

Prevalence of Insecure Attachment Styles in Kenyan Prisons and Associated Social Demographic Characteristics of Inmates

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Abstract

Attachment is about the emotional bond between caregivers and infants which has significant implications on adult interaction. When attachment is insecure it has been found to predict criminal behaviour, yet studies have not focused on Kenyan prisons' inmates. This study sought to establish the prevalence of insecure attachment styles among prison inmates and investigated the relationship between their social demographic characteristics and the insecure attachment styles at Shimo la Tewa Prison in Kenya. The study employed a correlational research design with a target population of 2,240 inmates, from which a sample of 237 inmates was selected using purposive sampling. The findings revealed a high prevalence of insecure attachment styles, with 148 inmates (62.45%) showing elevated anxiety attachment scores and 125 inmates (52.74%) demonstrating high avoidance attachment patterns. The social demographic analysis showed a predominantly male population (86.9%), with the largest age group being 25-34 years (34.30%). Most inmates (58.2%) had only primary education, were Christian (63.7%), and 46.8% were married. Statistical analysis revealed significant relationships between insecure attachment styles and both marital status ($\chi^2 = 186.780$, $p=0.001$) and education level ($\chi^2 = 72.529$, $p=0.029$), while no significant relationships were found with gender, age, or religion. The study concludes that understanding the relationship between social demographic characteristics and insecure attachment styles is crucial for developing effective rehabilitation programs in correctional facilities. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions that consider both attachment patterns and demographic factors, particularly focusing on education and relationship support. Recommendations include implementing comprehensive attachment-focused interventions, enhancing educational programs, and developing specialized support systems that address the unique needs of inmates based on their demographic characteristics and attachment styles. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on attachment theory in correctional settings and provide practical insights for improving rehabilitation outcomes in Kenyan prisons.

Key Words: Insecure attachment, Prisons, demographics of inmates

Introduction and Background

Attachment is described as a strong emotional attachment or connection that a baby develops with their primary caregivers, usually their mother (Bowlby, 1969). According to Karbowa-Plowens (2019), this theory is foundational in explaining personality development, behavior, and human relationships from infancy through adulthood. A child's internal schema of the world is developed through the reciprocal and interpersonal interaction that exists between the child and their caregiver, according to Bowlby (1969). Gold (2011), advancing the attachment theory postulates that children who create positive and healthy working models can use these models to locate new attachment figures that are secure and responsive. On the other hand, children who don't feel a connection to their caregivers grow up with internal models that make them believe that people are unreliable, apathetic, and careless. This can result in a variety of negative adult behaviors (Bowlby, 1969). According to Laible (2007), social behaviors that improve emotional awareness, empathy, and positive expressiveness while decreasing negative expressiveness are fostered by secure attachment during childhood. The lack of proper formation of the bond between mother and children would lead to the emergence of insecure attachment. Insecure attachment is described as a poor emotional bond between a primary caregiver and the child due to less consistent and unreliable caregiving (Kadir & Bifulco, 2016). Insecure attachment styles, such as avoidant, anxious, and disorganized attachments, have been linked to externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems. Externalizing behaviors, including aggression, defiance, and hyperactivity, tend to disrupt social interactions and are often directed outward. Internalizing behaviors, such as anxiety, withdrawal, and physical health complaints, affect the individual internally and may result in depressive or anxious tendencies (Tandon et al, 2009). These patterns often emerge in children with weak attachment bonds, highlighting deficiencies in empathy, emotional awareness, and concern. Thus, the need for this study to establish the ways in which insecure attachment may be linked to criminal behaviour, more so as seen through the lens of individual demographic characteristics.

Within prison populations, the prevalence of insecure attachment styles is notable, reflecting the impact of early childhood experiences on adult behavior. These attachment styles often serve as underlying factors in the development of maladaptive schemas, which mediate between insecure attachment and emotional problems (Welka, 2021). Such schemas arise from a lack of secure, stable caregiving and interfere with the individual's ability to regulate emotions

effectively. Consequently, individuals with insecure attachment style may exhibit behaviors that manifest in rule-breaking or aggression, aligning with the characteristics of antisocial personality disorder. In prisons, where a high percentage of inmates demonstrate antisocial tendencies, insecure attachment serves as a potential explanatory framework for these behaviors.

