer has no distinct date of release. Therefore, the inmate serving definite jail terms viewed lifers as persons whose lives had come to an end.

Prison and the experience of life imprisonment is not a similar experience for all long-term prisoners (Liebing and Maruna, 2005). The individual inmates are likely to differ in the way they are influenced by imprisonment. When asked how life imprisonment had affected their relationship with other people within the prison, the male lifers' opinion differed in some areas from that of the female lifers. The responses of the male lifers indicated that life incarceration had created mutual friendship in terms of sharing ideas, opting to do away with crimes and accepting the situation they had found themselves in. This indicates a notion of embracing change in order to live on as lifers. The male lifers view is supportive of Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) findings that long-term sentences could amount to constructive time if dealt with mature coping. The prisoners can identify and make use of the legitimate resources available in order to achieve autonomy, security and relatedness with others. Other male lifers revealed that the experience had improved their ability to select good friends who were of good understanding and had already reformed. Therefore, it had led some lifers to discover how to cope with different social relationships and bonding in times of difficult as well. Referring to the male lifers' constructive transformation, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) observed that male lifers spent much of their time in solitary pursuits. Their personal routines helped them to live effectively with others and to satisfy some of their needs. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2005) further agree with the present study by stating that in terms of relatedness to other prisoners and people generally, male lifers (who were participants in the study) reported becoming more thoughtful, tolerant and emphatic over time.

On the other hand, some lifers felt that most people fear lifers and perceive them as very dangerous people especially in matters of security. As a result, they are treated as suspects and cannot be trusted. A male lifer noted that there was a lot of discrimination, and just like the female inmates, they were denied access to other blocks or participation in certain activities. These restrictions are likely to strain the relationship between the lifers and the other inmates and can be stressful especially to the lifers who suffer the rejection. In one of the prisons the lifers lamented that:

“Because the constables separate lifers from socializing or mixing with short-term prisoners, there is no healthy interaction. The separation is aggravated by the strong walls to prevent them from meeting the lifers which is in itself stigmatization.”

The male lifers were requested to describe any other disturbing events or experiences they had encountered in prison as lifers. Some of the lifers noted that there was hostility from some of the lifers, torturing of inmates by inmates and as they noted, “One can be killed and nothing happens to the one who committed the (crime) act. Instead he stays very well and he is given everything in the name of keeping him ‘cool down’.” This is suggestive of tensed relationships among the inmates, which is likely to cause anxiety, fear and distress. The language used by other inmates is equally demeaning and may cause emotional turmoil. Some lifers reported having been told, “You will die and rot in prison. Therefore, the inter-prisoner relationship, according to the lifers, is ridden with indifference, suspicion, unfriendliness, segregation and ill intentions.

Concerning bullying of the lifers, the counsellors observed that this was minimal and instead, lifers tended to comfort each other. On matters related to gender, 66.3% of the females felt safe while 59.2% males were of the same opinion as presented in Table 41. In conclusion, more female lifers felt safe in matters pertaining to bullying in comparison to male lifers.

#### **4.7.5 Male and Female Lifers in Relation to Lifer-Constable Relationship**

Information on the relationship between lifers and the prison constables was collected by asking the respondents to specify the extent to which they agreed with the different statements pointing to lifer-constable relationship as a result of life imprisonment. Table 56 presents the results, which were analyzed using frequencies and percentages

Table 56: Frequencies and Percentages for Lifers' Responses on Lifer-Constable Relationship based on Gender

Statement	Gender	Always	Sometimes	Never
The prison constables are friendly and social to me as a lifer	M	19(24.4%)	52(66.7%)	7(9.0)
	F	28(35.0%)	41(51.2%)	11(13.0%)
I can easily share my issues and feelings as a lifer with the prison constables.	M	19(24.4%)	39(50.0%)	20(25.6%)
	F	19(24.7%)	36(46.%)	22(28.6%)
As a lifer, I always feel relaxed in the presence of the constables	M	16(21.1%)	35(50.0%)	22(28.9%)
	F	14(18.2%)	40(51.9%)	23(29.9%)
The guards have mistreated me several times on the account of being a lifer	M	12(15.8%)	40(52.6%)	24(31.6%)
	F	18(23.7%)	34(44.7%)	24(31.6%)
The guards use threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers	M	14(17.9%)	46(59.0%)	18(23.1%)
	F	19(23.8%)	29(36.3%)	32(40.0%)

Information in Table 56 indicates that majority of the male inmates (66.7%) acknowledged that the prison constables were sometimes friendly to them while (51.2%) of the female lifers shared a similar opinion. However, more male lifers (59.0%), in comparison to (36.3%) of the female lifers felt that the prison guards used threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers. The data was further analyzed in means and standard deviations and the findings are presented in Table 57.

Table 57: Distribution of means for Lifers Responses on Lifer-Constable Relationship based on Gender

Statement	Female Lifers		Male Lifers	
	Mean	S D	Mean	S D
The prison constables are friendly and social to me as a lifer	2.21	0.66	2.15	0.56
I can easily share my issues and feelings as a lifer with the prison constables.	1.96	0.73	1.99	0.71
As a lifer, I always feel relaxed in the presence of the constables	1.88	0.68	1.92	0.70
The guards have mistreated me several times on the account of being a lifer	1.92	0.74	1.84	0.67
The guards use threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers	1.84	0.78	1.95	0.64
Overall mean score	1.96	0.71	1.97	0.65

