From Jails to Healing Lodges
Evaluating the Impact of Correctional Facilities on Offender Adaptation

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Abstract
The purpose of the present study is to compare three types of correctional facilities within the province of Saskatchewan (i.e., Provincial Jails, Community Training Residences, and the Aboriginal Spiritual Healing Lodge) in terms of their specific impact on offender’s perceptions and level of adaptation. Specifically, offenders residing in the three types of facilities were asked to participate in a structured interview that addressed six basic factors related to positive adaptation: environment, sense of community, cultural awareness, educational/vocational training, spirituality, and psychological impact. It was hypothesized that offenders housed in the Healing Lodge, where the focus is on traditional Aboriginal cultural and spiritual teachings, should report the most positive experiences. In addition, it was hypothesized that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders would perceive the Provincial Jail to be the least positive with regard to aiding in successful adaptation. As hypothesized, results indicate that the Healing Lodge and the Community Training Residences are perceived as being significantly more positive than Provincial Jail on a number of dimensions related to positive environmental adaptation. The implications of these findings are discussed with regard to their relationship to the development of more effective correctional environments.

Researchers have suggested that prolonged exposure to traditional control-limiting correctional environments may result in adverse physical and psychological reactions in individuals, especially with their ability to successfully adapt (see e.g., Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973; Haney & Zimbardo, 1998). It has been suggested that this adverse impact may be due to the fact that administrators and staff within traditional correctional environments typically focus on keeping offenders in custody, maintaining order, control, and discipline (Toch, 1977). Given this focus, other goals such as providing rehabilitative programming, counselling, and health care are often allocated to a secondary position when staff members are faced with security issues (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998). Subsequently, it may be argued that, within the confines of a traditional correctional environment, the special needs of individual offenders are often secondary to the main goal of maintaining safety and security.

In addition to the above, it has been suggested that the level of behavioural adaptation and degree of assimilation experienced by offenders is often dependent upon the type of correctional environment in which they are placed (Schmid & Jones, 1993). Zamble and Porporino (1988), for example, argue that the ability to successfully adapt and assimilate may result in more positive outcomes for offenders, and that this ability may be heavily influenced by the type of correctional environment the offender resides in. This idea is evidenced by Pugh (1994, p. 985) who suggests that, “It may be that correctional systems which provide incentives and opportunities for offenders to earn release and other privileges work best toward enhancing successful adaptation both in and out of prison”.

Clearly, each correctional facility provides a unique experience based on interactions between offenders and staff, interactions among offenders, and the
physical properties of the facility. Given the above, it may be argued that this unique atmosphere may have a considerable influence on the perceptions and experiences of the offenders residing there. Further, it may be suggested that the underlying group dynamics within each facility are directly related to whether this atmosphere exerts a positive or negative influence on each offender's experience of incarceration (Achtenberg, 2000).

The above research is particularly noteworthy given the recent Canadian correctional legislation embracing the principle of utilizing the least restrictive measures of confinement for reasons of fairness, practicality, and economy (Luciani, 2001). This legislation has led to the development and implementation of a wide range of alternative correctional environments in Canada. The Saskatchewan provincial correctional system provides a fertile opportunity to examine the effectiveness of various correctional environments on offender adaptation given that it employs three different types of facilities (Saskatchewan Justice, 2001). The first and most commonly employed type of facility are the Provincial Jails. This type of facility includes all of the aspects of a traditional, control-limited prison environment. The environment is typically more controlling of offenders, and the model of justice followed within this setting is more punitive in nature. Like traditional correctional environments, Provincial Jails are organised according to a fixed regime that focuses predominantly around issues of security maintenance (Haney & Zimbardo, 1998).

The second type of correctional facility currently provided by the Saskatchewan Department of Corrections and Public Safety are the Community Training Residences, where low to moderate risk offenders may be housed. A Community Training Residence allows offenders to pursue activities that address their needs through work, education, training or specialized treatment in a community-based setting. With an emphasis on more community-based models of restorative justice, the Community Training Residence provides offenders with both increased decision-making ability as well as increased levels of community re-integration.