The multigenerational transmission of insecure attachment continues to persist, despite its profound and often devastating impact on individuals' lives. As Francois Mauriac insightfully expressed, "*We are moulded and remoulded by those who have loved us; and though the love may pass, we are nevertheless their work, for good or ill*" (Mauriac, 1952). This highlights the lasting influence of early caregiving, for better or worse. Many parents, however, appear unaware of how their caregiving practices can foster insecure attachment styles in their children, potentially setting the stage for criminal behavior later in life.

John Bowlby (1984) proposed that criminal violence might stem from dysfunctions within the attachment system, and Schimmenti (2014) supported this by noting that individuals with insecure attachment styles are more likely to engage in violent behavior compared to securely attached individuals. Additionally, Martens (2011) examined infamous criminals like Jeffrey Lionel Dahmer, who experienced significant social rejection, neglect, and isolation, contributing to an insecure attachment and subsequent violent acts.

With this, children might not properly develop some aspects of social behavior such as emotional awareness, empathy and positive expression and concern. Without proper development of such, children have poor emotional control which leads to a broad range of problems at a later age. According to Welka (2021), maladaptive schemas act as mediators between insecure emotional awareness and subsequent emotional problems. These maladaptive schemas develop early in life when a secure attachment with the primary caregiver is not established. This lack of secure attachment hinders the individual's ability to regulate emotions and properly form emotional connections with parents and peers (Welka, 2021). Empathy and concern are key elements of behavior control and without these elements, these children as adults would disregard the rules which may lead to violation of people and property which is regarded as criminal behavior. Without proper cultivation of positive expression and emotional awareness may lead to internalizing and externalizing problem behavior.

Externalizing problem behaviors are maladaptive actions directed toward an individual's environment, such as aggression, defiance, hyperactivity, and other behaviors that disrupt social interactions and external surroundings (Krueger et al., 2005). Internalizing problem behaviors are controlled actions directed inward, creating difficulties for the individual experiencing them, such as depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and somatic disorders, which reflect internal emotional struggles (Tandon et al., 2009). Ambivalent and avoidant attachment styles have been linked to internalizing problems (De Santis et al., 2019), while disorganized attachment style has been associated with externalizing problems (Forslund, 2018).

According to Laible (2007), empathy, emotional awareness, positive expressiveness and concern are the fundamentals of social behavior and without these elements it would result to opposite which is antisocial behavior. Antisocial behavior can be described to a heterogeneous set of actions that are outside of norms, rules or laws of the social group in which the subject develops, such as physical aggression, theft and violation of societal rules (Acquival, et al., 2018).

In Kenya, there is a scarcity of research investigating the co-occurrence of insecure attachment and the types of crime committed by inmates. In addition, in prisons it is not known the association between insecure attachment styles and inmates' characteristics, gender for instance. This leaves a critical gap in understanding the potential root causes of criminal behavior. This study aims to shed light on how insecure attachment styles may predispose individuals to committing violent crime providing valuable insights for parents and society. By promoting secure attachment, it is hoped that society may foster healthier relational foundations, potentially reducing the prevalence of criminal behavior. Accordingly, this study was to determine the prevalence of insecure attachment styles in prison inmates in Kenya; in addition, to determine the correlations between the attachment styles and inmates education level, marital status, age, gender and religion.

A closer examination of attachment styles among inmates in Kenya can provide essential insights into the high rates of recidivism and ongoing patterns of criminal behavior observed among individuals with insecure attachments. By focusing on early attachment and addressing emotional deficiencies, rehabilitation programs can help reshape inmates' emotional and social perspectives, thus breaking the cycle of insecure attachment and antisocial personality tendencies. Attachment-based interventions, such as those promoting secure attachments and

emotional awareness, could enhance rehabilitation outcomes and support societal reintegration, reducing the likelihood of re-offending.