Results in Table 57 indicate that the overall mean score for the female lifers was (mean score=1.96, SD=0.71) and (mean score=1.97, SD=0.65) for the male lifers out of the

possible 3 points. A comparison of the female and male lifer's responses reveals a mean score of (mean score=2.21, SD=0.66) and (mean score=2.15, SD=0.56) respectively in relation to the aspect of being social and friendly. It thus implies that more women lifers acknowledged that the constables were friendly and social to them. The present findings are contrary to the findings of Buchanan (2007) in observing that women prisoners are more likely to be the targets of sexual abuse by staff and according to Beck, et al (2013) of all reported staff sexual misconduct in prison, three-quarters involved staff victimizing women prisoners. This thus shows that female lifers experience a form of harassment from the prison staff thus influencing their relationship negatively. However, although all the lifers consented to being able to share their concerns and feelings easily with the constables, the mean registered by the male lifers of 1.99 was slightly higher than their counterparts at 1.96 with a standard deviation of 0.71 and 0.73 respectively. The analysis in Table 59 also show that the lifers agreed to having been mistreated by the guards several times, as indicated by the means of 1.92 for the females and 1.84 for the males with a standard deviation of 0.744 and 0.674 correspondingly. The present findings are in tandem with Walker and Worrall (2006), who in their interviews with the female lifers in a study revealed that the women lived in fear that the staff could misconstrue their actions or words leading to poor relationships. This is further supported by Haney (2003) who observes that prison staff members can be verbally and even physically abusive in ways that are too familiar to many prisoners.

Apart from the quantitative data on constable-lifer relationship, qualitative information from the open-ended questions was also used to give more specifics of the findings. When asked to describe any disturbing experiences they had encountered in prison as lifers, the male respondents expressed a feeling of being humiliated and abused by the prison constables. The male life imprisoned inmates also cited the aspects of poor communication, cruelty of the prison staff and negative utterances from the constables. These may affect the lifers' self-esteem and self-worth, features which are crucial for maintaining healthy social relationships. The male lifers mentioned matters concerning torture as stated by a respondent, 'There is torturing by the police officers as they beat us having done no mistake as well as torturous body search, while one is naked and intimidation by the officers.'

When describing disturbing experiences encountered in prison as lifers, some of the male lifers asserted that:

“In prison there are a lot of disturbing issues because some officers do not follow prison rules and go as far as beating some inmates badly. Furthermore, there is no time to think about your future because you are life imprisoned. So this is the most disturbing experience.”

The female lifers on the other hand affirmed that when taken ill, one was likely to be taken to the hospital by a security guard who would threaten them by reason of being lifers.

#### **4.7.6. Test for Equality of Means**

The fourth objective of the study intended to establish whether there exist differences in the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of male and female inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The following hypothesis was tested:

**H<sub>04</sub>** There is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on inmates’ social relationships based on gender.

Linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ . To establish the goodness of fit, the overall significance and individual significance of the model, the aspect of life incarceration was regressed against inmates’ social relationships.

##### **4.7.6.1 Group Statistics on Psychological Well-being of Male and Female Lifers**

The model was meant to evaluate the equality of means between male and female lifers with regard to life imprisonment. The items of life imprisonment which were assessed comprised family relationships and withdrawal. Table 58 displays the results of the findings.

Table 58: Group Statistics on Social Relationships based on Gender

Parameter	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Diff	t-value	P-value
Family Relationships	Male	80	3.755	0.703	0.079	0.149	1.398	.164
Withdrawal	Female	85	3.606	0.663	0.072			
	Male	80	2.798	1.332	0.149	-0.092	-0.449	.654
	Female	86	2.890	1.296	0.140			
Social Relationship	Male	81	3.332	0.743	0.083	0.053	0.441	.660
	Female	86	3.279	0.811	0.087			

As indicated in Table 58, there is no significant mean difference in male and female lifers at 5% significant level ( $t-v$  1.398;  $p-v$  0.164 > 0.05), ( $t$ -value-0.449;  $p$ -value 0.654 > 0.05). This is with regards to family relationships and social withdrawal respectively. The overall social relationship; ( $t$ -value=0.441) and ( $p$ -value=0.66 > 0.05), therefore the results suggest that on the overall, the influence of life imprisonment affects the social relationships of the male and female lifers nearly the same. The results of the present research contrast the findings of a study carried out by Crewe, et al., (2017), who indicated that females serving a life sentence term had very few support networks in comparison to their male counterparts. It was noted that the inmates' family and friends had cut off associations with them immediately after the offence was committed. On the other hand, the female lifers also detached themselves as a result of previous abusive relationships with either older members of the society, family members or fellow prisoners (Crewe, et al., 2017). The disparity of the male and female lifers' experience in prison is also supported by Guerino, Harrison and Sabol (2010), who observe that the female inmates also felt powerless to provide support when their families needed them. Unlike many male inmates whose children are likely to remain in the care of their wives or girlfriends, imprisoned females are at a very high risk of losing their children to the state.

#### 4.7.6.2. Goodness of Fit Models

The results in Table 59 represents the goodness of fit model, which was used to determine how much of the total variation in the social relationships can be explained by life imprisonment.

Table 59: Goodness of Fit Models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Male	.826 <sup>a</sup>	.682	.678	.42119
Female	.864 <sup>a</sup>	.747	.744	.41052

The data analysis results in Table 59 shows a high degree of correlation of 0.826 and 0.864 for the male and female lifers respectively, between life imprisonment and inmates social relationships based on gender. Therefore, 68.2% for the males and 74.7% females of variation in the social relationships is accounted for by life incarceration by the model.

Therefore, the model for male and female lifers shows that the female lifers are affected more, at 74.7% than the male lifers at 68.2%. In conclusion, the social relationship of the female lifers is more highly influenced by life incarceration than their male counterparts in selected prisons in Kenya.