Finally, the Saskatchewan Department of Corrections and Public Safety currently maintains a contract with the Prince Albert Grand Council for the operation of a Spiritual Healing Lodge that houses up to 20 provincially sentenced male offenders as well as 5 federally sentenced male offenders. The focus of the Healing Lodge program is on traditional Aboriginal spirituality and cultural practices. Offenders in this program are classified as low risk and are referred to as "relatives". Within the facility, emphasis is placed on spiritual and emotional healing and rehabilitation. It has been suggested that the Healing Lodge offers a more restorative approach to justice and also provides offenders with a more positive approach to decision-making and community re-integration (O'Byrne, 2002; Prairie Research Associates, 2001). One important difference between a Community Training Residence and the Healing Lodge is found in the emphasis on different aspects of rehabilitation — while the Community Training Residence tends to focus on employability, the Healing Lodge tends to focus on Aboriginal culture and spirituality. The Healing Lodge facility is staffed primarily by persons of Aboriginal descent, further promoting the ideals of cultural sensitivity and culturally-relevant programming for Aboriginal offenders.

Although there have been very few studies conducted on specific aspects of the Healing Lodge as a correctional facility, there seems to be the notion that "something is working" within this environment. Also, although there has been some comparison of different types of correctional facilities elsewhere (Yeboah, 2000), there has been a lack of research in this area within a Canadian context. As such, the primary purpose of this research is to investigate and document whether the experiences of adult male offenders residing at the Prince Albert Healing Lodge are significantly different from offenders housed in Provincial Jails or Community Training Residences. Specifically, it was hypothesized that residency in the Healing Lodge would positively impact offenders with regard to a number of psychological and spiritual aspects related to adaptation. The six factors examined included: environment, sense of community, cultural awareness, educational/vocational programming, spirituality, and psychological impact. These factors were conceptually selected through collaboration with corrections staff and administrators. In addition to examining differences between the three facility types, comparisons between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups were also carried out in order to examine the degree to which each facility might differentially impact cultural groups.

**Method**

**Participants**

A sample of 29 non-Aboriginal and 40 Aboriginal offenders was obtained with permission from the Saskatchewan Department of Corrections and Public
Safety, as well as the various facilities. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were recruited with assistance from facility staff members. Participation in the study was limited to those 18 years of age or older who were classified as low or minimum security risk and who resided at the facility for at least one month. It should be noted that a sample of non-Aboriginal offenders was not available from the Prince Albert Healing Lodge due to the fact that, to date, all residents of this facility have been Aboriginal.

**Measures**

A structured interview schedule was created to address the six identified factors believed related to the positive impact of the Healing Lodge on offender rehabilitation. Specifically, it was believed that the effect of residency at the Healing Lodge could best be evaluated by employing a number of protocols that would speak directly to six major conceptual factors. The specific protocols employed included the following:

**Demographic Information** — Participants were asked general questions about their age, security level, length of time spent in a correctional facility (of any type) or in open custody, length of current sentence, offence type (personal or property), and approximate number of previous incarcerations.

**Spirituality Self-Ratings** — Participants were asked to identify their current spiritual or religious beliefs. In addition, they were also asked to rate themselves on level of spiritual/religious attachment on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 representing not religious/spiritual and 5 representing very religious/spiritual.

**Cultural Awareness** — Participants were asked to self-identify as Aboriginal, Metis, or non-Aboriginal. Aboriginal offenders were then asked for further information about status and band membership. All participants were asked qualitative questions relating to number and type of Aboriginal languages spoken, cultural attachment, and participation in traditional Aboriginal cultural activities. In addition, all participants were asked to rate their sense of attachment to Aboriginal culture, the importance of guidance from Elders or other culturally specific spiritual leaders, and the importance of participation in cultural programming.

**Educational, Vocational, and Cultural Programs** — Participants were asked a number of open-ended questions relating to their perception of the availability of various programs at the facility they were currently residing in as well as the degree to which they were making use of these programs.

**Sense of Community** — Participants were asked to rate their perceived sense of community or group cohesion on a scale from 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating a greater sense of community. The scale consisted of four items with possible total scores ranging from 4 to 20 (for a discussion on the importance of community to rehabilitation see Pfeifer, 1999).

**General Environment Scale** — Participants were asked to rate the general environment within each facility on a scale of 1 to 5 with higher scores indicating a more positive perception of the environment. The scale consisted of ten items with total scores ranging from 10 to 50.