Close to this study is one by Samardzic et al. (2021) that examined the relationship between non-psychotic offenders and the attachment styles they developed in childhood. The findings revealed that offenders with a preoccupied attachment style (anxious ambivalent) scored high in anger, hostility, and aggression. According to the findings of the Samardzic study, attachment schemas established by individuals influence their behavior, and criminality is another manifestation of behavior often rooted in aggression and other emotions (Samardzic, 2021).

Additionally, Mora (2019) focused on understanding the attachment styles of sexual offenders aiming to determine if there was a connection between attachment styles and the mentalization of sexual offenders. The study found that insecure attachment styles were common among sexual offenders, who also exhibited resentment towards their parents and a perceived lack of autonomy during their upbringing.

Further, Schimmenti (2014) conducted research on Italian inmates, analyzing the connection between psychopathy and attachment styles among violent offenders. The study involved inmates with the highest scores on the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R) and used a survey to assess childhood experiences, current representations, and attachment styles. The results indicated that severe childhood abuse and disorganized attachment were most prevalent among these inmates. Similar findings in a study seeking to investigate the connection between sexual offending, attachment types, and maltreatment throughout childhood found that early and protracted maltreatment was linked to later sexual offending, and the research indicated that childhood abuse was associated with the development of anxious and avoidant attachment patterns (Grady et al., 2023).

Based on the above arguments, this study aimed to establishing the prevalence of inmates with insecure attachment styles. Thereafter, sought to highlight the social demographic characteristics of the inmates and finally, analyse the relationship between these two variables among the prisoners at Shimo la Tewa Prison. The researchers aimed at exposing the situation among inmates in Kenyan prisons as available research is mainly done outside Africa.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design focusing on a target population of 2,240 inmates who included adult male and female but excluding juveniles from Shimo la Tewa Maximum and Shimo la Tewa Women's Prisons in Mombasa. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a representative sample size of 325 inmates, comprising 285 males and 40 females, chosen to ensure understanding of the study and psychological assessments. This figure was arrived at by using the Yamane (1967),

$$n = N / 1 + Ne^2$$

The formula, 'n' is the appropriate sample size, 'N' is the target population and 'e' is the desired significance level. To make the selected sample manageable for the study, a 5 % significance level.

$$N = 1740 / 1 + 1740(0.05)^2$$

$$N = 325$$

325 participants.

Since the number of males is 1600 and females is 140, it is needed to show how the number of males and females has been picked for the study.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), if the accessible population is less than 10000, the researcher can select 10-30% percent to the representative sample size. The researcher chose the 30% percent of female sample which is;

$$30 \times 140 \div 100 = 42 \text{ female participants}$$

The number of male participants was arrived at by subtracting the female participants from the total sample size.

$$325 \text{ participants} - 42 \text{ participants} = 283 \text{ male participants}$$

Data was collected using the Adult Attachment Scale, which was developed in 1990, building upon the work of Hazen and Shaver (1987) and Levy and Davis (1988). The AAS consists of 18 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater agreement with each statement. Average scores were calculated for each dimension, with scores of 3 and above indicating the number of inmates with insecure attachment styles. The scale has demonstrated good reliability, with an internal consistency of 0.70. It also exhibits strong validity and cultural sensitivity, making it applicable across diverse groups. The tool was selected for this current study as it had been successfully used in a Kenyan study that had assessed the influence of childhood trauma on adulthood attachment styles within a prison population and was therefore relevant (Mwania, 2023).

The data was collected directly from the prisoners assessing 25–30 participants daily and completed the exercise in a period of one-month. Quantitative data were processed and analyzed using SPSS version 25 with correlation coefficients. Ethical considerations included securing informed consent from Daystar University-Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (DU-ISERC), National Commission for science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the prison authorities. Prisoner rights were protected through coded identifiers, and storing data securely. The study maintained rigorous ethical standards, emphasizing respect, confidentiality, and data integrity throughout the process.

Results

A remarkable 72.9% of the sample participated in the study, with 237 out of the 325 targeted participants successfully completing the questionnaires. This level of participation indicated that the research topic resonated with a significant portion of the inmate population at Shimo La Tewa Maximum Prison and Shimo la Tewa Women Prison. The discussions of the results included an analysis of the number of people with insecure attachment styles, highlighting variations across different social demographic characteristics. Additionally, the relationship between these social demographics and the prevalence of insecure attachment styles was explored, emphasizing key trends and associations.