#### 4.7.6.3 Overall Significance of the Models

The study sought to establish the effect of life incarceration on social relationships on male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. F-statistic was used to evaluate the overall significance of the simple regression model. The findings are presented in Table 60.

Table 60: Overall Significance of the Models

Model		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Male	Regression	1	30.115	169.754	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	79	.177		
	Total	44.130			
Female	Regression	1	41.783	247.935	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	84	.169		
	Total	85			

Data analysis results in Table 60 indicates that the overall significant model was statistically significant at 5% significant level with (F-value of 169.754; a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ) for the male lifers while the female lifers were at (F-value of 247.935 and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). This implies that life incarceration significantly affects lifers' social relationships of the male and female lifers. The analysis further verifies that the



linear model is highly statistically significant at 0.5% level of significant and can be adopted for prediction purposes.

#### 4.7.6.4 Individual Significance of the Model

A t-test was used to establish the individual significance of the influence of life incarceration on psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. Information in Table 61 presents the individual significance model statistics data analysis results.

Table 61: Individual Significance of the Model

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Male	(Constant)	-.543	.301		-1.803	.075
	Life incarceration	1.104	.085	.826	13.029	.000
Female	(Constant)	-.104	.219		-.476	.636
	Life incarceration	1.004	.064	.864	15.746	.000

Dependent variable: inmates social relationship

As displayed in Table 61 the findings show a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life incarceration and social relationships of male and female life incarcerated inmates. This indicates that once life imprisonment is effected, the social relationships of the male and female lifers are influenced. The data points out that life incarceration was considered to be statistically significant with (a regression coefficient of 1.104; t-value=13.029 and p-value=0.000<0.05) for the male lifers. The female lifers attained: (a regression coefficient of 1.004; t-value 15.746 and a p-value=0.000<0.05). Basing the conclusion on these findings, the inference is that life incarceration contributes significantly towards inmates social relationships based on gender. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference on the influence of life incarceration on inmates social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender is not supported by the present study. The regression equation to estimate social relationships of male and female inmates can be stated as follows:

$$Y_1 = 1.104X_1 + 1.004X_2$$

Where-  $Y_1$  = inmates social relationships

$X_1$  = life incarceration

(1.104) and (1.004)= an estimate of the expected increase in social relationships for the male and female lifers respectively, in response to a unit increase in life imprisonment in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender.

The regression coefficient of (1.104= males) and (1.004= females) indicate that for a unit increase in life incarceration of male and female lifers inmates, accounts for an increase in social relationships by a factor of 1.104 for the male lifers and 1.004 for the female lifers. Therefore, on the basis of these findings, we conclude that life incarceration contributes significantly to social relationships of lifers in selected prisons in Kenya based on gender. Another implication is that life incarceration has more effect on the social relationships of male lifers in comparison to the female lifers.

The results of the current study are in agreement with the findings of Knight (2010) who noted that men and women who are imprisoned are likely to face substantial challenges in maintaining their family relationships both in intimacy and parenting. It is challenging to carry out intimate relationships from prison as a result of barriers of contact and communication. Consequently, this nature of separation due to incarceration leads to unique stressors on the male and female inmates. According to (Kingi, 2000) the negative effects of restrictive regulations accumulate over time resulting in women serving long prison sentences, tending to have the greatest damage done to their family relationships.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

The study intended to find out the influence of life incarceration on the psychosocial well-being of life incarcerated inmates by comparing the male and the female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The study had one independent variable; life incarceration and two dependent variables: psychological well-being and social relationships. The study was guided by four objectives and four hypotheses, which were drawn from the objectives of the study. The hypotheses were tested at  $\alpha=0.05$  level of significance using regression and correlation analysis. The necessary data was collected from the male and female life imprisoned inmates, constables and prison counsellors through questionnaires and an interview schedule respectively. This was carried out in selected prisons in Kenya where life-incarcerated inmates are detained. This chapter therefore presents the summary of the main findings of the study, conclusions and recommendations. The suggestions for further research are also included in the chapter.

#### 5.2. Summary

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The study established that life incarceration influenced inmates' psychological well-being in the areas of deprivation, stress, personality change identity loss and trauma. The inmates felt that they were losing the best years of life in prison and that their life was being wasted. The aspect of having stressful experiences as lifers was highly rated and majority of the inmates feared losing their mental health due to the prison experience. The life incarcerated inmates also had the highest percentage inmates shocked, when they learnt they had been life imprisoned. From the interviews, the study showed that the inmates were traumatized by the episodes in prison, such as violence, total lock up in the cells at night and lack of contact with the outside world. This resulted in a sense of hopelessness, bitterness and regrets. The study further reveals that there is statistically significant positive linear relationship between life imprisonment and psychological well-being of inmates with a regression coefficient=1.081. It thus implies that life incarceration contributes significantly towards psychological well-being of inmates.

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of inmates in selected prisons in Kenya. The study found out that inmates' social relationships were influenced in the areas related to family relationships, withdrawal, social isolation among lifers, inter-prisoner relationships and constable-prisoner relationship. Majority of the inmates consented to strongly missing their family members, however, there was very little to be done to reunite with them due to the indeterminate imprisonment. Additionally, most of the inmates had been deserted or rejected by their family members. Most of the inmates (89.8%) also suffered and emotionally disturbed for being separated from their friends. The other areas of concern included lack of control over their day-to-day lives, poor relationships with prisoners serving other prison sentences and verbal and physical threats by the prison constables. The open ended questions revealed that inmates also lived in fear, anxiety and suspicion especially of the short-term inmates. This results further showed a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life incarceration and social relationships of inmates, with a regression coefficient=1.033.