**Prison Environment Inventory** — The Prison Environment Inventory (PEI) (Wright, 1985) is an instrument designed to measure contextual properties of correctional environments that may influence an individual's behaviour. It is divided into eight subscales that are based on Toch's (1977) eight environmental concerns — privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, activity, and freedom. The short form of the PEI was used for the purposes of this study. A total of 48 items were rated on the basis of how frequently they are perceived to occur. Mean scores on the eight subscales range from one to four with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions of the environment. Initial assessments of the psychometric properties of the PEI have shown that it is an effective measure of correctional environments (Wright, 1985).

**Prison Problem Scale** — The Prison Problem Scale (PPS) (Zamble & Porporino, 1988) is a 40-item scale that measures the extent to which specific situations, or events, in a prison environment are perceived as problematic by offenders. Items are rated on a scale from 0 to 4 and possible total scores range from 0 to 160, with higher scores indicating a higher level of expressed concerns. These total scores may be an indication of the psychological aspect of poor adjustment to the correctional environment. Support for the validity and reliability of this scale has been demonstrated by subsequent research (see e.g., Zamble & Porporino, 1988).

**Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale** — The Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale (SIBS) (Hatch, Burg,
Naberhaus, & Hellmich, 1998) was designed to be widely applicable across religious traditions, to assess actions as well as beliefs, to address key components not addressed by other available measures, and to be easily administered and scored. The SIBS contains 26 items anchored on a 1 to 5 scale and possible total scores range from 26 to 130, with higher scores indicating higher levels of religious beliefs and activity. Initial analysis of the instrument indicates high levels of reliability and validity (see e.g., Hatch et al., 1998). In addition, the SIBS also demonstrates a high correlation with the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (see below) but has the advantages of a broader scope of application, use of terms that avoid cultural/religious bias, and an assessment of both beliefs and actions (Hatch et al., 1998).

**Spiritual Well-Being Scale** — The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982) was developed in order to measure the spiritual dimensions of quality of life and subjective well-being. In addition to the total scale score, the scale also provides two subscale scores: religious well-being, and existential well-being. Assessments of the SWBS indicate positive support for the reliability of the scale, as well as support for its validity (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991). The questionnaire consists of 20 items anchored on a scale of 1 to 6 and possible scores on each subscale range from 10 to 60, with higher scores indicating higher levels of religious and existential well-being. Research indicates that the SWBS is a good general index of well-being and may positively correlate with other standardized indicators of psychological well-being (Bufford et al., 1991). Furthermore, the availability of normative data for both religious and non-religious inmate samples facilitates the interpretation of group means and individual scores (Bufford et al., 1991).

**Responsibility and Self-Esteem Questionnaire** — The Responsibility and Self-Esteem Questionnaire (RSEQ) (Nair, 1994) documents attributions of responsibility and self-esteem and was initially developed for use with offender populations. The RSEQ consists of 25 items anchored on a scale from 1 to 5 and possible overall scores range from 25 to 125, with higher scores indicating more responsibility taking and higher self-esteem. Initial assessment has shown that the RSEQ demonstrates positive content and face validity (Nair, 1994).

**Prison Locus of Control Scale** — The Prison Locus of Control Scale (PLOCS) (Pugh, 1994) consists of 20 items that specifically measure locus of control orientation relating to a correctional environment. This measure is a particularly relevant one given the significant role that locus of control seems to play in the adjustment of prisoners in both the prison environment and the non-custodial environment upon release (Pugh, 1998). PLOCS items are anchored on a scale of 1 to 10 and the range of total scores is from 20 to 200 with lower scores indicating a more internal locus of control orientation that is indicative of better adaptive functioning (Pugh, 1994, 1998). Research supports both the reliability and validity of the PLOCS (Pugh 1992, 1994, 1998).

As discussed above, it was hypothesized that these measures would provide information with regard to the hypothesis that correctional facility type significantly impacts the perceptions of offenders in terms of their beliefs and attitudes toward their environment, sense of community, cultural awareness, educational/vocational opportunities, spirituality and psychological state.

**Results**

Analysis of the data garnered through the above measures indicates a number of significant findings related to the six factors of interest (i.e., environment, sense of community, cultural awareness, educational/vocational opportunities, spirituality and psychological impact). Results are presented below for each of these factors.

**Demographic Information**

In terms of racial grouping, analysis indicated that the Aboriginal group had a significantly higher number of incarcerations ($M = 7.4$) than the non-Aboriginal group ($M = 3.1$) [$t(65)=-3.6, p<.01$ (two-tailed)]. The Aboriginal group had also spent significantly more time in a secure custodial facility ($M = 62.9$ months) than the non-Aboriginal group ($M = 29.5$ months) [$t(66)=-2.2, p<.05$ (two-tailed)]. Aboriginal offenders were also more likely to be incarcerated for a personal offence (50%) while non-Aboriginal offenders were more likely to be incarcerated for a property offence (48.3%). Impaired driving offences were common between both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders (22.5% and 24.1% respectively). In terms of facility grouping, analysis indicates that offenders in the Provincial Jails ($M = 6.4$ months) spent a significantly
longer amount of time in that particular facility prior to the study than had offenders in the Community Training Residences \( (M = 1.9 \text{ months}) \) or those in the Healing Lodge \( (M = 1.7 \text{ months}) \) \( [F(2,66) = 21.7, p < .01] \).

**Environment**

Perceptions of the environment were analyzed through the responses to three scales: the General Environment Scale, the Prison Environment Inventory (PEI), and the Prison Problem Scale (PPS). In terms of the General Environment Scale, overall analysis indicated that the Healing Lodge was perceived significantly more positively than the Community Training Residences which, in turn, were perceived as more positive than the Provincial Jails \( [F(2,66) = 76.89, p < .05] \). This trend was similar for all individual items on the scale (see Table 1).

Table 1: General Environment Ratings by Facility Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Provincial Jails Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Community Training Residences Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Healing Lodge Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>2.03 (0.19)</td>
<td>3.10 (0.32)</td>
<td>4.70 (0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing interesting activities</td>
<td>1.90 (0.96)</td>
<td>2.55 (0.59)</td>
<td>4.40 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>3.10 (1.03)</td>
<td>4.03 (1.12)</td>
<td>3.70 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with room/cell</td>
<td>3.86 (0.92)</td>
<td>4.20 (0.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace and quiet</td>
<td>2.10 (0.92)</td>
<td>3.69 (1.23)</td>
<td>4.70 (0.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowding</td>
<td>2.53 (1.13)</td>
<td>4.03 (1.02)</td>
<td>4.80 (0.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety issues</td>
<td>2.57 (0.94)</td>
<td>4.72 (0.53)</td>
<td>4.80 (0.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General attractiveness of facility</td>
<td>2.00 (1.05)</td>
<td>3.93 (1.19)</td>
<td>4.70 (0.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-octon within community</td>
<td>2.72 (1.07)</td>
<td>4.51 (0.69)</td>
<td>4.80 (0.42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff interaction with residents</td>
<td>2.57 (0.86)</td>
<td>3.59 (0.80)</td>
<td>4.90 (0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Scale Score</td>
<td>2.24 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.84 (0.74)</td>
<td>4.57 (0.27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Ratings within each row that do not share a subscript differ at the .05 level. This Table indicates that offenders from the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences perceive their psychological environment to be significantly more positive on a number of dimensions when compared to the perceptions of offenders from the Provincial Jails.*

Similarly, overall analysis of the PEI indicated that the Provincial Jails \( (M = 4.14) \) were rated significantly lower than the Healing Lodge \( (M = 6.70) \) and Community Training Residences \( (M = 6.00) \) \( [F(2,64) = 12.99, p < .01] \). Subsequent analyses on the individual items of the PEI also revealed similar trends with regard to: structure \( [F(2,66) = 8.82, p < .01] \), emotional feedback \( [F(2,66) = 48.07, p < .01] \), activity \( [F(2,66) = 24.44, p < .01] \), safety \( [F(2,66) = 47.60, p < .01] \), social atmosphere \( [F(2,66) = 26.03, p < .01] \), support \( [F(2,66) = 22.48, p < .01] \), privacy \( [F(2,66) = 51.67, p < .01] \), and freedom \( [F(2,66) = 23.99, p < .01] \) (see Table 2).

Table 2: Prison Environment Inventory Responses by Facility Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Provincial Jails Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Community Training Residences Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Healing Lodge Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>3.51 (0.37)</td>
<td>3.82 (0.32)</td>
<td>3.90 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Feedback</td>
<td>2.29 (0.37)</td>
<td>2.70 (0.32)</td>
<td>2.47 (0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>2.66 (0.37)</td>
<td>3.24 (0.47)</td>
<td>3.57 (0.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>2.92 (0.42)</td>
<td>3.66 (0.26)</td>
<td>3.85 (0.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2.67 (0.45)</td>
<td>3.23 (0.56)</td>
<td>3.58 (0.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>2.63 (0.41)</td>
<td>3.03 (0.49)</td>
<td>3.67 (0.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy</td>
<td>2.67 (0.41)</td>
<td>3.50 (0.42)</td>
<td>3.92 (0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>2.53 (0.39)</td>
<td>2.67 (0.31)</td>
<td>3.38 (0.29)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Ratings within each row that do not share a subscript differ at the .05 level. This Table indicates that offenders from the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences perceive their psychological environment to be significantly more positive on a number of dimensions when compared to the perceptions of offenders from the Provincial Jails.*

Finally, in terms of the PPS, analysis indicated an overall main effect for facility type similar to those discussed above \( [F(2,66) = 21.1, p < .01] \). Specifically, offenders reported significantly lower scores on the Prison Problem Scale at the Healing Lodge \( (M = 38.97) \) than at either the Community Training Residences \( (M = 46.80) \) or the Provincial Jails \( (M = 76.03) \). Among the three different facilities, offenders at the Provincial Jails reported significantly more concerns and problems as measured by the PPS, while offenders at the Community Training Residences and the Healing Lodge reported considerably lower levels of subjective distress. Interestingly, qualitative data suggested that offenders at the Healing Lodge also report experiencing “pressure” to succeed as indicated by the fact that they voiced concerns regarding fear of failure or “letting down” those who have made efforts to help them.

In addition to the quantitative data presented above, analysis of supplementary qualitative information indicated that offenders housed at the Provincial Jails believed that the environment was a negative experience, citing concerns about gang-related activity, personal safety, theft and muscling. This is in stark contrast to qualitative information gathered at the Community
Training Residences and the Healing Lodge where perceptions of environment, personal safety, and structure were much more positive. Specifically, there were more positive perceptions with regard to cooperation, respect, and bonding from offenders at the Community Training Residences and the Healing Lodge. It was felt that these facilities offered more freedom, privacy and control over individual decision-making. More positive relations with staff members were also cited at both the Community Training Residences and Healing Lodge. In general, offenders at the Healing Lodge indicated that they perceive the environment to be one in which they feel supported and “safe” to concentrate on their rehabilitative efforts.

**Sense of Community**

As with the ratings on perceived environment, results indicated that residents of the Healing Lodge and the Community Training Residences perceive a significantly higher level of sense of community than residents in the Provincial Jails \( F(2,66) = 28.89, p<.01 \). Specifically, when compared to offenders at the Healing Lodge and the Community Training Residences, offenders at the Provincial Jails reported feeling that they get along less well with staff \( F(2,66) = 9.40, p<.01 \), perceived that staff care less about them \( F(2,65) = 13.16, p<.01 \), and perceived less positive community interaction \( F(2,66) = 34.62, p<.01 \) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Mean Ratings of Sense of Community by Facility Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Provincial Jails Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Community Training Residences Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Healing Lodge Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How well do you get along with staff?</td>
<td>3.80 (1.00)</td>
<td>4.59 (0.97)</td>
<td>4.70 (0.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How concerned are the staff with your personal welfare?</td>
<td>2.24 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.48 (1.27)</td>
<td>4.10 (1.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much can you interact with outside community?</td>
<td>2.00 (1.37)</td>
<td>3.97 (1.05)</td>
<td>4.50 (0.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Scale Score</td>
<td>3.01 (0.68)</td>
<td>4.12 (0.67)</td>
<td>4.43 (0.46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Ratings within each row that do not share a subscript differ at the .05 level. This Table indicates that offenders from the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences report significantly more positive interactions with staff and the community when compared to the offenders from the Provincial Jails.

**Cultural Awareness**

Perceptions of cultural awareness were assessed through the analysis of cultural ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 representing less attachment and 5 representing most attachment) as well as through the analysis of qualitative information. For the purpose of this analysis, Aboriginal offenders were further divided as North American Indian or Metis. Analysis of the data indicated that 77.5% of the Aboriginal offenders self-identified as North American Indian and 22.5% of offenders self-identified as Metis. In addition, 77.5% of Aboriginal offenders indicated that they were treaty or registered Indians, and 80% indicated that they were members of an Indian Band or First Nation. Also, 75% of the Aboriginal participants indicated that they could speak or understand an Aboriginal language, predominantly Cree (67.6%). In terms of cultural awareness ratings, both Aboriginal and Metis offenders were more likely than non-Aboriginal offenders to endorse the importance of traditional Aboriginal spirituality, culture, Elders, and participation in cultural events. Table 4 below presents the results of this analysis.

Table 4. Cultural Attachment Ratings by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Provincial Jails Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Community Training Residences Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Healing Lodge Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>3.2(1.2)</td>
<td>3.6(1.2)</td>
<td>2.6(1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Attachment</td>
<td>3.7(1.2)</td>
<td>3.6(1.2)</td>
<td>2.3(1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Elder</td>
<td>4.0(1.3)</td>
<td>3.6(1.2)</td>
<td>2.4(1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Participation</td>
<td>4.0(1.3)</td>
<td>3.8(1.2)</td>
<td>2.3(1.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Ratings within each row that do not share a subscript differ at the .05 level. This Table indicates that North American Indian and Metis offenders report significantly higher levels of attachment to Aboriginal culture on a number of dimensions when compared to non-Aboriginal offenders.

The majority of North American Indian offenders in this study (55%) endorsed traditional Native spiritual beliefs, while Metis offenders equally endorsed both traditional Native beliefs (33%) and Christian beliefs (33%). All Aboriginal offenders indicated that they had attended or participated in at least one form of cultural activity—most commonly smudges (87.5%), talking to an Elder (82.5%), attending Pow Wows (82.5%), and/or circle ceremonies (80%). Of the non-Aboriginal sample, no offenders reported being fluent in any Aboriginal language. However, qualitative information indicated that many non-Aboriginal offenders shared some form of Aboriginal beliefs and
had an appreciation of Aboriginal culture. Further analysis of qualitative data indicated that the Healing Lodge appears to offer the most in terms of cultural programming, followed by the Provincial Jails. It was recognized that the lack of cultural programming provided at the Community Training Residences is most likely due to the fact that this facility focuses predominantly on job placements and community re-integration.

**Educational/Vocational Opportunities**

Although most offenders had achieved a moderate level of education (i.e., Grade 10) and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their current literacy skills, results indicate that 65.5% of non-Aboriginal offenders had achieved Grade 12 or higher, while only 37.5% of Aboriginal offenders had achieved Grade 12 or higher.

Perceptions of educational and vocational programming were also assessed qualitatively through key questions during the interviews with participants. Analysis of the qualitative data indicated that educational and life-skills programming opportunities were more frequently taken advantage of at the Provincial Jails. However, even though the Community Training Residences and the Healing Lodge offer very specific programming as their focus, other types of programming (i.e., educational at the Community Training Residences and vocational at the Healing Lodge) are encouraged and can be put in place if an offender takes the initiative to do so.

**Spirituality**

Perceptions of spirituality were assessed through the analysis of spirituality self-ratings, cultural/spiritual awareness, the SIBS, and the SWBS. As mentioned previously, Aboriginal offenders were more likely than non-Aboriginal offenders to endorse the importance of talking to a spiritual advisor (i.e., Elder) and participating in spiritual and cultural activities with others who shared their beliefs (see previous results on Cultural Awareness).

Analysis of the two measures of spirituality suggests that although Aboriginal offenders tend to be more culturally involved, this did not necessarily translate directly into spiritual beliefs. Specifically, there was no significant difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders' scores on either the SIBS ($t(67) = -1.7$, ns) or the SWBS ($t(67) = -1.2$, ns). In addition, although offenders at the Healing Lodge ($M = 102.10$, $SD = 2.70$, n.s.) had a significantly higher level of participation in spiritual activities than offenders at the Provincial Jails ($M = 85.5$, $SD = 14.2$) and Community Training Residences ($M = 86.5$, $SD = 11.9$) as shown by scores on the SIBS ($F(2,66) = 5.4$, $p < .01$), the SWBS showed no significant differences among facility types ($F(2,66) = 2.7$, ns). It may be argued that the significant differences in SIBS scores found among facility types was due to the measure's inclusion of level of involvement in spiritual activities in deriving a total score. It is to be expected that participants at the Healing Lodge would take part in more spiritual activities, and once this component was factored out, scores were no longer significantly different among facility types. The scores obtained on the SWBS subscales and total scores were comparable to scores obtained in other studies of offender populations (Bufford et al., 1991).

**Psychological Impact**

Evaluation of the psychological impact of correctional facility on offenders included the following: the Existential Well-Being Subscale (EWBS), the RSEQ, and the PLOCS. Analysis of the PLOCS indicated a significant main effect based on facility type ($F(2,66) = 12.01$, $p < .05$). Specifically, offenders in the Provincial Jails ($M = 83.37$) reported a significantly more external locus of control than offenders in the Healing Lodge ($M = 43.10$) and the Community Training Residences ($M = 65.72$). These findings are bolstered by the analysis of qualitative data suggesting that the Community Training Residences and the Healing Lodge offer more decision-making ability and personal freedom than does the Provincial Jails.

In terms of the RSEQ, analysis also indicated a main effect for this variable when examined by facility type ($F(2,66) = 3.33$, $p < .05$). Specifically, offenders in the Community Training Residences ($M = 107.86$) reported feeling significantly more responsible for their actions than offenders in the Healing Lodge ($M = 102.10$) and the Provincial Jails ($M = 101.78$). Qualitative information indicated that this finding may be due to the fact that the Community Training Residences promotes vocational training and enhanced community re-integration. Both of these factors may be conducive to higher levels of responsibility-taking behaviour as well as enhanced levels of self-esteem.

In terms of the Existential Well-Being Scale (EWBS), there were also no significant differences identified. Interestingly, although the analysis of the EWBS did not indicate a main effect for facility type ($F(2,66) = 2.70$, n.s.), a number of significant correlations were
found between this variable and other scales, including the following:

EWBS and PPS — Total scores on the PPS were negatively correlated with scores on the EWBS, \( r(68)=-.50, p<.01 \), and the SWBS total score, \( r(68)=.36, p<.01 \). This indicates that higher scores on the EWBS and SWBS total scores are moderately correlated with spirituality. In other words, offenders who report higher levels of spiritual and existential well-being also report having less concerns or problems in their correctional setting.

EWBS and RSEQ — The EWBS was positively correlated with the total score on the RSEQ, \( r(68)=.71, p<.01 \). In addition, the SWBS total score was also moderately correlated with the total score on the RSEQ, \( r(68)=.49, p<.01 \). These results indicate that higher scores on measures of spiritual well-being are strong predictors of attributions of responsibility and self-esteem. In other words, offenders who report higher levels of spiritual and existential well-being also report higher levels of self-esteem and are more likely to take responsibility for their actions.

EWBS and PLOCS — The EWBS showed evidence of a significant negative correlation with total scores on the PLOCS, \( r(68)=-.31, p<.01 \). In addition, the SWBS total score was significantly correlated with total scores on the PLOCS, \( r(68)=.46, p<.01 \). Because lower scores on the PLOCS are interpreted as an internal locus of control orientation, these results can be interpreted to mean that higher scores on the EWBS and SWBS total score are more likely correlated with a more internal locus of control. That is, offenders who report higher levels of spiritual and existential well-being are more likely to believe that they hold personal control for their actions.

Discussion

As hypothesized, the results of this study appear to indicate that both the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences are positively impacting offenders in a number of ways when compared to Provincial Jails. In general, it appears that offenders in the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences perceive these environments to be “safe” communities in which they can concentrate on issues related to rehabilitation. Specifically, the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences received comparatively positive ratings on aspects of sense of community, structure, and personal safety. In addition, offenders at the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences also reported a significantly more positive view of the correctional environment on the PEI and PPS and consistently reported a more internal locus of control on the PLOCS when compared to offenders in the Provincial Jails. It appears, therefore, that the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences are providing offenders with an environment that encourages a higher level of internal LoC. This higher internal LoC, in turn, may encourage offenders to take more responsibility for their actions and motivate them to engage in changes to their lifestyles.