Prevalence of Insecure Attachment Styles

To determine the number of inmates with insecure attachment styles, the study employed the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS), focusing on two key dimensions of attachment: Anxiety (Anxious attachment style) and Avoidance (Avoidant attachment style). Table 2 presents the number of inmates scoring below and above 3 for both the Anxiety and Avoidance dimensions, showing the actual count and percentage distribution across the entire sample of prison inmates.

Table 1: Prevalence of Insecure Attachment Styles

Category	Frequency	Percent
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Anxiety 3 and above	148	62.45
Anxiety 3 and below	89	37.55
Avoidance 3 and below	112	47.26
Avoidance 3 and above	125	52.74

The study employed an alternative scoring method that gives 2 attachment dimensions to assess insecure attachment styles among 237 prison inmates in Shimo la Tewa, focusing on two primary dimensions: anxiety (model of self) and avoidance (model of other). For the anxiety dimension, which reflects an individual's model of self in relationships, the study utilized items 2*, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12, with reverse scoring for item 2. The results revealed that 148 inmates (62.45%) scored 3 or above on the anxiety scale, while 89 inmates (37.55%) scored below 3. These numbers are particularly significant as they indicate that nearly two-thirds of the inmates exhibit a negative model of self, characterized by fears of rejection and abandonment.

The high number of inmates with anxiety-related attachment suggested widespread difficulties with self-worth and relationship security within the prison population.

The avoidance dimension, assessed through items 1*, 3, 6*, 7*, 8, 9, 13*, 14*, 15, 16, 17, and 18 (with asterisked items being reverse scored), showed that 125 inmates (52.74%) scored 3 and above. This dimension reflects the inmates' model of others in relationships, with high scores indicating a negative model characterized by discomfort with closeness and dependency. Indeed, this suggested that a significant portion of the prison population struggled with trusting others and maintaining emotional connections, potentially stemming from early life experiences of neglect, abuse, or inconsistent caregiving.

The distribution of attachment patterns reveals a complex interplay between anxiety and avoidance, with the higher number of anxious attachments (148 inmates) compared to avoidant attachments (125 inmates) suggesting that fears of rejection are more prevalent than complete emotional detachment. This nuanced understanding was made possible through the alternative scoring method, which allows for a dimensional approach rather than categorical classification. The method has identified that while 148 inmates struggle with anxiety-related issues and 125 with avoidance-related issues, there is likely significant overlap, indicating that many inmates may experience both challenges simultaneously, confirming insecure attachment. Were there some with both

These findings have crucial implications for rehabilitation programs within the prison system.

Social Demographic Characteristics

The social demographic characteristics presented in this section provides a comprehensive overview of the respondents' characteristics, offering valuable insights into the composition of the sample. The social demographic characteristics cover gender, age, education level, religion, and marital status. The study results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Social Demographic Characteristics

Type	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	206	86.9
	Female	31	13.1
Age	18-24 years	45	19.10%
	25-34 years	81	34.30%
	35-44 years	62	26.30%
	45-54 years	28	11.90%
	55 and above	20	8.40%
Level of Education	Primary school education	138	58.2
	Secondary education	70	29.5
	Tertiary education	23	9.7
Religion	Christian	151	63.7
	Muslim	78	32.9
	Traditionalists	1	0.4
Marital Status	Single	93	39.2
	Divorced	4	1.7
	Separated	26	11
	Married	111	46.8

The gender distribution among the 237 respondents showed a significant male predominance, with 206 males (86.9%) compared to 31 females (13.1%). This substantial gender disparity reflected typical prison population patterns and has important implications for rehabilitation program design. Studies have shown that males are more prone to engage in violent crimes and drug offenses, which are subject to increased policing and prosecution (Harmon et al., 2011). The correlation between female to male imprisonment rates is intricately associated with the ratio of female to male arrest rates for drug offenses (Harmon et al, 2011). Gender-specific

interventions may be necessary, particularly considering that the smaller female population might have different attachment-related needs and may require more specialized attention to ensure their unique challenges are adequately addressed within the correctional system.