The third objective of the study was to establish whether there existed differences in the influence of life incarceration on the psychological well-being of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The study established that the male and female lifers experienced the influence of life incarceration on their psychological well-being differently. Both male and female lifers acknowledged that they were experiencing stress as a result of life incarceration. On the other hand, more female lifers found it difficult to cope with the idea of being a life imprisoned than the male lifers. Most of the female lifers lost their self-esteem and developed a feeling of rejection. Fewer female inmates, however, witnessed violent incidents during their life imprisonment period than their male counterparts. This tendency points to the notion that although the lifers were experiencing mental disturbances due to diverse experiences encountered in prison as lifers, the male lifers had a greater representation in percentage than their counterparts. From the open-ended questions, the practice of conducting personal search while stripped naked was identified as causing psychological disturbance among the female lifers. It was perceived as an act of degradation, therefore, lowering their self-esteem. The results indicate that males are more affected in deprivation as an aspect of psychological well-being, than their female counterparts.

The fourth objective of the study was to establish whether there exist differences in the influence of life incarceration on the social relationships of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya. The results show that both male and female lifers acknowledged that their family relationships were influenced by life incarceration. More male than female lifers lost interest in relating with other prisoners who were not lifers, preferring to keep to themselves. Life incarceration had made them create mutual friendship among themselves in terms of sharing ideas, opting to do away with crimes and accepting the situation they had found themselves in. Male lifers also admitted that life imprisonment experience had enhanced their ability to select good friends who were of good understanding and had already reformed. Therefore, life incarceration had led some lifers to discover how to cope with different social relationships and bonding in times of difficulty as well. Consequently, there was constructive transformation and an aspect of positive change of attitude towards life. The study also established that there was no difference between male and female lifers with regard to social relationships.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of the research:

Life incarceration was detrimental to the inmates' psychological well-being due to its indeterminate nature, creating a sense of hopelessness and desolation which were overwhelming to the inmates. This was aggravated by the unpleasant environment in which the inmates operated which adversely exerted pressure on the mental and emotional processes of the inmates. This in the long run inhibited the potential for the inmates to realize reform and rehabilitation, ending up in emotional pain and psychological distress, anxiety and dejection.

The study found out that the inmates social relationships were acutely disrupted leaving majority of the inmates without a sense of belonging and no family attachment. The separation from friends was a cause of disturbance as the inmates felt abandoned, and found it difficult to adjust to the new social set-up as inmates for lack of appropriate socialization. Majority of the inmates lived in isolation, withdrawal, rejection by inmates serving shorter prison terms and had a strained relationship with the prison constables. It is necessary to link up the lifer with all relevant social systems to enhance healthy social forums for the inmates.

The study established that the experience of life incarceration was not homogenous for the male and female lifers. Consequently, the psychological well-being of the female lifers is more highly influenced by life incarceration than their male counterparts, except in the case of deprivation; more male lifers were affected in comparison to the female lifers. The current research revealed a statistically significant positive linear relationship between life incarceration and psychological well-being of male and female inmates. The life imprisonment had influenced the inmates' psychological well-being in areas comprising: deprivation, loss of identity and personality change. Therefore, there is need to deal with the lifers with close reference to their gender so as to inject psychological health to the individual inmate.

The study led to the conclusion that life incarceration significantly affected social relationships of the male and female inmates, and that based on gender, they had nearly similar experiences, as life prisoners. The influence as a result of indeterminate imprisonment was in the areas inclusive of family, withdrawal and social isolation. Male and female inmates had no interest in relating with other prisoners who were not lifers, and they felt ashamed for having to serve a life imprisonment term. However, they refuted the notion of having no control over their day-to-day life on the account of being lifers. It is important that the gender aspect be considered when dealing with lifers so that relevant attention can be accorded to each individual group.

#### **5.4 Recommendation**

From the research findings, it is apparent that life incarceration has an influence on the psychological well-being and social relationships of the lifers. Some of the effects lead to emotional agony, trauma as well as rendering some of the social relationships dysfunctional. Consequently, based on established information, the following recommendations were made:

- i. The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government in collaboration with the Prisons Department should ensure that there are well-trained counsellors, to deal with the different experiences of the inmates causing any undesirable influence on their psychological well-being. This will facilitate behaviour change for the lifers as well as mental health which is desirable for holistic living.

- ii. There is need to create social groups and forums within the prison in order to facilitate social support for the lifers by inmates serving other prison terms as well as the prison constables. Appropriate connectivity between the inmates and their families/society needs to be established to uphold the linkage and combat social alienation as a result of the society's negative attitude towards lifers
- iii. The Prisons Department needs initiate programmes tailored specifically for the life incarcerated inmates; addressing issues of gender interest in order to tackle the gender based psychological challenges. By the nature of their indeterminate sentence, the lifers are a distinctive group of inmates and the nature of the life they are expected to lead requires programmes that will take care of their permanent existence in jail.
- iv. The Ministry Interior and Coordination of National Government needs to have frontage on matters related to human rights in relation to deprivations, segregation of male and female lifer, social isolation and freedom of association among the prisoners to enhance their social relationships. This will enhance the quality of socialization which is therapeutic and crucial for the male and female lifers' rehabilitation.