Some slight differences between the Community Training Residences and the Healing Lodge were evident however. Offenders at the Healing Lodge were more likely to give higher ratings to environmental aspects of emotional feedback, freedom, social stimulation, and support, while offenders at the Community Training Residences provided slightly higher scores on the RSEQ. These findings lend support to the notion that the Healing Lodge offers a more personal, supportive environment for offenders which is provided by members of their own culture, while the Community Training Residences focus on establishing a sense of responsibility and improving self-worth through vocational placements.

The self-rating scales related to questions of spiritual and cultural attachment indicate that Aboriginal offenders are more likely than non-Aboriginal offenders to endorse the importance of traditional practices such as taking part in ceremonies and speaking with an Elder. While this result may seem obvious, it is important to note that all item means on the self-rating scales were above the halfway point or higher (i.e., greater than 3 on a 5-point rating scale). This finding may lend support to the importance of providing Aboriginal offenders with culturally specific programs. In fact, previous research has suggested that Aboriginal offenders more readily participate in programs developed and delivered by Aboriginal people and communities (Correctional Service of Canada, 2000).

Although there are clear differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders in terms of cultural and spiritual attachment, perceptions of spirituality across offenders from the three facilities is less clear. Specifically, in terms of differences in spiritual beliefs
among facility types, it is clear that although offenders at the Healing Lodge are significantly more likely to engage in "spiritual" practices and endorse the importance of spirituality in their rehabilitation, the actual effect of this practice did not demonstrate itself in any significant fashion across the established quantitative measures of spirituality employed in this project (i.e., the SIBS and SWBS). It is possible that these two measures were unable to tap the specific spiritual beliefs shared by those with traditional Aboriginal backgrounds because they were developed to assess predominantly Christian beliefs. In addition, several of those interviewed pointed out that there is a perceived difference between "religion" and "spirituality" and this perceived difference may have been a source of a potential confound. Importantly, however, although the impact of "spirituality" could not be clearly assessed in this project, the EWBS produced a significant correlation with other positive measures of psychological well-being such as the PPS, the RSEQ, and the PLOCS. In other words, although the impact of "spirituality" was not directly tapped in this study, there is a clear indication that it is correlated with a number of indices of positive change.

In terms of differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders, aside from stronger levels of endorsement of spiritual and cultural attachment, Aboriginal offenders also had a higher number of previous incarcerations, spent more time in secure custody facilities, and were more likely to have committed a personal offence. Aboriginal offenders were also less likely to have completed a Grade 12 level of education.

One potential limitation of this study is that offenders who choose to transfer to the Healing Lodge may be self-motivated to change their lifestyle and believe that the Aboriginal culture offers a positive experience. Likewise, offenders who choose to transfer to a Community Training Residence may also differ from other offenders in level of motivation. By only selecting offenders from the Provincial Jails who were considered low risk, efforts were made to control for this difference by matching security level. Although this method is not ideal, it was impossible for the researchers to dictate which offenders would be housed at each facility. Therefore, a quasi-experimental design was necessary.

Although this study did not investigate whether the positive perceptions and attitudes displayed by offenders at the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences translated into actual behaviours (e.g., recidivism rates), basic social psychological theory would suggest that attitude change is the first step in the move toward behavioural change. Future research might investigate the extent to which these attitudes are being translated into behaviours.

It is clear that one of the primary purposes of any correctional environment is to ensure the physical safety of staff and the community at large while also attending to issues of security maintenance, especially in regard to high-risk offenders. However, it is also clear that the breadth of offender populations with regard to security risk allows for the development and implementation of alternative facilities and environments that may more effectively address the rehabilitation needs of offenders. In response to this situation, agencies in Canada and the United States, have increasingly sought to develop and implement a number of alternative correctional facilities to accommodate low-risk offenders.

The increasing implementation of alternative facilities in Canada and elsewhere, however, has not been paralleled by research on the effect of these initiatives. As such, the overarching purpose of this research was to examine the impact of these facilities on the perceptions and attitudes of offenders. While the findings of this study indicate some that the type of correctional facility can have a clear and significant impact on the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of offenders, future research should attempt to identify why each correctional environment is effective and what type of offender might best be suited to each environment. In addition, a number of the positive elements of the Healing Lodge and Community Training Residences may be potentially transferred to other custodial facilities. It is suggested that further research be conducted to investigate how this transference may best be accomplished.

References


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