Age distribution analysis revealed that young to middle-aged adults comprised the majority of the prison population. The largest group consists of 81 inmates (34.30%) aged 25-34 years, followed by 62 inmates (26.30%) aged 35-44 years, and 45 inmates (19.10%) aged 18-24 years. The smaller numbers in older age groups - 28 inmates (11.90%) aged 45-54 years and 20 inmates (8.40%) aged 55 and above - suggest that rehabilitation programs should particularly focus on younger inmates who have greater potential for behavioral change and social reintegration. This age distribution also implies a need for age-appropriate interventions that consider developmental stages and life experiences.

Educational levels among the inmates revealed concerning patterns, with 138 inmates (58.2%) having only primary education, 70 inmates (29.5%) with secondary education, and just 23 inmates (9.7%) with tertiary education. These numbers highlight a potential link between limited educational opportunities and incarceration, suggesting that rehabilitation programs should incorporate educational components. The high number of inmates with only primary education implies a need for basic skills training and educational support as part of the rehabilitation process, which could enhance their prospects for successful reintegration into society.

Religious affiliation shows a predominance of Christianity with 151 inmates (63.7%), followed by 78 Muslims (32.9%), and 1 Traditionalist (0.4%). These numbers suggest that faith-based approaches might be valuable in rehabilitation programs, as the high number of religiously affiliated inmates indicates potential receptiveness to spiritual or faith-integrated interventions. Religious organizations could be important partners in providing support services and moral guidance, though programs should be designed to be inclusive and respectful of different faith traditions.

Marital status data reveals that 111 inmates (46.8%) are married, 93 (39.2%) are single, 26 (11%) are separated, and 4 (1.7%) are divorced. The high number of married inmates suggests a need for family-oriented rehabilitation approaches that maintain and strengthen family bonds during incarceration. The significant number of single inmates (93) might benefit from programs focusing on relationship skills and healthy attachment formation. The presence of 30

inmates who are either separated or divorced indicates a need for support in dealing with relationship trauma and developing healthy relationship patterns. These marital status patterns have implications for visitation policies, family counseling services, and post-release support systems that could help maintain or rebuild family connections.

Relationship Between Social Demographic Characteristics and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles

The study examined the relationship between social demographic characteristics and the incidence of insecure attachment styles among prison inmates using chi-square analysis. This statistical approach aimed to determine whether factors such as gender, age, education level, religion, and marital status had significant associations with attachment patterns. Understanding these relationships is crucial for developing targeted interventions and rehabilitation programs that consider both demographic factors and attachment patterns. The results of this analysis provide valuable insights into how different demographic characteristics might influence or relate to the development and manifestation of insecure attachment styles within the prison population, as presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Relationship Between Social Demographic Characteristics and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles

			Value	Significance level (P value)
Gender and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles	Pearson Square	Chi-	47.020a	0.311
Age and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles	Pearson Square	Chi-	203.569a	0.180
Level of Education and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles	Pearson Square	Chi-	72.529a	0.029
Religion and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles	Pearson Square	Chi-	133.468a	0.376
Marital Status and Incidence of Insecure Attachment Styles	Pearson Square	Chi-	186.780a	0.001

The chi-square analysis revealed varying degrees of relationships between social demographic characteristics and insecure attachment styles among prison inmates. The results show a significant relationship between marital status and insecure attachment styles ($\chi^2 = 186.780$, $p = 0.001$). This association suggests that an inmate's attachment style substantially influences their marital status.

The analysis found no significant relationships between attachment styles and other demographic characteristics. Gender showed no significant association ($\chi^2 = 47.020$, $p = 0.311$), suggesting that attachment patterns develop similarly across gender lines. Age also showed no significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 203.569$, $p = 0.180$), indicating that attachment styles might be relatively stable across different age groups. Similarly, religion demonstrated no significant association ($\chi^2 = 133.468$, $p = 0.376$), suggesting that religious affiliation may not significantly influence attachment patterns in this population.

The significant relationships with marital status and education level suggest that interventions should particularly consider these factors when designing attachment-focused therapies. For instance, programs might need to be tailored differently for inmates with various marital experiences and educational backgrounds. The lack of significant relationships with other demographic factors suggests that certain aspects of attachment-focused interventions might be effectively implemented across different gender, age, and religious groups without substantial modification.

Discussion

The study's finding that most of the inmates demonstrated anxiety and avoidant attachment styles is borne witness by the numerous studies in this population. A study done by Hanzen et al., which showed that prison inmates scored higher on avoidant attachment style, and anxious attachment explained most of the variances in aggression in intimate relationships. The results are testament to the fact that attachment theory is of universal applicability and that cultural differences may not differently impact similar parental behaviour across diverse cultures. This seems to contradict findings that attachment does vary across cultures. The attachment theory has been criticized as culturally insensitive, in its attempt to show that attachment is identical in all cultures. Scholars have asserted that the theory was developed through the experiences of a Western middle-class population, concluding that empirical studies are required in non-western cultures and rural settings (Keller, 2012; Rothbaum, et al. 2000). This present study is an effort in filling this gap. Nevertheless, in support of these scholars, Bakaraki et. al (2024) in a mini-review of literature on cultural implications of the theory concluded that indeed there are cultural variations in how attachment presents. However, this is an issue far from being settled as other scholars have argued that the importance and ramifications of the mother/infant bond are universal, what differs is the cultural differences in mothers' responses to children, in a study on attachment among Arabian mother-child dyads (Salih et. al, 2023). That said, this

present study has managed to fall on the universality side yet calling for qualitative studies to establish the nuances of attachment in the African context. Indeed, the finding of prevalence among prison inmates has illustrated Bowlby's assertion that insecure attachment may be linked to criminal behaviour (Adshead & Moore, 2022).

Some notable findings on the social demographics of the prison population studied led to the conclusion that rehabilitation efforts could be focused on certain aspects to be effective. For instance, the age differentiation may suggest having corrective measures that bear in mind developmental stages of the inmates. In addition, the stark dominance by the male gender distribution may have implications on the uptake of rehabilitation efforts, which may include psychotherapeutic interventions, given the high level of insecure attachment among the inmates.

The study concludes that the social demographic characteristics of inmates at Shimo la Tewa Prison reveal significant patterns that warrant attention in rehabilitation programming. The gender distribution shows a stark male predominance (206 males, 86.9%), while age distribution concentrates in the young to middle-aged adult range, with the largest group (81 inmates, 34.30%) aged 25-34 years. Educational attainment is notably low, with 138 inmates (58.2%) having only primary education, suggesting limited access to educational opportunities. Religious affiliation shows a Christian majority (151 inmates, 63.7%), while marital status reveals that 111 inmates (46.8%) are married, with a significant proportion (93 inmates, 39.2%) being single. These demographic patterns highlight the need for targeted interventions that consider gender-specific needs, age-appropriate programming, educational support, and family-oriented rehabilitation approaches. Further, the concentration of inmates in younger age groups and low educational attainment suggests a critical need for educational and skill-building programs to enhance rehabilitation outcomes and reduce recidivism.

Two social demographic characteristics were significantly linked to insecure attachment styles. Marital status emerged as strongly correlated with insecure attachment patterns ($\chi^2 = 186.780$, $p=0.001$), suggesting that relationship experiences significantly influence how attachment styles play out. It is well known that the attachment style formed in infancy can change, based on an individual's experiences. This finding is in keeping with the ground breaking work of Hazan and Shaver (1987) when they proposed that romantic relationships are an attachment process; adult relationships were henceforth categorised into four attachment styles similar to Bowlby's infant attachment styles. It is significant in this prison sample that adult significant

interactions in marriage would be linked to insecure attachment. Educational level also showed a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 72.529$, $p=0.029$), indicating that academic achievement may play a role in attachment or vice versa. However, no significant relationships were found with gender ($\chi^2 = 47.020$, $p=0.311$), age ($\chi^2 = 203.569$, $p=0.180$), or religion ($\chi^2 = 133.468$, $p=0.376$), suggesting that these factors may not substantially influence attachment patterns in this population. These findings underscore the importance of considering marital status and educational background when designing attachment-focused interventions in correctional settings. The lack of significant relationships with other demographic factors suggests that certain aspects of attachment-based therapies could be effectively implemented across different gender, age, and religious groups without substantial modification, while special attention should be paid to relationship dynamics and educational components in rehabilitation programs. In this discussion, it's still not clear how the correlates interact with attachment styles. Is the insecure attachment style determining the age, marital status etc or does the age ...determine how the individual is attached? This needs to be clear before the article is published.

The study recommends that given the high number of inmates with insecure attachment styles (148 with anxiety and 125 with avoidance), comprehensive attachment-focused interventions should be implemented within the prison system. These interventions would include individual and group therapy sessions specifically designed to address attachment-related issues, trauma-informed care approaches, and emotional regulation training. The prison system should establish specialized counselling programs that focus on helping inmates understand and work through their attachment patterns, particularly addressing fears of rejection, abandonment, and difficulties with trust and intimacy. Additionally, peer support programs should be developed, utilizing the 89 inmates with lower anxiety scores and 112 with lower avoidance scores as potential peer mentors after appropriate training. Furthermore, family therapy sessions may be incorporated where possible to help inmates develop healthier attachment patterns and improve their ability to maintain meaningful relationships both during incarceration and after release.

In terms of the social demographic characteristics observed, targeted interventions may be developed that consider the specific needs of different demographic groups within the prison population. Given the high male population (206 males), gender-specific programs can be developed that address masculine norms and their impact on emotional expression and relationship building. Educational programs could be significantly enhanced, particularly

focusing on the 138 inmates with only primary education, including both basic education and vocational training opportunities. Age-appropriate interventions can be developed, with particular attention to the 81 inmates aged 25-34 years, focusing on life skills and career development. Religious-based counselling and support programs need to be made available, considering the large Christian population (151 inmates), while ensuring inclusivity for other faiths. The study also recommends developing specific support programs for both married (111 inmates) and single (93 inmates) individuals, focusing on relationship skills and family maintenance during incarceration. Additionally, the prison system may consider establishing partnerships with educational institutions and vocational training centers to provide opportunities for inmates to advance their education and acquire practical skills.

The study recommends that based on the significant relationships found between demographic characteristics and attachment styles, rehabilitation programs should be specifically tailored to address these connections. Given the strong correlation between marital status and insecure attachment ($p=0.001$), relationship counselling and family therapy programs need to be mandatory components of rehabilitation, with particular focus on maintaining and strengthening family bonds during incarceration. The significant relationship between education level and attachment styles ($p=0.029$) suggests the need for integrated educational-therapeutic programs that combine academic or vocational training with attachment-focused interventions. While gender, age, and religion showed no significant relationships with attachment styles, the study recommends maintaining inclusive, general attachment-focused programs across these demographic categories while concentrating resources on marital status and education-based interventions. The prison system may consider also implement regular monitoring and evaluation of these programs to assess their effectiveness in improving attachment patterns and reducing recidivism rates. Additionally, staff training programs should be developed to ensure prison personnel understand the importance of attachment styles in rehabilitation and can effectively support inmates through their recovery process. In addition, further studies need to be done in this population to enhance understanding of the significance of the relationships the results have demonstrated.

Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a high prevalence of insecure attachment in the Kenyan prison population, significantly associated with marital status and low education levels. Noteworthy is the fact that with targeted therapy, attachment styles can change towards secure attachment. Inmates can be helped this way as a prevention to repeating offenses. This is a particularly important fact given the gender and age demographic in this sample. The study found that majority of inmates are males and young adults. It behoves prison authorities to combine these two findings so that the prison population can be led to secure attachment which they will perpetuate in their families, thereby reducing their own propensity to crime and of their future generations. Indeed, interventions targeting the demographic characteristics in the context of the attachment styles found in this population have a high chance of changing attachment styles. This implies that an understanding of the attachment theory in the community and in the criminal justice system has the capacity to turn the tide of criminality in this country.

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