### **5.5. Suggestions for Further Research.**

Based on the findings of the study, it is important that further investigations be done and the following areas are suggested for the study:

- i. A study can be carried out on the psychological challenges faced by prison personnel in dealing with life imprisoned inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- ii. Coping mechanism of indeterminate inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya.
- iii. A study can be done on influence of prison environment and nature of incarceration on the inmates' social and emotional health. A comparative study of lifers and short-term inmates in selected prisons in Kenya.
- iv. A research can be carried out based on effectiveness of life incarceration as a mode of behaviour modification and self-actualization of inmates in prisons in Kenya.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Letter to Respondents

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student in the Faculty of Education, Chuka University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the **Life Incarceration and Psycho-Social Well-Being of Inmates: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Lifers in Selected Prisons in Kenya**. You have been selected to take part in this study. I would be grateful if you assist me by responding to the items in this questionnaire. You are not required to identify yourself. The information given on this paper will be treated as confidential and will be used for academic research purposes only. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Conny Kaari Kibaara  
(Researcher)

## Appendix 2: Questionnaire for the Life Incarcerated Inmates

### Part 1: Background Information

Please tick one response as appropriate

1. Gender            Male    (    )            Female    (    )
2. Age    30 years and below    (    )  
    31-40 years                    (    )  
    41-50 years                    (    )  
    51-60 years                    (    )  
    61 years and above        (    )
3. For how long have you been in prison? Below one year        (    )  
    1- 10 years                    (    )  
    11- 20 years                    (    )  
    20 years and above        (    )
4. Marital status: Single    (    )    Married    (    )    Widowed    (    )    Divorced    (    )
5. How many children do you have? None    (    )    1-3    (    )    4 or more    (    )
6. Highest level of education:
  - i.    Never attended school            (    )
  - ii.   Primary school level            (    )
  - iii.   Secondary school            (    )
  - iv.   College level            (    )
  - v.    University level            (    )
7. What did you do for a living before life incarceration?
  - i.    Casual worker            (    )
  - ii.   Self-employed            (    )
  - iii.   Private Sector            (    )
  - iv.   Government employee    (    )

**Any other occupation (specify)**

.....  
.....

## Part II: Inmates' Life Incarceration and Psychological Well-being

Below are some of the issues the life-incarcerated inmates are likely to experience while in prison.

### 8. (i) Issues related to Deprivation

Please tick only one appropriate response for the statements given below. They rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the five-point scale shown below.

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. I have been denied my total freedom as a lifer.					
2. I feel all my rights have been violated by being life imprisoned.					
3. Life imprisonment makes me feel like I have no future.					
4. I feel that my life is being wasted.					
5. I feel that I am losing the best years of my life.					
6. I wish I had more privacy as a lifer.					

### (ii) Stress related issues

The table below presents statements about your feelings and thoughts as a lifer. For each statement, choose a response from the given alternatives and put a **tick(✓)** appropriately.

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Being life imprisoned makes me feel sad and miserable.			
2. I have a feeling of hopelessness always at the thought of being life imprisoned.			
3. I have frequent crying spells in prison as a lifer			
4. I usually feel upset because of being life imprisoned.			
5. I have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned.			
6. I cannot cope with the thought of being a lifer.			

7. The thought of being a lifer makes me have sleepless nights.			
8. I usually have nightmares whenever I am asleep.			
9. Being a lifer makes me feel ashamed.			
10. I am worried how I will cope with life as a lifer.			
11. My experience in this prison as a lifer is stressful.			

**(iii) Loss of Identity**

The table below presents statements about you as a lifer. You are to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements using the five point scale shown below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SA))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	DS
1. I usually experience extreme bad temper after life imprisonment					
2. I find myself getting quite upset by minor issues since I was life imprisoned					
3. I find it difficult to do things I enjoyed doing before I was life imprisoned.					
4. Being referred to as a lifer has made me lose my self-worth as a person					
5. I feel I have been alienated from myself by being life imprisoned					
6. As a lifer-imprisoned inmate, I am afraid of losing my mental health					

Do you ever feel like you are no longer the person you were before you became a lifer?

.....

If the answer above is yes, what kind of a person have you become?

.....

.....

**(iv). Personality Change**

Please tick only one appropriate response for the statements given below. They rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the five-point scale shown below.

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. I have learnt to suppress my emotional reactions to events around me since I became a lifer.					
2. It is impossible to retain my behaviour as a life imprisoned inmate.					
3. I have been hardened by my experience in prison as a lifer.					
4. Being a lifer has made me develop a feeling of committing suicide.					
5. Being life imprisoned has made me to construct a new way of living.					
6. I have never positively adjusted to the idea of being in prison a lifetime.					

**(v) Issues Related to Trauma**

The statements below indicates some experiences the lifers have gone through and are likely to be causing mental disturbance to them while in prison. Please tick **TRUE** or **FALSE** as the case may be.

Statement	True	False
1. I was shocked when I learnt that I have been life imprisoned.		
2. I have been physically attacked in prison as a lifer.		
3. I have been sexually assaulted while in prison as a lifer.		
4. I have witnessed violent incidents during my life imprisonment period		
5. I remain distressed by the memories of violence which I have witnessed inprison as a lifer.		
6. I have been tortured while in prison as a lifer.		
7. I have witnessed people commit suicide in prison.		
8. Some lifers carry weapons in prison which makes me live in fear.		
9. I live in constant state of fear due to uncertainty of life as a lifer.		

a) Describe any other disturbing events /experiences you have encountered in prison as a lifer.

.....  
 .....  
**9. Part III: Inmates' Life Incarceration and Social Relationships.**

Below are some of the social issues the life-incarcerated inmates are likely to experience while in prison.

**(i). Issues Relating to Family Relationships**

The statements in the table below refer to your feelings and thoughts about your relationship with your family members. You are to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements using the five-point scale shown below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. My family members do not involve me in decision making since I became a lifer.					
2. I miss my family members very much.					
3. I am able to maintain meaningful contact with my family despite being life imprisoned.					
4. My relationship with family members before I became life imprisoned was warm and fulfilling.					
5. I no longer desire any contact with family members since life incarceration.					

**ii). Social Isolation**

The statements below indicate your feeling owing to separation from your previous social environment. Please tick **TRUE** or **FALSE** as the case may be.

Statement	True	False
1. I feel rejected by my friends after being life imprisoned		
2. As a lifer, I feel I have no sense of belonging.		
3. I have had a hard time adjusting to this new social set-up as a lifer		
4. I am worried about how I am described or referred to by my friends as a lifer.		
5. I am always disturbed for being separated from my friends		

**(iii). Withdrawal**

The statements in the table below refer to your feelings and opinion about your association with others. You are to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements using the five-point scale shown below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. like spending time alone in prison as a lifer					
2. I do not feel like being together with other inmates					
3. The prisoners do not seem to understand me at any one time					
4. I have no control over my day-to-day life as a lifer					

**(iv). Inter-Prisoner Relationship**

The statements below indicate your value for other lifers' involvement in your life. Please tick **TRUE** or **FALSE** as the case may be.

Statement	True	False
1. I consider having any friends among the inmates a very difficult thing.		
2. I have no interest in relating with other prisoners as a lifer.		
3. I do not like discussing my issues with any other inmate in prison.		
4. I feel safe from being bullied by other inmates in prison.		

**(v).Lifer-Warden Relationship**

The table below presents statements about your feelings and thoughts towards the prison constables. For each statement, choose a response from the given alternatives and put a tick ( ) appropriately.

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. The prison constables are friendly and social to me.			
2. I can easily share my issues and feelings with the constables.			
3. I feel relaxed in the presence of the constables.			
4. The guards have mistreated me.			



5. The guards use threatening and aggressive verbal strategies against the lifers.			
--	--	--	--

11. How has life imprisonment affected your relationship with other people within the prison?

.....

.....

.....

How has life imprisonment affected your relationship with people outside the prison?

.....

.....

.....

**Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the Prison Constables.**

**Part 1: Background Information**

**Please tick one response as appropriate**

1. For how long have you worked as a prison warden?

- Below one year           ( )
- 1- 10 years               ( )
- 11- 20 years             ( )
- 20 years and above      ( )

2. Highest level of education:

- i. Never attended school           ( )
- ii. Primary school level           ( )
- iii. Secondary school               ( )
- iv. College level                   ( )
- v. University level                 ( )

**Other qualifications specify**.....  
 .....

3. What are some of the duties and responsibilities you have towards the life-incarcerated inmates? **Please specify**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Part II: Inmates' Life Incarceration and Psychological Well-being.**

**4. (i) Stress related issues**

The table below presents statements about your feelings and thoughts as a lifer. For each statement, choose a response from the given alternatives and put a **tick(√)** appropriately.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. Lifers have a feeling of hopelessness at the thought of being life imprisoned.			

2. Lifers have frequent crying spells while in prison.			
3. Lifers have felt nervous and anxious for being life imprisoned.			
4. The life-imprisoned inmates find it difficult to cope with the thought of being a lifer.			
5. The lifers are worried about how they will cope with life in prison as lifers.			
6. The experience of lifers in this prison seems stressful.			

**(ii) Issues related to Deprivation**

Please tick only one appropriate response for the statements given below. They rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the five-point scale shown below.

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SA))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Lifers feel that most of their rights have been violated by being life imprisoned.					
2. Lifers express a feeling of having no future while in prison.					
3. Lifers feel that their life is being wasted in prison.					
4. Lifers feel that they are losing the best years of their life as prisoners.					
5. Inmates have no control over their day-to-day life as lifers.					
6. Lifers wish they had more privacy during their sentence.					

**(iii) Personality Change**

Please tick only one appropriate response for the statements given below. They rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the five-point scale shown below.

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SA))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. Inmates have learnt to suppress their emotional reactions to events around them since they became lifers					
2. Lifers have been hardened by the experience in prison as lifers.					

3. Being life imprisoned makes lifers come up with a new way of living.					
4. Being a lifer has made inmates develop a feeling of committing suicide					

**(iv). Issues Related to Trauma**

- a) Is there any **disturbing** incident /experience the lifers have encountered in prison due to the nature of their sentence?

.....

If your answer above is yes, describe the experience.

.....  
 .....

**(v) Loss of Identity**

The table below presents statements about you as a lifer. You are to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements using the five point scale shown below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SA))

Statement	SA	A	U	D	DS
1. Being referred to as lifers has made the inmates lose their self-worth as persons.					
2. Lifers feel they have no sense of belonging.					
3. Lifers are worried about how they are described or referred to in prison.					
4. Lifers are afraid of losing their mental health in prison.					

Do the lifers ever feel like they are no longer the persons they were before they became lifers? .....

If the answer above is yes, how have they changed?.....  
 .....

How would you describe the lifers' character in terms of self-value?

.....  
 .....  
**5. Part III: inmates' life incarceration and social relationships**

**(i). Issues Relating to Family Relationships**

The statements in the table below refer to the lifers' feelings and thoughts about their relationship with their family members. You are to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the statements using the five-point scale shown below. Tick (✓) the appropriate response

(Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD))

1. Lifers feel rejected by their family members after being life imprisoned.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2. Lifers express lack of being involved in decision making by family members since they became a lifer.					
3. Lifers confess missing their family members very much.					
4. Lifers are able to maintain meaningful contact with their family despite being life imprisoned.					
5. Lifers lament the loss of warm and fulfilling family relationship since they became life imprisoned.					
6. Inmates no longer desire any contact with their family members since life incarceration.					

**ii) Withdrawal and Isolation**

The statements below indicate your view of relationships among the lifers. Please tick **TRUE** or **FALSE** as the case may be.

Statement	True	False
1. Lifers see no need to love others since life imprisonment.		
2. Inmates feel no need to be loved as a life sentenced prisoner.		
3. Most lifers are never happy in the company of other inmates.		
4. Lifers do not like discussing their issues with any other inmate in prison.		
5. Lifers fear being bullied by other inmates in prison.		

**iii).Warden-Prisoner Relationship**

i) How would you describe the relationship between the prison constables and the life-incarcerated inmates?

ii) How would you rate the lifers' willingness to share their experiences with the prison constables?

.....  
.....

iii) What are some of the issues that the lifers are eager to disclose to you as a prison warden?

.....  
.....  
.....

#### Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for Prison Counsellors

The information that you will provide in the interview will be kept as confidential.

#### SECTION B: Life Incarceration and Inmates' Psychological Well-being

	CATEGORY	PROBS
(i)	Are there any cases of deprivation among the lifers?	? 1. Describe any restrictions given to the lifers. 2. Comment on the freedom allowed to life-incarcerated inmates. 3. What is the feeling of the lifers concerning personal space?
(ii)	Does life-incarceration cause stress to lifers?	1. Comment on the lifers' feelings and thoughts about spending the whole of their life in prison. 2. Describe the lifers' ability to cope with life in prison. 3. What aspects related to mental distress do the inmates complain about
(iii)	Does life imprisonment lead to loss of identity of the lifers?	1. Do the lifers have an opportunity of positive self-development? 2. Are there any cases of regression/ deterioration among the lifers? 3. How do the lifers adjust to the prison environment? 4. Comment on the issue of self-alienation among the lifers.
(iv)	Do lifers experience Personality/Character change as the imprisonment term progresses?	1. Are there any changes noticed in lifers' personality as the sentence progresses? Comment. 2. What is your observation about inmates' self-worth as they serve their term? 3. Do the lifers register any behaviour change while in prison? Give examples. 4. Describe the aspect of adjusting to prison life for the lifers.
(v)	Is there any relationship between life imprisonment and trauma?	1. What feelings do the lifers harbour at the thought of spending their whole life in prison? 2. Do the lifers express any form of fear or uncertainty in relation to their prison term? 3. Comment on the issues that are likely to cause psychological disturbance to the lifers.

#### SECTION C: Life Incarceration and Inmates' Social Relationships

	CATEGORY	PROBS
(i)	Is there any effect of life imprisonment on the lifers' relationship with their family members?	1. Describe the rapport between the lifers and their family members. 2. What do the lifers feel about the prolonged separation from family members 3. What is the lifers longing in relation to family ties?
(ii)	Is there any relationship between life imprisonment	1. Do the lifers prefer resigning themselves to their individual environment

	and inmates' Social Isolation?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Are there lifers who find comfort in social disconnection?</li> <li>3. Describe the lifers in relation to social trust within and out of prison.</li> <li>4. Do lifers retain initial social groups throughout the jail term?</li> </ol>
(iii)	Life imprisonment in relation to withdrawal/reserve/solitary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do the lifers keep their issues to themselves?</li> <li>2. Comment on the aspect of suspicion among the inmates.</li> <li>3. Do the lifers enjoy doing communal work together?</li> <li>4. Describe the social environment of the life-imprisoned inmates</li> </ol>
(iv)	How would you describe the Inter-prisoner rapport amongst lifers?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do life-imprisoned inmates relate with each other in prison?</li> <li>2. What feelings do lifers harbour towards each other?</li> <li>3. Do the lifers support each other in case of a crisis?</li> <li>4. Comment on the aspect of bullying amongst the lifers.</li> </ol>
(v)	Effect of life imprisonment on the Lifer-warden relationship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How do the lifers interact with the constables?</li> <li>2. How do the lifers conduct themselves in the presence of the constables?</li> <li>3. Do the lifers confine in the constables?</li> <li>4. Are there times when it becomes necessary for constables to exercise physical coercion or verbal intimidation to lifers?</li> </ol>



## Appendix 5: Chuka University Ethics Review Letter

CHUKA

Telephones: 020 2310512  
020 2310518



UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 109  
Chuka

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

---

Our Ref: CU/IERC/NCST/18/8

6<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION  
P.O. BOX 30623-00100  
NAIROBI**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE AND AUTHORIZATION FOR CONNY KAARI  
KIBAARA .REG NO ED16/22583**


The above matter refers:

The Institutional Ethics Review Committee of Chuka University met and reviewed the above PHD Research Proposal titled **Effect of Life Incarceration on Psychological Well- being and Social Relationship of Inmates: a Comparative Study of Male and Female Lifers in Selected Prisons in Kenya** The Supervisors are **Dr. Veronica K. Nyaga, Dr. Beatrice M. Mburugu and Dr. Hillary Barchok**

The committee recommended that after candidate amends the issues highlighted in the Attached research clearance and authorization check list, the permit be issued.

Attached please find copies of the minutes, research clearance and authorization check list for your perusal. Kindly assist the student get the research permit.

Yours faithfully,

  
Prof. Adiel Magana

**CHAIR  
INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

cc: BPGS

## Appendix 6: NACOSTI Research Authorization



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 3310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/29226/24884**

Date: **12<sup>th</sup> March, 2019**

Conny Kaari Kaaria  
Chuka University,  
P. O. Box 109-60400  
**CHUKA.**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationships of inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **selected Counties** for the period ending **11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education of the selected Counties** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioners  
Selected Counties.

The County Directors of Education  
Selected Counties.

Appendix 7: Commissioner General of Prisons

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

KENYA PRISONS SERVICE

Telegrams: "COMPRISONS", Nairobi  
Telephone: +254022722900-6  
Email: Comprisons@yahoo.com  
When replying please quote



PRISONS HEADQUARTERS  
P.O. BOX 30175-00100  
NAIROBI



REF: PRIS 1/112 VOL XIX/4

15<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Conny Kaari Kibaara  
P.O. Box 3-60400  
**CHUKA**



Does please assist her

SP Jackie to note p. 1 & 2 A.

**RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

We acknowledge receipt of your letter requesting for rescheduling the authorization to collect information about the population size of lifers and conduct research titled **"Impact of life imprisonment on psychological well-being and social relationships: a comparative study among male and female inmate in prisons in Kenya"**

Target stations: Langata women Naivasha prison  
Nyeri priso Kisumu main prison

This is to inform you that your request to reschedule your research period from **February 2016** to **February 2019** has been approved and will run from 18<sup>th</sup> Monday 2019 for 3 months. You are expected to adhere to Prisons rules and regulations during your attachment period. You are also required to provide the Prisons headquarters training section with a copy of your final report at the end of your programme.

By a copy of this letter, the officers in charge of the target institutions are requested to accord you the necessary assistance.

**J. K. NKIRIA, MBS (SDCP/A)**  
**FOR: COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF PRISONS**



- Cc.
- 1. Officer in Charge Langata women
  - 2. Officer in Charge Naivasha prison
  - 3. Officer in Charge Nyeri prison
  - 4. Officer in Charge Kisumu main prison





## Appendix 8: Regional Co-Ordinator of Education- Nairobi



Republic of Kenya

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

### STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Nairobi  
Telephone; Nairobi 020 2453699  
Email: [rcenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:rcenairobi@gmail.com)  
[cdenairobi@gmail.com](mailto:cdenairobi@gmail.com)

REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI REGION  
NYAYO HOUSE  
P.O. Box 74629 – 00200  
NAIROBI

When replying please quote

Ref: RCE/NRB/RESEARCH/1/64/VOLI

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

Conny Kaari Kaaria  
Chukka University  
P. O. Box 109-60400  
CHUKA

#### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We are in receipt of a letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on "*Effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationships of inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya*".

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 as indicated in the request letter.

Kindly inform the Sub County Director of Education of the Sub County you intend to visit.

  
15 FEB 2019  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI

**JAMES KIMOTHO**  
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION  
NAIROBI

Copy to: Director General/CEO  
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
NAIROBI

## Appendix 9: County Commissioner – Nakuru



### **THE PRESIDENCY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

Telegram: "DISTRICTER" Nakuru  
Telephone: Nakuru 051-2212515  
When replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
NAKURU COUNTY  
P.O. BOX 81  
NAKURU.

Ref No. CC. SR . EDU/12/1/2 VOL.IV/66

9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019

The Deputy County Commissioner  
NAIVASHA SUB COUNTY

#### **RE:- RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – CONNY KAARI KAARIA**

The above named student from Chuka University has been authorized to carry out research on **"effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationship; of inmates; A comparative study of male and female lifers"** in Naivasha Sub County in Nakuru County for a period ending 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

Please accord her all the necessary support to facilitate the success of her research.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Kichwen'.

**John Kichwen**  
**FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER**  
**NAKURU COUNTY**

## Appendix 10: County Director of Education- Nakuru

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING OF BASIC EDUCATION

Telegrams: "EDUCATION",  
Telephone: 051-2216917  
When replying please quote  
Email: cdenakurucounty@gmail.com  
Ref.CDE/NKU/GEN/4/1/21/VOL.IX/60



COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
NAKURU COUNTY  
P. O. BOX 259,  
NAKURU.

9<sup>th</sup> April, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - CONNY KAARI KAARIA**  
**PERMIT NO. NACOSTI/P/18/29226/24884**

Reference is made to letter NACOSTI/ P/18/29226/24884 dated 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2019.

Authority is hereby granted to the above named to carry out research on "*Effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationships of inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Nakuru County - Kenya,*" for a period ending 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

For: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
NAKURU COUNTY

**G. KIMANI**  
**FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**  
**NAKURU COUNTY**

Copy to:

✓ Chuka University  
P. O. Box 109-60400  
CHUKA



## Appendix 11: County Commissioner - Nyeri



**THE PRESIDENCY  
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL  
GOVERNMENT**

Telephone: 061 2030619/20  
Fax: 061 2032089  
E-mail: nyericountycommissioner@yahoo.com  
When replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
NYERI COUNTY  
P.O. Box 33-10100  
NYERI

**REF: NYC/ADM I/57 VOL. VI/151**

**27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019**

Conny Kaari Kaaria  
Chuka University  
P.O. Box 109-60400  
**NAIROBI**

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Reference is made to your letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 on the above subject.

Approval is hereby granted to carry out a research on ***“Effect of Life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationships of inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in Nyeri Prison”***.

The period of study ends on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

  
M. Kiama  
For: County Commissioner  
**NYERI COUNTY**

## Appendix 12: County Director of Education-Nyeri County



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

E-Mail –centralpde@gmail.com  
Telephone: Nyeri (061) 2030619  
When replying please quote

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
P.O. Box 80 - 10100,  
NYERI

CDE/NYI/GEN/23/VOL.3/34

27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

Conny Kaari Kaaria  
Chuka University,  
P.O. Box 109-60400  
CHUKA

#### RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to Secretary National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation letter Ref. NACOSTI/P/18/29226/24884 of 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 on the above subject.

Kindly note that you have been authorized to undertake the research on *“Effect of life incarceration on psychological well-being and social relationships of inmates: A comparative study of male and female lifers in selected prisons in Kenya”* for a period ending 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Obiero J.O.', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**OBIERO J.O.**

**COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**NYERI**

c.c.

National Commission for Science  
Technology and Innovation,  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI