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The Effectiveness of Communication by Women Inmates in Florida With the Outside World

George A. Manning

Lynn University

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION BY WOMEN INMATES IN FLORIDA WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School
of Lynn University

By
George A. Manning, CFE
Lynn University
2002

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of women inmates in maintaining communication with the outside world. Specifically, the investigator sought to determine how certain independent variables affect particular dependent variables. The independent variables used in the study were, (1) race/ethnicity, (2) remaining time to serve in prison, (3) age, (4) number of children, if any, the inmate has, and (5) education. The dependent variables used in the study were, (1) number of people on the outside world, (2) volume of correspondence, (3) number of visitations, and (4) volume of telephone calls.

A statistical design was employed using the multiple regression analysis. The significance was set at the .05 level. A sample from two prison facilities were obtain with an “N” count of 143.

The study revealed that the number of people communicating with women inmates was statistically significant. However, some of the independent variables were not statistically significant. The most influential independent variables were number of children and educational level. The volume of correspondence with women inmates was insignificant and low. Women inmates do not get visitations from family and friends since this was statistically insignificant. However, telephone calls by women inmates was statistically significant. Overall, whites did better in maintaining communication than Hispanics, and Hispanics did better than blacks. However, the longer an inmate is incarcerated, then the more communications with the outside world diminishes.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to determine how effectively women inmates maintain contacts with family, friends, and children. Inmates have only three ways of maintaining contacts to the outside world: visitations, telephone calls, and correspondence. E-mail and chat rooms are prohibited. A review of literature has clearly shown that women inmates get few or no visitations from family and friends. This is partially due to the large distances that relatives and friends must travel between the prison facility and hometown. Telephone calls are too expensive for most family and friends, therefore inmates cannot receive telephone calls. They can call but they must make collect calls. Therefore, the best means of maintaining contacts with the free world is through letters. As will be discussed at length in the Review of Literature, age, education, time to serve, race/ethnicity, and children, family and relatives, and friends influence the amount of letters sent and received.

Girshick (1999) found that contact with relatives and friends during imprisonment helps lower stress, enhances adjustment, and provides aid such as money and information. She found that visiting rooms for male prisoners were crowded with mothers, wives, and children. Visiting rooms for female prisoners were not crowded. Female inmates get fewer visits from fewer people. They are less likely to see their children, and families and friends show female inmates less loyalty. Girshick (1999) found other factors affecting visitations. One reason for fewer visits is women prisons are located farther from their families. Another reason is there are fewer women facilities
than there are male facilities. Also, women inmates have less reliable partner(s) who might care for their children.

The Florida Department of Corrections allows men and women inmates to receive and send mail. However, all incoming mail is opened to inspect for contraband and prison violations. Incoming and outgoing mail may be withheld or returned to sender if it violates the Department Rules under Chapter 33-210. The use of e-mail by prisoners is prohibited. The Florida Legislature, in 1999, enacted statutes that are aimed at strengthening the relationship between incarcerated mothers, children and families. The legislation emphasized the importance of enhancing visitor services and programs and increasing the frequency and quality of visits. The Florida Department of Corrections found by improving an inmate’s family and community relationships, it could in turn improve an inmate’s behavior during incarceration and help reduce recidivism (1999).

Owen (1998) found that economic related issues are important to inmates besides letters, phone calls, and visitations. Inmates need some financial support while incarcerated. Some women do not have family or friends to provide for them while they are incarcerated. They have to rely on “runners” or “tricks” for material support. “Runners” and “tricks” are usually older males that the women knew prior to their incarceration whom they made contact with through magazine or other publications soliciting pen pals. Only inmates with financial means were able to advertise for pen pals and then the advertising was done mostly in biker magazines. Commencing during the late 1990’s, a few companies started Internet sites on which women inmates could place a web page soliciting free world correspondence. This service is free for women inmates.
People from the outside can purchase the female inmate’s full name and address for a small fee. There were no companies that offered this service prior to this time.

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court (Procunier v. Martinez, 416 U.S. 396) made a ruling in regard to inmate’s personal correspondence with those outside of prison. This decision encompassed publications as well as correspondence. Although it did not recognize the free speech right of inmates, the Martinez decision did contribute to the analysis of free speech issues in the prison context by delineating a two prong test. Under the test, a regulation limiting free expression is justifiable only if it furthers important government interest in rehabilitation, security, or order, and if the restriction is not overly broad. Prior to this decision, different states had a variety of rules regarding inmate’s correspondence. It ranged from an outright ban on correspondence to lesser restrictions. Prison officials could seize and/or withhold any correspondence that they felt did not meet the rules. These rules were usually very broad and subjective.

Statement of the Problem

Correspondence by women inmates is one way of maintaining communication with the free world in addition to visitations and telephone calls. The number of people and amount of letters women inmates receive can help to determine the effectiveness of maintaining those contacts with the free world. The problem lies in the effectiveness of correspondence in maintaining those contacts. Many of the women inmates have relatives and friends who live long distances from the prison location. Therefore, visitations and telephone calls become fewer. For the most part, research on correspondence by women inmates with the outside world has been largely ignored.
Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of correspondence in maintaining contacts with the outside world by women inmates. This study will also determine how certain variables affect the number of people and volume of letters an inmate receives. The variables affecting the number of people who correspond are age, length of sentence, race/ethnicity, number of children, and educational level. Relationships, e.g. family and relatives, and friends, will determine the volume of mail the inmate receives. One would assume that the closer the relationship, then the more mail an inmate would receive. This may not be the case. The volume of correspondence is an indicator of how close the contacts are to the outside world. If the volume is greater, then the contacts will be closer.

Significance of the Study

Hairston (2000) finds maintaining family and other relationships while in prison reduces recidivism. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (May 1998) has evidence that inmates with strong family relationships are more likely to reintegrate successfully into society after serving their sentence. Correspondence is the principal way for women inmates to maintain relationships with the free world. As Girshick (1999) points out, women prisoners are generally located farther away from family and friends. Family and friends are also less loyal to women inmates than to men. Therefore, family and friends are not as likely to visit or even write. Women prisoners who do not have many family and friends in the outside world are turning to Internet providers to establish relationships with people on the outside. When they are released, they hope to start a new life through these contacts. Other women prisoners just want to establish pen pal relationships
because of their long-term sentences. Correctional staff can realize from this study if correspondence is effective in maintaining strong relationships. If it is effective, then they can encourage women inmates to correspond more. However, this has a disadvantage. It could affect the prison operating budget because of the additional staff needed for reviewing mail for contraband and violation of prison rules.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows

1. Do certain factors affect communication with family and friends for women inmates in the outside world?
   a. Does race/ethnicity have an effect on communication for women inmates with the outside world?
   b. Does level of education have an effect on communication for women inmates with the outside world?
   c. Does having children affect communication for women inmates with the outside world?
   d. Does time to serve have an effect on communication by women inmates with the outside world?
   e. Does age have an effect on communication by women inmates with the outside world?

2. Does correspondence maintain communication with family and friends by women inmates with the outside world?

3. Do visitations maintain relationships with family and friends by women inmates with the outside world?
4. Do telephone calls maintain communication with family and friends by women inmates with the outside world?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are to be tested in this investigation.

H1.0: There is no statistical significance in the number of family and friends that correspond with women inmates from the outside world.

H1.1: Race/ethnicity has no effect on the number of people writing to the inmate.

H1.2: Educational level has no effect on the number of people in writing to the inmate.

H1.3: The number of children has no effect on the number of people in writing to the inmate.

H1.4: Time to serve has no effect the number of people writing to the inmate.

H1.5: Age has no effect on the number of people writing to the inmate.

H2.0: There is no statistical significance in the volume of correspondence by family and friends that correspond with women inmates from the free world.

H2.1: Race/ethnicity has no effect on the volume of letters the inmate receives.

H2.2: Educational level has no effect on the volume of letters received by the inmate.

H2.3: The number of children has no effect on the volume of letters to the inmate.

H2.4: Time to serve has no effect on the volume of letters received by the inmate.
H2.5: Age has no effect on the volume of letters sent to the inmate.

H3:0: There is no statistical significance for visitations by family and friends on maintaining communication with the outside world by women inmates.

H3.1: Race/ethnicity has no effect on visitations by family and friends.

H3.2: Educational level has no effect on visitations by family and friends.

H3.3: The number of children has no effect on visitations by family and friends.

H3.4: Time to serve has no effect on visitations by family and friends.

H3.5: Age has no effect on visitations by family and friends.

H4:0: There is no statistical significance for telephone calls on maintaining communication to family and friends made by women inmates.

H4.1: Race/ethnicity has no effect on telephone calls to family and friends.

H4.2: Educational level has no effect on telephone calls to family and friends.

H4.3: The number of children has no effect on telephone calls to family and friends.

H4.4: Time to serve has no effect on telephone calls to family and friends.

H4.5: Age has no effect on telephone calls to family and friends.

Assumptions

The following basic assumptions are made in the conduct of this investigation.

1. It is assumed that the Florida Department of Corrections web site has correct information.

2. It is assumed that the inmates will correctly answer the survey form.
Delimitation

The population in this study is women inmates in the State of Florida. Two women facilities have been chosen to conduct a survey: Broward and Dade Correctional Institutions. These facilities were chosen because of the location near the researcher. The women inmates voluntarily completed the survey. The survey was distributed and collected by the prison mailroom staff. The researcher delivered the survey forms to the correctional institutions and later picked up the completed forms.

Limitations

Although this study used two women’s prisons in Florida, these prisons are statistically representative of all of the women’s prisons in Florida. The DOC database for the whole state of Florida show whites makes up 45 percent, African Americans make up 48 percent, and Hispanics make up 5 percent (Florida DOC Web Site). The Broward and Dade facilities house one-third of the women inmate population. The racial balance of these two facilities is 45 percent white, 43 percent African American and 10 percent Hispanics (Florida DOC Web Site). The average age of women inmates in Florida is 36 for whites, 34 for blacks, and 35 for other racial/ethnic groups (1999-00). For the Dade and Broward correctional facilities, the average age of women inmates is 37 for whites, 36 for blacks, and 35 for other racial/ethnic groups (Florida DOC Web Site). The survey shows that the average age is 37 for whites, 34 for blacks, and 37 for other racial/ethnicity groups. The women inmate’s average age, regardless of race/ethnicity, is 37 for the state population, 37 for the two prisons (Dade and Broward correctional facilities), and 36 on the survey.
Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this study.

Correspondence means letters and post cards.

Family and relatives means children, spouse, parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

Friends mean any acquaintance before incarceration.

Pen pals mean contacts with people outside the prison while in prison.

G.E.D means the same as a high school diploma and has completed the 12th grade.

Organization of the Study

This research report is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research questions, hypotheses, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter Two consists of a review of literature, historical background, theoretical background, and related research as well as a summary of the literature. Chapter Three describes the design, data collection procedures, independent and dependent variables, instrumentation, and collection of data, and design summary. Chapter Four will be where the researcher reports the results from the analysis of data gleaned from the study. Finally, Chapter Five consists of research summary; findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations made from the research.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature focuses on two primary areas. The first focus is on government laws, regulations, statistical data, and special reports. The second focus is in the area of the research studies about women in prisons. The findings of this review are then summarized.

Government

The U.S. Supreme Court rendered a decision in the Procunier v. Martinez case (416 U.S. 396) in 1974. In effect, the Court struck down the California Department of Corrections rules on censorship of prisoner mail because of incidental restrictions on the right of free speech of both prisoners and their correspondents. It can only be justified if the following criteria are met:

1. It must further one or more of the important and substantial government interests of security, order, and the rehabilitation of inmates, and

2. It must be no greater than is necessary to further the legitimate government interest involved. A decision to censor or withhold delivery of a particular letter must be accompanied by minimum procedural safeguards against arbitrariness of error.

The State of California, as well as other states, had censorship rules as stated in the U.S. Supreme Court Decision (416 U.S. 396). Prison employees could screen both incoming and outgoing personal mail for violations of those regulations. There were no criteria provided to guide members of the mailroom staff to decide whether a particular
letter contravened prison rules or policies. When a prison employee found a letter objectionable, he/she could take one or more of the following actions:

(1) refuse to mail or deliver the letter and return it to the author;

(2) submit a disciplinary report, which could lead to suspension of mail privileges or other sanctions; or

(3) place a copy of the letter or a summary of its contents in the prisoner’s file, where it might be a factor in determining the inmate’s work and housing assignments and in setting a date for parole eligibility. Prison personnel could withhold mail for complaining, magnifying grievances, or expressing inflammatory political, racial, religious or other view or beliefs.

This case went to the U.S. Supreme Court due to a class action by prison inmates challenging prisoner mail censorship regulations. The Director of the California Department of Corrections issued the regulations. The regulations banned inmate correspondence that “unduly complained,” “magnified grievances,” “expressed inflammatory political, racial, religious or other views or beliefs,” or contained matter deemed “defamatory” or “otherwise inappropriate.” The U.S. District Court held these regulations unconstitutional under the First Amendment, void for vagueness, and violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of procedural due process, and it enjoined their continued enforcement. Procunier, the Director of the California Department of Corrections, petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the U.S. District Court’s decision.

In a recent case decided by the First District Court of Appeals, Bowman (2001) reported the decision of the Court of Appeals on e-mail and Internet access. The Appeals
Court in California sided with prison officials in banning e-mail and Internet access for prisoners. The appeals judges agreed with the California Department of Corrections that Internet access be denied to inmates because of the high volume of e-mail, sender anonymity and fears of the Internet hiding criminal communications.

The Florida Department of Corrections has regulations regarding prisoner mail. The regulations are found in the “Rules of the Department of Corrections”, Chapter 33-210, Field Support Services. These regulations spell out the specific type of mail forbidden to or from inmates. Inmates are not authorized access to the Internet or to computers connected to the Internet that can send or receive e-mail messages.

The Florida Department of Corrections issues an “Annual Report” each year. The last published report is for 1999-00. This report shows the women inmate population being 4,019 as of June 30, 2000. It is comprised of 1,800 white females, 2,027 black females, and 192 of other ethnicity. Hispanics are classified as whites since they only make up ten percent of the women inmate population. Also, the report breaks down the primary offenses by race as follows:
Table 1

Racial Composition of Crimes Committed by Women Inmates in Florida

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder/manslaughter</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Offenses</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent Personal Offenses</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft, Fraud, Forgery</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other offenses</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4,007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Florida Department of Corrections in May 2001 issued a special report on recidivism. This report identifies offender characteristics and other factors that affect recidivism rates. These characteristics along with their relative influence are:

1. Age – reoffense probability drops 2.1% for each year older at release.
2. Prior Recidivism – prior reoffenders are 58.1% more likely to reoffend.
3. Race – blacks are 43.6% more likely to reoffend than non-blacks.
4. Gender – male inmates are 24.2% more likely to reoffend than females.
5. Education – reoffense probability drops by 2.9% for each higher grade of adult basic education tested.
6. Offense – primary property offenders are 13.9% more likely to reoffend; primary violent offenders are 31.9% less likely to reoffend.

7. Custody – releasees from close custody are 10.8% more likely to reoffend.

8. Disciplinary Reports – reoffense probability rises by 1.6% for each additional disciplinary report received.

9. Time served – reoffense probability drops 1.2% for each additional year served.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (1998) issued a report that revealed certain female inmate characteristics. From 1988 to 1998, female inmates have increased by 182 percent or 7,512. Female inmates comprise 7.1 percent of the Federal prison population. The Bureau of Prisons says their facilities, policies, programs, and services were not designed for the unique needs of female inmates. They recognize that evidence shows inmates with strong family relationships are more likely to reintegrate successfully into society after serving their prison sentence. At the Federal government level, the average age of female prisoners is 38 years old. The racial composition is 58 percent white, 39 percent black, one percent Native American and two percent Asian. Most women are classified as a minimum security risk (62 percent), while one percent is classified as a high security risk. Women facilities for federal inmates are primarily located in California, Texas, and Florida. Sixty percent of the female offenders have a high school diploma or GED certificate. While in Federal prison, women are offered various occupational training programs. The Bureau of Prisons also provides psychological counseling, drug treatment programs, life skills training, and job skills counseling.
In Florida, the average age of female prisoners is 35 years old. The racial composition in Florida is 45 percent white, 50 percent black, and five percent other groups. Sixty-three percent of the inmates tested below the ninth grade level. Generally, women inmates in the Florida State prison system are younger and less educated than in the Federal prison system.

Researchers

Owen (1998), a criminologist at California State University at Fresno, conducted research of women prisoners at the California Women’s Facility. She addressed relationships both inside and outside of prison. She found women maintained contact with their children by mail, telephone, and visitations. Reuniting with their children was a primary goal of many women. Her survey found 80 percent of the women prisoners had children. 52 percent of all women prisoners valued motherhood. The survey showed 30 percent of the women’s children were under the age of six at the time of the interview, 45 percent were between the ages of seven and 17 and 24 percent were over the age of eighteen. Owen’s interviews show prisoners with “child abuse” convictions were shunned and scorned. However, she found only one-third of the women reported living with all their children prior to incarceration. About 28 percent did not live with their children prior to imprisonment. One prisoner remarked that if they do not have support on the outside then it would be twice as difficult when they were released from prison. Many inmates feel that if families are taking care of their children, then family members and/or relatives are not obligated to visit or send anything. Owen’s survey of 294 women revealed that 34 percent had telephone conversations with their children between one and three times a week. About 75 percent said that they wrote letters to their children at least
once a month. Less than 11 percent had visits with their children once or more a month. One reason for the low rate of visitation by children is due to it “making it harder to do your time” while another reason is the long distance between the prison facility and the inmate’s hometown. Economic factors have great importance besides the emotional and social importance of letters, telephone calls, and visitations. Economic factors include money and boxes of various items. Various items consist of such things as shampoo, soap, writing paper, books, magazines, and newspapers. Those women who cannot get family support have to turn other means. These means consist of soliciting pen pals, outside “runners” or “tricks”, outside friends or acquaintances (Owen, p.130). (Note: Runners and tricks are people who send money and boxes.) The women acknowledge that friends on the outside are unreliable. She found women inmates were more likely to commit property crimes and were drug users. Almost 40 percent of the women held in California prisons in 1995 were convicted of drug offenses. Property crimes accounted for 33 percent. The support by men, fathers and/or husbands was nonexistent.

Wojda and Rowse (1997) did a study of women at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in Marysville, Ohio. During the time of the study, there were 1,700 women at this facility. Women account for 6 percent of the prison population in Ohio. Their data show most of them are in prison for drug related crimes. Most (73%) women are first offenders, and are less than 40 years old. African Americans make up 60 percent of the population while whites make up 40 percent. The American Correctional Association reports 49 percent are African Americans while 48 percent are whites and Hispanic. The researchers interviewed 21 prisoners. The prison restricts visitations based upon the sentence. Women sentenced to life only get one visitation per week, while other women
may get up to four visitations per week. At Marysville, 80 percent of the women have children. Telephone calls are unlimited for minimum-security inmates, while telephone calls for maximum security is limited to four calls per week. The researchers are silent on mail regulations. However, several women inmates did address mail. One does not write because she did not want her children to know that she is in prison. The other woman inmate only gets mail from family only once or twice a month.

Rios (1996) was a teacher at the San Marcos County Jail in Texas. While teaching at the jail, she found that most of the inmates could not read or write. Most of the inmates were Hispanic. Rios found prisoners who were illiterate could not read the inmate handbook, fill out a medical request, read signs, or write letters to family. A college-educated person may have a hard time finding his/her way around the criminal justice system, but it is impossible for illiterate person. She heard many inmates complain about their lawyers using big words. An illiterate person would not tell the court that they cannot read or write or even understand what is going on. First, they wouldn’t be believed. Second, they would be ridiculed. Last, no one would care.

Watterson (1996) is an author and journalist who does investigations of the criminal justice system. As with other researchers, Watterson found the greatest source of tension in prison for women is the anxiety and concern that they have about their children. Some 80% of the women in prison are mothers. Of the 80 percent, 70 percent are single parents with children under eighteen years old. Fathers took responsibility of the children in only 22 percent of the cases. In most cases, the inmate’s mother took in the children. Only three prisons have a program where babies and mothers can be together for up to 18 months. These are located Bedford Hills, New York; Taconic
State, New York, and the State prison for women in York, Nebraska. In California (1995), the amount of correspondence an inmate may receive is unlimited, but incoming correspondence is checked for contraband. Outgoing correspondence is checked for lewdness and any violation of prison policies. In California, Watterson finds women inmates are on average between 25 and 30 years old and most are single heads of households. Drug offenses are the most common crimes committed by these women.

Girshick (1999) is a sociologist and community activist. She teaches sociology and women’s studies at Warren Wilson College, in North Carolina. Girshick did her study of women inmates at the Black Mountain Correctional Center in North Carolina. In this study, Girshick found recidivism is reduced when contact with family and friends are maintained for male prisoners. She says that the same holds true for female inmates. When contact with relatives and friends are maintained during imprisonment, it lowers stress, enhances adjustment, and provides sources of aid such as money, clothing, and information. It gives a sense of security and helps inmates resume their social roles when they are released. She found female inmates get very few visits from males and get less loyalty from other family members and friends. At the Black Mountain facility, only 70 percent of the women received mail. Only 60 percent of the white women got mail while 76 percent of the African American women got mail. Only 33% of the white inmates got mail regularly while black inmates received regular mail 24 percent of the time. As to visitations, women inmates had no visitations 43 percent of the time. Only 55 percent of the women inmates received any money or economic support from family and friends. The remaining 45 percent of women relied on their own prison earnings. Most of the women were satisfied with their level of support. Girshick found prisoners who have
been incarcerated for many years usually lose support and communication with family and friends on the outside. She also found the most severe punishment for women inmates is the separation from their children. Many mothers have little or no contact with their children because they live with relatives or in foster care. Children are more affected by the incarceration of mothers than of fathers and they may be confused or angry that a parent has broken the law. African American women had more children than the white women by a ratio of 2 to 1. Most of the inmates wrote to or received mail from their children. However, in some cases, the children were too young to read or write. Seventy-nine percent of the white mothers received mail from their children while only 16 percent of the black women received mail from their children. Upon release, most inmate mothers intended to live with their children, 71 percent of the whites and 65 percent of the blacks. White and black inmates who did not plan to live with their children were 14 percent and 15 percent respectively. Most of the women inmates were in prison for drug offenses, primarily possession. The second most common offenses were property crimes, usually fraud and shoplifting. The average length of sentence was slightly less than 11 years.

Hampton (1993) is a researcher for the New South Wales University, who spent time (19 months) conducting research in a prison. Hampton did her research at the Women’s facility named Mulawa. Hampton found that inmates could only make three telephone calls per week from 1:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. In Australia, all incoming mail is opened with the purpose of checking for contraband. Outgoing mail is subject to spot checks. At Mulawa, officials would sometimes withhold mail or unreasonably delay the mail. One reason given by prison officials is it might upset prisoners. Mail delays
encompassed not only personal mail, but also educational correspondence courses. Only 10 percent of the women were married before going to prison. The majority were either never married (41%) or living in a de facto relationships (32%), with either a male or female partner. Women prisoners committed 49 percent of the property crimes and 15 percent of the drug offenses.

Belknap (1996), of the University of Cincinnati, found women’s prisons are smaller, fewer in number, and different from men’s prisons in both the U.S. and England. Belknap claims that prisons have resulted in a form of institutionalized sexism. She defines institutional sexism as putting all female offenders into one unit regardless of age, race, or crime committed and separate from male offenders. She bases this upon:

1. Women’s prisons are generally a farther distance from friends and families because of their isolated locations, thus making visits from children, family, and friends more difficult. Women inmates receive fewer visits from family members than men receive. They are not visited with the same loyalty as men are by families and friends.

2. There are relatively small number of women in prison, which is used to justify the lack of diverse educational, vocational, and other programs available to incarcerated women. Belknap (1996) found treatment and training programs for female offenders are poorer in quantity, quality, and variety when compared to those for male offenders. Most women’s prisons have programs in cosmetology, office skills, typing, sewing, hairdressing, and homemaking. There are few programs for women in skills to help them become more independent on their release. Belknap (1996) found that both prisoners and
staff rank education as the most valuable resource for women during incarceration.

3. There are relatively small number of women in prison, which is also used to justify low levels of specialization in treatment and failure to segregate the more serious and mentally ill offenders from less serious offenders. The shortage of medical care for women is problematic, especially in gynecological issues, sexually transmitted infections, cancer examinations, menstrual problems, and poor nutrition and drug abuse.

Belknap (1996) found an average of two out of three facilities were not designed to house females. Two-thirds of women prisoners in 1987 are serving time for such minor offenses as larceny, theft, prostitution, and disturbing the peace. Drug abusers and victims of domestic violence are rising at an increasing rate. She found the most obvious characteristic of women in prison was race. More women were African American than white and Hispanic women. Belknap (1996) does not discuss mail and free world communications. She found the average adult female offender is under 30 years old and a single mother. A larger proportion of white women committed more drug offenses than African American women did. On the other hand, African American women committed more property and assault crimes than whites.

Feinman (1994) has found no changes in female offenders between 1987 and 1994. There were no changes in the kind of offenses committed, age continued to be between 26 and 35, and were single mothers. Women's offenses continue to be primarily drug related and property crimes. Since the late 1980s, there has been an increase in drug related charges. Black and Hispanic women compose more than 50 percent of the
female prison population in both federal and state prisons. Feinman found that minority women face more problems than whites. Minority women are more likely to be single, poor, and solely responsible for dependent children than whites. However, minority female offenders have the same problems as whites of being in poor health, drug or alcohol addiction, and inability to keep jobs because they are unskilled and poorly educated. Feinman found that the major problem faced by women leaving prison is the lack of support. Most of the women have no or very little money and families to support them emotionally or financially. Feinman found white women grew up in two parent households while black women grew up in one-parent households. However, black women had stronger relationships with their families and children and received more visits, telephone calls, and mail than white women. Most of the women in prison come from large urban centers. Prisons are located in mostly suburban or rural areas. Women did not get visits from children, family or friends because of the distance, lack of public transportation, and cost of travel. Prisons were located in rural areas to remove women from corruptive influences in urban areas. However, it has also removed them from schools, training programs, and jobs. Only 55.2 percent of the women received one or no visit a month. Only 89 percent of mothers in prison attempted to maintain contact with their children. Most of the women feared that they would be unable to provide a home for their children because of the lack of money, job skills, and few were married. Feinman did not provide any data on mail.

Baunach's (1985) research focused on mothers in prison. Her research was conducted in Washington State and Kentucky. She found 50 to 70 percent of incarcerated women have one or more dependent children. Many women inmates
attempt to keep contact with their children by any means possible. In most cases, contacts consisted of telephone calls, correspondence, and visits. One-half of the children had not seen their mothers since their incarceration. About 83 percent of the inmate mothers were under 35 years old. Almost all of the white mothers and 62 percent of the black mothers had been married. All inmate mothers had about the same level of education before entering prison. About 69 percent had up to an eleventh grade education, 27 percent had a high school diploma, and 5 percent had post high school education. About half of all inmate mothers had been convicted of property offenses. Drug offenses accounted for one-fourth of the offenses. The two most frequent offenses were forgery and larceny/theft. Inmate mothers had an average of 2.2 children each. Approximately two-thirds of the children were under age 10 and separated from their mothers relatively early in life. Mothers had been separated from their children for an average of 18 months. Baunach believes that the number of letters, telephone calls, and visits will decline with the duration of time in prison.

Hairston and Seymour (2001) conducted research in Illinois on children of incarcerated parents. Hairston and Seymour found about one-half of incarcerated parents do not receive any visits from their children and the others only receive infrequent visits. This is primarily due to the cost and inconvenience associated with the distance between the incarcerated mother and the child. Maintaining contact through telephone calls and letters is somewhat more common. However, these forms of communications are limited by the family’s ability to afford expensive collect calls and by the literacy level of the parent, child, and caregiver. Children of incarcerated mothers experience multiple placements. About one-half of the children live with grandparents,
one quarter with their fathers, and the remaining with non-family care. The caregivers tend to have low incomes and lack social support and resources to meet children’s needs. Child welfare workers are mandated to facilitate parent child visits when such visits are not detrimental to the child. Caseworkers have identified obstacles to visiting. These obstacles include: inadequate information on visiting procedures, difficulties in scheduling visits, the time consuming nature of visits, visiting procedures that are uncomfortable or humiliating, and caregivers resistant to visits. The child welfare and criminal justice systems work with many of the same families; however, they have not developed a method of information sharing or coordination of services. Hairston and Seymour propose that caseworkers be trained in managing cases where a parent is incarcerated. Specialized caseworkers could cultivate relationships with correctional department staffs, which would allow the free flow of information.

Greer (2000) also found that very few women inmates got visitations with children and family. However, they did remain current on what was taking place with a significant other through mail and telephone contacts. Greer said family networks were advantageous to women inmates since it provided a sense of protection, companionship, and mutual aid. A few respondents believed some correctional staff and other female inmates were prejudiced; however, racial differences for the most part were not discussed. Some pseudofamilies were found to exist across racial lines. Greer’s study was aimed at interpersonal relationships among women in prison over time. She found women inmates do not maintain communication with other inmates as they did forty or fifty years ago. One element of women inmates is mistrust. Women inmates forgo establishing close relationships with others because of the motives and intentions of other
women prisoners. Another factor that influences forming friendships is the transitory
nature of relationships. When an individual leaves the correctional institution, they often
sever contact with the remaining inmate.

Gondles (2001) predicted in 1998 that future female offenders would become
more violent. Those future offenders who were victimized would require more attention
and treatment. The effect mother’s absence upon inmate’s children would remain
extreme. Children of women inmates are more likely to do poorly in school and get in
trouble with local authorities. There would be fewer staff and qualified applications due
to lower wages. The prison population is increasing. Gondles has found that his
predictions have come true. He found the same conditions exist in Canada, Great Britain,
and Australia as they do in the United States.

Temin (2001) said the most pressing issue in women’s prisons surrounds the large
majority of incarcerated women who are mothers. Only 26 percent of mothers in state
prisons are being held for violent offenses. Property offenses account for 28.3 percent
while drug offenses account for 35.1 percent. Twenty-two percent of all minor children
with parents in prison were younger than five. Grandparents took care of 52.9 percent of
the children whose mothers are in prison. Fifty-four percent of the mothers reported
never having personal visits from their children. When a mother is incarcerated, she
very often loses her family. Temin said it was common knowledge that separation from a
parent is a traumatic event that can have lifelong consequences. Yet, she finds nothing is
being done to confront the problems of children. Temin found more correctional
facilities are providing children with appropriate visiting rooms, but there is no effort to
get the children to the prison. She recommends all incarcerated women should be able to
participate in parenting skills programs and appropriate drug and/or mental health treatment programs where necessary.

Greenfield, Snell, Morash, Bynun, and Koons (2000) published a research report on women offenders. These authors agree that women prison population is increasing at a faster rate than for male offenders. Violence and drug trafficking account for 46% of those incarcerated in state prisons and 65% of those confined in Federal prisons. There are 21,000 female offenders in state prisons for violent crimes while there are less than 1,000 in the Federal prison. Among the convicted female drug traffickers, there are 13,500 in state prisons and 5,300 in Federal prisons. About one-half of the women offenders in state prison had been using alcohol, drugs, or both at time of their offense. Women offenders in state prisons reported higher drug usage than male offenders. About 26 percent of women admitted to prison had been convicted of larceny or fraud.

Discussion

The U.S. Supreme Court has made it easier for inmates, men and women, to receive and send mail. Their decision in 1974 has standardized policies in dealing with correspondence to some extent. Yet, their decision does not recognized prisoner free speech, but it tries to balance inmate free speech with government interests in security, order, and rehabilitation. The States of California and Florida have banned e-mail for inmates because of volume, sender anonymity, and possible hiding of criminal communications.

Researchers have found some common threads regarding the connection between women inmates and contacts with the free world. One common thread found by researchers of women inmates is the relative lack of visitations from relatives and friends.
The primary reason for this is the long distances between prisons and the location of relatives and friends. Relatives and friends are usually not financially able to travel long distances for visitations. Most women inmates are in the lower socioeconomic status group. Correspondence is the most cost-effective alternative way of maintaining communication with the outside world. Researchers have found most women inmates have an educational level below the twelfth grade. This of course could make it difficult for women inmates to write letters, since many are illiterate. Most of the women inmates have children less than ten years of age. Children under ten years old are not literate enough to write very well. However, white mothers received more mail regularly from their children than did black women inmates.

The researchers have not fully addressed the impact of age, their crime(s), and length of sentence upon free world communication. One researcher, Girshick (1999), found women inmates who have been incarcerated for many years lose support and communication with relatives and friends. Baunach (1985) believes letters, telephone calls, and visits will diminish over time. Researchers have not specifically addressed the affect of age. However, their statistics indicate younger inmates get more mail than older inmates do. Of course, length of sentence has a large part to play. One possible cause for this would be the older inmates do not have minor children. Most of the researchers have found the most common crimes were property offenses (theft and bad checks) and drug offenses.

All studies by researchers have used qualitative methods in their research while government agencies use quantitative methods. Researchers have limited their studies to particular institutions. The qualitative design is more concerned with processes and in
identifiable local contexts. Qualitative researchers want to see the precise events and the related consequences. From this means, they derive fruitful explanations. Even though they have provided various statistics, these statistics are limited to the facilities where the research was conducted. The Florida Department of Corrections has recently done studies of inmates using quantitative designs. However, their study did not take into consideration inmate contacts with the outside world. They did not address visitations, telephone calls, or mail.
Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The researcher sought to determine if correspondence is effective in maintaining communication with the outside world for women inmates in Florida. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the influence certain variables has on generating communication with the outside world. The effectiveness is influenced by age, length of sentence, education, and race/ethnicity. The number of children, family, and friends influences the volume of correspondence with the outside world. The multiple regression analysis determines the joint effect of the set of independent variables on the dependent variable and the unique effect each independent variable has upon the dependent variable.

Sampling Procedures

The women inmates from two of the five women prisons in Florida were chosen to receive the survey. Women on death row and those with sentences that are ending within three months were excluded from the study. The survey was sent to 1,104 women inmates.

Instrumentation

A survey form was prepared and sent to each individual inmate in the two institutions. This was done to help the prison mailroom facilitate the distribution and collection of the surveys. The survey form asked the inmates for: (See Appendix A for a copy of the Survey Form)

a. Education. This variable is defined as the inmate’s grade level of education that they have completed. This is a continuous variable.
b. Number of children, if any. This variable is defined as to the number of children that the inmate has before being incarcerated, if any. This is a continuous variable.

c. The number of people they correspond with on an average monthly basis. This variable is defined as the average number of people who correspond with the women inmates during any given month. This is also a continuous variable.

d. Average quantity of letters they receive on a monthly basis. This variable is defined as the average number of letters an inmate receives on a monthly basis. It is a continuous variable.

e. Average number of telephone calls they make. This variable is defined as the average number of telephone calls the inmate makes to family and friends during any given month. It is a continuous variable.

f. Average number of visitations they receive. This variable is defined as the average number of visitations the inmate gets with family and friends during any given month. It is a continuous variable.

Additional data on each inmate was obtained from the Department of Corrections Web Site. The data on the DOC Web Site can be retrieved in various ways. It can retrieve data on a particular inmate (name or prison number), by prison facility, by type of crime, by county of commitment, or by gender. In this case, inmate data was retrieved by facility. The data retrieved was:

a. Name and prison number.

b. Inmate’s date of birth.
This data was downloaded into a spreadsheet. The data for dates of release and birth were converted to the number of years on the spreadsheet.

Survey forms were prepared based upon the information contained on the DOC Web Site. Only two facilities were sampled, Broward and Dade Correction Institutions. These two facilities were chosen because they were conveniently located near the researcher. The two facilities had 1,448 women inmates in early December 2001. Inmates on death row and those with release dates within three months were excluded. This provided an N count of 1,104.

The survey forms were addressed to each inmate by name, prison number, and facility. The survey forms were delivered to the mailroom of the prison facility. The prison mailroom staff distributed and collected the survey forms. The completed survey forms were picked up a week later from the prison mailroom. Only 145 survey forms (n = 145) were completed and returned to the researcher. The data from the completed survey forms were entered on a spreadsheet.

Analysis of Data

The data from both the survey form and the DOC Web Site were entered into a spreadsheet for analysis. The data on inmates who did not complete the survey forms were eliminated from the study. The dates for release and birth were converted to years using December 31, 2001 as the base. The race/ethnicity data was separated under
separate columns for whites, blacks, and Hispanics on the spreadsheet. One inmate was Native American and was eliminated. Another inmate was eliminated because it was an outlier. She had over 90 people and 160 letters per month. This brought the count of inmates in this study analysis down to \( n = 143 \). After hiding columns for name, dates of birth and release, the spreadsheet data was transferred to the SPSS computer program for analysis. A descriptive analysis of on all variables was conducted as well as a correlational analysis. The statistical test used in evaluating this research was multiple regression analysis (Kerlinger, 2000). This design enabled the researcher to focus on the independent variables and the degree of their influence on the dependent variable. Before the regression analysis could be done, the discrete variables for race/ethnicity were changed into dummy variables with integers of zero meaning not of that race/ethnicity and one meaning that it is of that race/ethnicity. The three dummy variables are: whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Multiple regression analysis requires that one dummy variable be dropped. The dummy variable for whites was dropped in this study. The level of significance for all analyses in this study was set at the \( p < .05 \) level. By utilizing multiple regression, the researcher was able to determine the direction and strength of the relationship of the independent variables upon the dependent variable. Frequency analysis was performed on the discrete variables, race/ethnicity. This shows the sample matches the state and prison population in terms of race/ethnicity. Descriptive analysis was done for all continuous variables where state and/or prison population data was available. The variable Age matched the state and prison population in Florida. Correlation analysis was conducted for the independent variables (age, time to serve,
educational level, and number of children) for each of the dependent variables (number of people, quantity of correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables measured the number of people corresponding with the inmate and the quantity of correspondence. Additional dependent variables were obtained for visitations and telephone calls. Inmates cannot receive telephone calls, but they can make collect telephone calls.

Independent Variables

The independent variables consisted of age, education, and number of children, family, and relatives, race/ethnicity, and remaining time to serve.

Summary

The problem statement of this research is to determine how certain independent variables influence communication by women inmates with the outside world. The number of people and the quantity of correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls determine the amount of communication with the outside world.

The data was statistically analyzed using multiple regression analysis. This method determines the weight of the effect that each independent variable has upon the dependent variable. The significance level for this research is set at the $p \leq .05$ level.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine the degree of influence that selected independent variables have upon communication with the outside world for women inmates in Florida prisons. The independent variables are age, race/ethnicity, remaining time to serve in prison, and education level. Women inmates have three ways to communicate with the outside world: correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls. The dependent variables are the number of people on the outside world, the quantity of correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls.

Assumptions

The following basic assumptions were made in the conduct of this investigation.

1. It is assumed that the Florida Department of Corrections web site has correct information.

2. It is assumed that the inmates will answer the survey form correctly.

Sample

The survey was sent to 1,104 women inmates in two Florida prisons. Only 145 survey forms were returned. The causes for the low response are not fully known. When the researcher picked up the survey forms, a staff employee overhead some inmates saying that the survey would not be beneficial to them. Some women inmates did not complete the survey because they did not want to sign the consent form according to the staff employee. The Florida Department of Corrections (1999-00) found 63.1 percent of incoming inmates are functionally illiterate with a 7.3 average grade level. Therefore, it
is also speculated that some inmates are illiterate. The low return rate could be attributed to some women inmates not wishing to participate in the survey. Of the 145 surveys, two surveys were excluded because one of American Indian ethnicity sample and one outlier.

Descriptive Analysis

The prison population selected was \( n = 1,442 \). The breakdown of race/ethnicity of the inmates was composed of 634 Black, 648 White, 142 Hispanic, and 18 Other. The sample consisted of 145 completed surveys (\( n = 145 \)). The race/ethnicity breakdown was composed of 64 Black, 65 White, 15 Hispanic, and 1 Other (Native American).

Table 2 compares the race/ethnicity between state population, the prisons where the sample was taken, and the actual sample. The sample taken from the selected prisons where the sample was obtained closely resembled the total State of Florida women inmate population. The difference ranges from two to five points.

Age for the prison population and the prison sample has almost the same average age with identical standard deviations. However, the years remaining to serve has two-point difference in years to serve and three-point difference in the standard deviation. The sample selected had an age mean of 37 years and remaining time to serve mean of 15 years. The completed survey had a mean age of 36 and remaining time to serve mean of 13. The completed survey had an age ranged from 17 to 63. Table 3 compares the women inmates’ ages and remaining sentence for the two prisons with the sample size collected.
Table 2

*Population Mix (Race/Ethnicity) Percentage Comparisons*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>PRISONS</th>
<th>SAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>4,391</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation**

Correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment technique for the continuous independent variables and for each continuous dependent variable. This analysis determines if there are any relationships between the independent variables. The independent variables act independently of each other because no correlation coefficient was greater than .3. Some act in a positive manner while others react in a negative way.
### Table 3
Means, Standard Deviation, and Range of Continuous Variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>STATE Mean</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>PRISON Mean</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SAMPLE Mean</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Go</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 4,391 - - 1,442 - - 143

Note: - means the data was not available.

As shown in Table 4, the correlation between the continuous variable for remaining time to serve has a very weak and negative relation with all of the dependent variables. Also, there is no statistically significant relationship (p > .05). For remaining time to serve, the data show that over time, communication with the outside world by...
women inmates tends to diminish. Girshick (1999) found communication with children, family and relatives diminishes over time. Wojda and Rowse (1997) found many women inmates did not write to their children while in prison because inmates did not want their children know that they were in prison.

Age is another independent variable that resembles remaining time to serve. Age has a weak and negative relation on all of the dependent variables. However, age has a statistically significant relationship with telephone calls at $p = .05$ level. Baunach (1998) found telephone calls by women inmates diminish over time. In Florida, this could be due to inmates not being able to receive telephone calls. They can only make collect telephone calls out. One of the most frequent comments by women inmates on the survey was telephone calls were too expensive.

Children are another independent variable that has very little relation with the dependent variables. The effect of children on most of dependent variables has a negative effect but is statistically insignificant ($p > .05$). Owen (1999) found 30 percent of the women inmates' children are under the age of six. Baunach found two-thirds of the inmates children were under the age of ten. Children under ten years of age are usually not yet able to read and write. The trend for visitations is negative. Owen (1998), Girshick (1999), Feinman (1994), Baunach (1985), and Greer (2000) found women inmates did not have many visitations with their children. They found that the principle reasons to be long distance from family and friends and lack of loyalty by family and friends.

The independent variable for education has a positive relation with all of the dependent variables, but it is very weak and is only significant for the quantity of mail
dependent variable (p ≤ .05). Rios (1996) found minority inmates were illiterate. Feinman (1994) found all women in prison were poorly educated and feared that they would be unable to provide a home for their children because of the lack of money and job skills. Baunach (1985) found that all inmate mothers had about the same level of education before entering prison. About 69 percent had up to an eleventh grade education, 27 percent had a high school diploma and five percent had post high school education. In Florida, the Department of Corrections test incoming inmates on their educational level. They found 63.1 percent of inmates are functionally illiterate (less than the 9th grade level). All inmates entering the Florida prison system must attend G.E.D. classes if they test below the ninth grade level. In the survey, the average educational level was near the twelfth grade level. This difference can be attributed to the mandatory G.E.D. classes that inmates must attend.

The Spearman Rho correlation analysis technique was used to examine the relationships between the continuous dependent variables and the discrete independent variables. The discrete variable was race/ethnicity, but this variable was broken down into two dummy variables: blacks and Hispanics. This analysis determines if there are any relations between the continuous dependent variables and the discrete independent dummy variables. As the analysis shows, the independent variables act independently of each other. Some act in a positive manner while others react in a negative way.
Table 4

Correlation between the Continuous Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Quantity of Mail</th>
<th>Visitations</th>
<th>Telephone Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Serve</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.183*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.177*</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 143

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
Table 4

Correlation between the Continuous Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
<th>Quantity of Mail</th>
<th>Visitations</th>
<th>Telephone Calls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Serve</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>-.045</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.183*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.177*</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.149</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 143

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
As shown in Table 5, the correlation between whites and the number of people has a positive ratio of .291 and is statistically significant at \( p \leq 0.01 \) level. On the other hand, blacks and Hispanics have negative ratios of .269 and .035 respectively. They are both statistically significant at \( p \leq 0.01 \) level. Whites are able to maintain communication with people on the outside while blacks and Hispanics lose contacts with people on the outside. Rios (1996) found most blacks and Hispanics are less educated than whites and therefore, are not able to maintain contact with people on the outside world as well as whites. Girshick (1999) found blacks and Hispanics have fewer contacts with people on the outside than whites. Owen (1998) attributes the low communication with people on the outside as being unreliable. Feinman (1994) attributes the decline for blacks and Hispanics due to them being single and poor. Belknap (1996) suggests that long distance from hometown and prison facility is another cause.

As shown in Table 5, the Spearman Rho correlation coefficient between race/ethnicity and quantity of mail was computed. It shows whites get mail from the outside world by a correlation coefficient of .285 and this relationship is statistically significant at the \( p \leq 0.01 \) level. Hispanics has a positive statistical ratio of .003 that is statistically insignificant at \( p > 0.01 \) level. However, blacks have a negative ratio of .287 that is statistically significant at the \( p \leq 0.01 \) level. Whites get more mail than blacks and Hispanics. Hispanics are able to only maintain correspondence with the outside world. Blacks get the least amount of mail and declines over time. Rios (1996) found blacks are less educated than whites, therefore, they are not as able to read and write as whites. Girshick (1999) found blacks and Hispanics have less contacts with people on the outside than whites. Owen (1998) attributes this low volume of mail to family and friends being
unreliable. Feinman (1994) attributes the decline in mail for blacks and Hispanics to being single and poor. Belknap (1996) suggests the large distances between home town and prison facility as a cause.

As shown in Table 5, the Spearman Rho correlation coefficient between race/ethnicity and visitations was computed. The results show whites and Hispanics get visitations from family and friends by coefficients of .157 and .196 respectively. The relationship is not statistically significant for whites, while it is statistically significant for Hispanics at p ≤ .05 level. Blacks, on the other hand, have fewer visitations from family and friends with a negative ratio of -.287. It is statistically significant at p ≤ .01 level. Whites get visitations but not as many as Hispanics. Girshick (1999) found only 57 percent of all women got visitations from family and friends. Belknap (1996) attributes low visitations by family and friends to long distances between inmate’s home and the prison facility. Feinman (1994) believes the low visitation rate is due to minority women being single and poor. Hairston and Seymour (2001) attribute low visitations to obstacles in visiting. Obstacles that were identified were inadequate information on visiting procedures, difficulties in scheduling visits, time consuming nature of visits, visiting facilities that are uncomfortable or humiliating, and caregivers resistant to visitations.

As shown in Table 5, the Spearman Rho correlation coefficient between race/ethnicity and telephone calls was computed. The relationships between whites and Hispanics and telephone calls were positive. For whites, it is statistically significant at p ≤ .05 level. For Hispanics, it is not statistically significant. Blacks have a negative relationship with telephone (.278). It is statistically significant at p ≤ .01 level. They
make fewer telephone calls than whites or Hispanics. It is statistically significant at $p \leq .01$ level.

Owen (1998) found only 34 percent of inmates had regularly telephone conversations with their children on a weekly basis. The ability of women inmates was limited to their ability to afford making telephone calls. Feinman (1994) found minority women inmates were more likely to be single, poor and less educated. In Florida, women inmates can only make collect calls out. One of the largest complaints on the survey was telephone calls were too expensive.

### Table 6

**Correlation between Dependent Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. People</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.763**</td>
<td>.226**</td>
<td>.254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Letters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.323**</td>
<td>.291**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Visitations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.440**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Telephone Calls</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 6, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was conducted for all dependent variables. This analysis determined the relationships between the dependent variables. If a correlation coefficient approaches or equals 1.00, then, in essence, the variables are the same.
When total people is correlated to volume of letters, the score is .763 and is statistically significant at \( p = .01 \) level. This clearly indicates a close relation between the number of people communicating with women inmates and the volume of mail that they receive. The researcher expected a close relation between the number of people and the volume of correspondence.

When total people is correlated to the number of visitations, the coefficient is .226 and is statistically significant at \( p \leq .01 \) level. This indicates that the total number of people who visit is weakly related to the total number of visitations. Many researchers have found that women inmates get fewer visitations than they do by mail (Owen, 1998; Girshick, 1999; Belknap, 1996; Feinman, 1994; Hairston and Seymour, 2001, Geer, 2000; Temin, 2001).

When total people is correlated with telephone calls, the correlation coefficient is .254 and is statistically significant at \( p \leq .01 \) level. This indicates total phone calls is weakly related to total people. Many researchers have found that inmates make less telephone calls then they do by correspondence (Owen, 1998; Hampton, 1993; Feinman, 1994; and Hairston and Seymour, 2001).

As shown in Table 7, a Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was conducted for independent continuous variables. This analysis determined the relationships between the independent continuous variables. If a correlation coefficient approaches or equals 1.00, then, in essence, the variables are the same. If the correlation coefficient is .300 or below, then there is a weak relationship between the independent variables. A correlation coefficient at or near .000 indicates no relationship between the variables.
Table 7
Correlation between Independent Continuous Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Time to Go</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Go</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.199*</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>.289**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.196*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

When time remaining on sentence is correlated with age, the correlation coefficient is .199 and is statistically significant at p = .05 level. This clearly indicates a weak relation between time remaining on sentence and age. These two independent variables do act independently of each other.

When time remaining on sentence is correlated with number of children, the correlation coefficient is .005 and is statistically insignificant. This clearly indicates that there is no relationship between time remaining on sentence and number of children. These two independent variables react separately from each other.

When time remaining on sentence is correlated with education, the correlation coefficient is .071 and is statistically insignificant. Likewise, this clearly indicates that
there is no relationship between time remaining on sentence and educational level of inmates. These two independent variables behave independently of each other.

When age is correlated with number of children, the correlation coefficient is .147 and is statistically insignificant. There is a very weak relationship between age and number of children. These two independent variables react independently of each other.

When age is correlated with age and education, the correlation coefficient is .289 and is statistically significant at the $p = .01$ level. However, this relationship between age and educational level is weak. These two independent continuous variables react independently of each other.

When the number of children is correlated with educational level, the correlation coefficient is a negative .196 and is statistically significant at the $p = .05$ level. The relationship between the number of children and educational level is very weak and responds oppositely of each other.

The correlation between the independent continuous variables have no or very weak relationship between each other. The correlation coefficients between all of the independent continuous variables are below .300. Only one correlation of independent continuous variable (age and education) had statistical significance at the $p = .05$ level and two independent continuous variables (time remaining on sentence and age, educational level and number of children) had statistical significance at the $p = .01$ level.
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

The statistical test used in evaluating the research questions of this research study was multiple regression analysis (Kerlinger, 2000). This method enabled the researcher to determine the influence upon the dependent variable by the set of independent variables.

The data analyzed in this research study consisted of both continuous and discrete data. The continuous variables were age, number of people, time remaining on sentence, number of children, and educational level. The discrete variable was race/ethnicity. The dependent variables are the number of people (family and friends), their volume of mail, visitations, and telephone calls. The level of significance was set at $p < .05$ level, which is usually recognized by social science as an acceptable level. By using the multiple regression method, the researcher was able to determine the degree of influence that the set of independent variables had on the dependent variable, as well as the unique effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

The regression analyses are presented below. Each analysis addresses the set of independent variables on a particular dependent variable. The discrete variable for race/ethnicity was changed into dummy variables. The dummy variables are blacks and Hispanics. When dummy variables are used, one of the dummy variables is dropped ($n - 1$). In this study, the dummy variable for whites was dropped. Two integers were given to each dummy variable: zero for not of that race/ethnicity and one being of that race/ethnicity. The independent variables used in the multiple regression analysis are: blacks, Hispanics, age, remaining time to serve, educational level, and number of
children. The dependent variables for which a regression analysis was done are: number of people, the volume of correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls.

Examination of Hypotheses

H1.0: A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate to what extent the dependent variable is influenced by the set of independent variables (Regression Analysis One). The dependent variable is the number of people who communicate with women inmates by mail. The set of independent variables used in this regression analyses are:

H1.1: Race/Ethnicity – blacks and Hispanics.
H1.2: Educational level.
H1.3: The number of children an inmate has.
H1.4: The time remaining on the inmates sentence.
H1.5: The age of the inmate.
The results of Regression Analysis One are shown in Table 8. As shown in Table 8, the R square is .101 with an overall significance of .023. This is statistically significant since $p \leq .05$. This set of independent variables account for 10.1 percent of the variation of the dependent variable. The remaining 90 percent of the variation of the dependent variable are due to other variables not included in this study. Four of the standardized Beta weights have a negative influence: blacks, Hispanics, remaining time to go, and age.
to serve, and age. Only the dummy variable for blacks is statistically significant with a score of .002. The two continuous independent variables for educational level and number of children have positive standardized Beta weights. However, they are not statistically significant since $p > .05$. The analysis shows race/ethnicity, remaining time to serve, and age have a negative impact in maintaining contact with people on the outside world. Conversely, education and number of children have a positive effect on maintaining contacts with people on the outside world.

Girshack (1999) found blacks and Hispanics have fewer contacts with people in the outside world than whites. Their result is supported by this analysis. Girshack (1999) found women inmates who are incarcerated for many years usually support and communication with family and friends in the outside world. The data here supports the finding that age and remaining sentence decreases communication with family and friends on the outside world. Owen (1998), Feinman (1994) and Baunach (1985) found women inmates tried to keep contact with their children as much as possible by whatever means.

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Two

H2.0: Multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the extent to which the dependent variable is influenced by the following set of independent variables. The dependent variable is the volume of correspondence that the women inmates receive from the outside world. The independent variables used in this regression analysis are:

H2.1: Race/Ethnicity – blacks and Hispanics.
H2.2: Educational level.
H2.3: The number of children an inmate has.
H2.4: The time remaining on the inmates sentence.

H2.5: The age of the inmate.

Table 9

Summary of Regression Analysis Two

Dependent Variable: Volume of Correspondence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R Squared</th>
<th>F Statistic</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.077</td>
<td>1.893</td>
<td>.086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>-.224</td>
<td>.018*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>-.093</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Go</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.048</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p \leq .05$

n=143

As shown in Table 9, the R square is .077 with an overall significance of .086. This is not statistically significant. This set of independent variables accounts for only 7.7 percent of the variation of the dependent variable. The remaining 92.3 percent of the variation of the dependent variable is due to other variables not included in this study.

Four of the standardized Beta weights have a negative influence: blacks, Hispanics, time
remaining on sentence, and age. Only the dummy variable for blacks is statistically
significant with a score of .018 (p ≤ .05). The two continuous independent variables for
educational level and number of children have positive standardized Beta weights. They
are not statistically significant since p > .05. The analysis shows race/ethnicity, time
remaining to serve and age have a negative influence on the volume of correspondence
with the outside world. Conversely, educational level and number of children have a
positive effect on the volume of correspondence with the outside world.

Girshick (1999) found blacks and Hispanics have less correspondence with the
outside world than do whites. This is indicated here as well. Girshick (1999) found
women inmates who are incarcerated for many years usually lose support and
communication with the outside world. The data here supports Girshick’s findings. Rios
(1996) found educational level enhances communication with the outside world. It is
supported here. Owen (1998), Feinman (1994), and Baunach (1985) found women
inmates try to keep contact with their children as much as possible by whatever means.
Correspondence of course is one mean.

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Three

H3.0: A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the
relationships between the dependent variable and the following set of independent
variables. The dependent variable is the number of visitations by family and friends that
women inmates have from the outside world. The independent variables used in this
regression analysis are:

H3.1: Race/Ethnicity – blacks and Hispanics.

H3.2: Educational level.
H3.3: The number of children an inmate has.
H3.4: The remaining time to serve by inmates.
H3.5: The age of the inmate.

Table 10

Summary of Regression Analysis Three

Dependent Variable: Visitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>-.068</td>
<td>.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Go</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.108</td>
<td>.258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=143

As shown in Table 10, the R square is .049 with an overall significance of .327. This is not statistically significant since p > .05 level. The set of independent variables accounts for 4.9 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. The remaining 95.1 percent of the variation of the dependent variable is due to other variables not included in this study. Four of the standardized Beta weights have a negative influence: blacks, time
remaining on sentence, age, and number of children. None of the negative independent variables have any significance since \( p > .05 \). The trend shows that visitations are hindered by these independent variables. On the other hand, the independent variables for educational level and Hispanics have a trend toward enhancing visitations, but they are not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \).

Owen (1998), Girshick (1999), Feinman (1994), and Greer (2000) had the same findings as above in their research. They found the principle causes to be distance from family and friends and to the prison facility, and lack of loyalty by family and friends. Hariston and Seymour (2001) found visitations were hindered by inadequate information on visiting procedures, difficulties in scheduling visits, time consuming nature of visits, visiting procedures that are uncomfortable or humiliating, and caregivers resistant to visits. Temin (2001) found 54 percent of mothers in prison never had personal visits with their children. Temin (2001) found more correctional facilities are providing children with appropriate visiting rooms, but there is no effort to get the children to the prison.

**Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Four**

H4.0: A multiple regression analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between the dependent variable and the following set of independent variables. The dependent variable is the number of telephone calls to family and friends that women inmates make to the outside world. The independent variables used in this regression analysis are:

H4.1: Race/Ethnicity – blacks and Hispanics.

H4.2: Educational level.

H4.3: The number of children an inmate has.
H4.4: The time remaining on the inmates sentence.

H4.5: The age of the inmate.

Table 11

Summary of Regression Analysis Four

Dependent Variable: Telephone Calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacks</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>.208</td>
<td>.015**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Go</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.290</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.215</td>
<td>.019**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>.409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p ≤ .01

** p ≤ .05

n=143

As shown in Table 11, the R square is .142 with an overall significance of .002. This is statistically significant since p < .05. The set of independent variables account for 14.2 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. The remaining 85.8 percent of
the variation of the dependent variable is due to other variables not included in this study. Two of the standardized Beta weights have a negative influence: blacks and age. Only age has a significance of .001. The independent variable for Hispanics, time remaining to serve, educational level, and number of children have positive standardized Beta weights. Two of these independent variables have a significance of .015 for Hispanics and .019 for educational level. These are statistically significant at $p < .05$ level. This shows blacks don’t make many telephone calls. The variables for number of children and time remaining to serve on sentence have a positive influence on making telephone calls to the outside world.

Owen (1998) found only 34 percent of women inmates had regular telephone conversations with their children on a weekly basis. The ability for women inmates to make telephone calls was limited to their ability to afford them. Feinman (1994) found minority women inmates were more likely to be single, poor, and less educated. This is the primary reason for minority women inmates in not making telephone calls. In Florida, inmates can only make collect calls out. One of the largest number of complains on the survey was telephone calls were too expensive.

Inmate Comments

The survey provided space for the inmates to make open-ended comments. Only 49 inmates made any comments. The most common comments were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Telephone calls were too expensive and/or inadequate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Outside world communication is beneficial to inmates</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pen pals were beneficial to inmates</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several inmates found receiving magazines and books from the outside are beneficial to inmates. Some inmates expressed concern over pen pals. Those inmates who get pen pals usually lie about their situation was one comment. One inmate wants to write to other inmates in other facilities, but the prison rules prohibit it. One inmate said, "Living in prison is like living in a sewer." Another inmate found, "pen pals are all right, but it is hard to find a good man. Pictures of inmates on the Internet make them look mean, unattractive and not the norm. This, in turn, discourages writing or visiting." One inmate suggested that family members be given calling cards so they can make calls to the inmate. Another inmate suggested that transportation be furnished to family and children who don't have any transportation.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Women inmates in Florida have three ways of communicating with the outside world. They are by correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls. The principal aim of this research was to determine the effectiveness of maintaining communications with people in the free world.

A survey was conducted at two Florida Correctional Institutions for women. Florida has over 4,000 women inmates. Two prisons in South Florida have over 1,400 women inmates. The survey was sent to 1,104 women inmates. Only 145 surveys were completed and returned by the women inmates. Two completed surveys were omitted because of numerous reasons. This left \( n = 143 \). Descriptive analysis showed the sample did represent the women inmate population in Florida. Thus, generalization to the total population of these two prisons and to the State of Florida may be made. A correlation analysis of independent and dependent variables was conducted. The analysis showed that the independent variables acted independently of each other. Some independent variables reacted positively, some negatively, and some with no or little effect.

This research sought to determine how certain independent variables influence certain dependent variables. The independent variables were identified as race/ethnicity, age, educational level, remaining time to serve in prison, and the number of children the inmate, if any. The discrete variables for race/ethnicity were broken down into separate dummy variables. One of the dummy variable was omitted since multiple regression
analysis requires $N - 1$ when using dummy variables. The independent variables were: number of people who communicate with the inmate, the volume of correspondence, the volume of visitations, and the volume of telephone calls.

This research found that the set of independent variables influenced the dependent variable for number of people communicating with women inmates in Florida at a minimal level. The set of independent variables accounted for 10.1 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. It had an overall significance of .023. However, only one independent variable for blacks had any statistical significance at the .002 level. Both the overall significant level of .023 and the independent variable significant level of .002 are statistically significant since the selected level of significance is $p < .05$. The Beta weights for number of children and educational level were positive while the remaining Beta weights for the independent variables were all negative.

This research found that the set of independent variables influenced the dependent variable for the volume of correspondence with women inmates in Florida. The set of independent variables accounted for 7.7 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. It had an overall level of significance of .086. This is not significant since $p \leq .05$. Only the dummy variable for blacks had a significance level below $p \leq .05$. The significance level for the dummy variable, blacks, was .018. The Beta weights for number of children and educational level were positive while the remaining independent variables were all negative.

The research for the dependent variable on visitations found the set of independent variables only accounted for 4.9 percent of variation on the dependent variable. The overall significance was .327. This is not statistically significant. None of
the independent variables had any significant score below p ≤ .05. The Beta weights for Hispanics and educational level were positive. The Beta weights for the remaining independent variables were negative.

The research for the dependent variable on telephone calls found the set of independent variables only accounted for 14.2 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. The overall significance level was .002. This is very significant since p < .05. Three of the independent variables had significant scores below p = .05. They are Hispanics with a significance level of .015, age with a significance level of .001, and educational level with a significance level of .019. The remaining independent variables had significance level greater than p = .05. The Beta weights were positive for Hispanics, time remaining on sentence, educational level, and number of children the inmate has. The other independent variables were negative.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine the degree of influence selected independent variables have on selected dependent variables regarding communication with the outside world by women inmates in Florida. The null hypothesis was rejected in this research for number of people (family and friends) and telephone calls. The null hypothesis was accepted for volume of correspondence and visitations.

In Hypothesis One, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis since the number of people communicating with women inmates was statistically significant. However, some of the independent variables were not statistically significant. The most influential independent variables were number of children and educational level that were statistically significant. This sounds reasonable since many women inmates can read and
write and they keep in touch with family and friends in the outside world. Women inmates try to keep in touch with their children by any means possible. In Florida, incoming inmates, male and female, are tested on their educational level. If the inmates education fall below the ninth grade level, whether or not they have a diploma, they are required to attend G.E.D. classes.

In Hypothesis Two, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis. This hypothesis dealt with the volume of correspondence from family and friends in the outside world. The same set of independent variables was used in this test. It found that independent variables have a lesser influence than for the analysis of number of people. This indicated that people on the outside world do not write as much. For inmate’s children, this sounds reasonable since many inmates’ children are too young to read and write. Another reason researchers have given is the lack of loyalty by family and friends. The null hypothesis is accepted because the statistical significance is .086(p > .05).

In Hypothesis Three, the researcher accepted the null hypothesis. This hypothesis dealt with the number of visitations an inmate has with family and friends at the prison facility. The same independent variables were used. Other research studies have shown women inmates do not get many visitations from family and friends. This study has the same findings. Other researchers have found many reasons for women not getting regular visitations. Some of those causes for lack of visitations are:

1. Lack of loyalty by family and friends.
2. Visitations were hindered by inadequate information on visiting procedures.
3. Difficulties in scheduling visits.
4. Time consuming nature of visits.

5. Visiting procedures that are uncomfortable or humiliating.

6. Family and friends resistant to visits.

7. Lack of transportation

The null hypothesis was accepted since the significance score is .327. Also, the set of independent variables only had a limited influence on visitations ($R^2 = 4.9$).

In Hypothesis Four, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis since the overall significance score is .002. This is statistically significant since $p < .05$. The same independent variables were used. However, some of the independent variables were not statistically significant. The significance scores for blacks, time remaining on sentence, and number of children are .331, .809, and .409 respectively. These significance scores are not statistical significant. The significance scores for Hispanics, age, and educational level were .015, .001, and .019. These significance scores are statistically significant since $p < .05$. The Beta weights were negative for blacks (.088) and age (.290). The Beta weights for the other independent variables had a positive influence. Owen (1998) found 34 percent of women inmates had regular telephone conversations with their children on a weekly basis. The trend shows blacks do not make a large volume of telephone calls. Feinman (1994) found minority women inmates were more likely to be single, poor and less educated. In Florida, Hispanics are more economically advantaged than in the U.S. Southwest. This is a possible explanation for why the data suggest that telephone calls by Hispanics are statistically significant ($p = .015$). One of the largest complaints on the survey was telephone calls were too expensive.
Findings

The researcher followed in general the established methodology of Kerlinger (2000) in conducting this research. Generalization is made to the general population of women inmates in Florida since the sample is representative of the Florida women inmate population. However, there are some null hypotheses that are rejected while other null hypotheses are accepted. The following statements are made regarding the hypotheses in this dissertation.

H1.0: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher rejects the null hypotheses for number of people who communicate with the women inmates. The set of independent variables only accounted for 10.1 percent of the variation on the dependent variable. The overall significance of the independent variables was .023 for the number of people.

H1.1: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for Hispanics but rejects the null hypotheses for blacks. The race/ethnicity for blacks has a significance of .002 while Hispanics has a significance of .069. Both have negative Beta weights.

H1.2: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for educational level. Educational level has a significance of .583. The Beta weight for educational level has a positive score of .405.

H1.3: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for the number of children that the inmates have. The number of children that the inmates have has a significance of .281. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The Beta weights for the number of children is .092 and is positive.
H1.4: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for time remaining on sentence. The remaining time on sentences has a significance of .541. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight is a negative .051.

H1.5: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses on age. The age of the inmate has a significance of .082. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight is a negative .156

H2.0: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for the volume of correspondence an inmate receives and sends. The overall significance of the independent variables is .086. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The set of independent variables accounts for 7.7 percent of the variation of the dependent variable for volume of correspondence.

H2.1: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for blacks, but rejects the hypotheses for Hispanics. The race/ethnicity has a significance of .018 for blacks and .292 for Hispanics in the volume of correspondence. The Beta weight for blacks and Hispanics is negative .224 and .093 respectively.

H2.2: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses on educational level. Educational level has a significance of .160. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight has a positive score of .133.

H2.3: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for number of children. The significance score for number of children is .581. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight for number of children that the inmates have is a positive .048.
H2.4: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for remaining time to serve. The significance score for remaining time to serve is .618. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The Beta weight for remaining time on to serve has a negative score of .042.

H2.5: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses on age. The age of inmates has a significance of .371. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The Beta weight for age is a negative .081.

H3.0: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for visitations. The overall significance of the independent variables is .327. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The set of independent variables accounts for 4.9 percent of the variation of the dependent variable for visitations.

H3.1: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for blacks and Hispanics since the significance scores are .477 and .109 respectively. Both of these scores are not significant since p > .05. The Beta weight for blacks is negative .068 while the Beta weight for Hispanics is positive .143.

H3.2: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses on educational level. Educational level has a significance of .108. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The Beta weight has a positive score of .108.

H3.3: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for number of children. The significance score for number of children is .893. This is not statistically significant since p > .05. The Beta weight for number of children that the inmates have is a negative .012.
H3.4: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for remaining time to serve. The significance score for remaining time to serve is .628. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weights for remaining time to serve on their sentences has a negative score of .042.

H3.5: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses on age. The age of inmates has a significance of .391. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight for age is a negative .079.

H4.0: Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher rejects the null hypotheses for telephone calls. The overall significance for the set of independent variables is .002. This is statistically significant since \( p < .05 \). The set of independent variables accounts for 14.2 percent of the variation of the dependent variable for telephone calls.

H4.1: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for blacks since the significance is .331. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). However, the researcher rejects the null hypotheses for Hispanics since the significance score is .015. This is statistically significant since \( p < .05 \). The Beta weight for blacks is negative .088 while the Beta weight for Hispanics is positive .208.

H4.2: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher rejects the null hypotheses on educational level. Educational level has a significance of .019. This is statistically significant since \( p < .05 \). The Beta weight has a positive score of .215.

H4.3: Based upon the statistical tests performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for number of children. The significance score for number of children is
This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight for number of children that the inmates have is a positive .069.

**H4.4:** Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher accepts the null hypotheses for remaining time to serve. The significance score for remaining time to serve is .809. This is not statistically significant since \( p > .05 \). The Beta weight for remaining time to serve on their sentences has a positive score of .020.

**H4.5:** Based upon the statistical test performed the researcher rejects the null hypotheses on age. The age of inmates has a significance of .001. This is statistically significant since \( p < .05 \). The Beta weight for age is a negative .290.

**Inmate Comments**

Inmates were allowed to make any comments on the survey. Only 49 inmates made any comments. The most common complaint was telephone calls were too expensive. Outside world communication was quoted as being beneficial. Several inmates made suggestions. One suggestion was for the prison system to furnish transportation for family who have no way of getting to prison facility. The other suggestion was to provide family members with prepaid calling cards. However, this suggestion is not feasible since inmates can not receive calls.

**Conclusions**

This research tested the effect of a set of selected independent variables upon certain dependent variables. The independent variables were race/ethnicity, age, education, inmates' children, and time remaining to serve. The dependent variables were number of people (family and friends), visitations, telephone calls, and volume of correspondence. The dependent variables show the only means for inmates to have
contact with the outside world. Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The independent variables in this study have a small influence on the dependent variables. The amount influence by the set of independent variables upon the dependent variables as indicated by the $R^2$ ranged from a low of .018 to a high of .142. This indicates that there are other variables not identified in this study that influence the dependent variable. Only the number of people and telephone calls had any statistical significance.

2. Race/ethnicity generally had a negative influence on all the dependent variables. This is especially true with blacks. Blacks have the least amount of communication with the outside world by all three means of mail, visitations, and telephone calls. They were statistically significant in the number of people and mail ($p \leq .05$). Hispanics did poorly in correspondence, but did well in visitations and telephone calls. Whites were excluded from the multiple regression analysis. However, the correlation of whites with the dependent variables show they do a little better than blacks and Hispanics. Whites had all positive correlation coefficients with the dependent variables. Hispanics are able to maintain communication with the outside world by telephone calls ($p = .015$).

3. The time remaining to serve has a negative influence on most of the independent variables. The longer an inmate has to serve; the less communication with the outside world the inmate will have. The significance level on all dependent variables was $p > .05$. This is not significant.
Girshick (1999) and Baunach (1985) found in their studies that women inmate's communication with the outside world decline during time in prison. This study supports that theory. The longer an inmate has to serve; communications with the outside world decline.

4. Education is one independent variable that has a positive influence on maintaining communication by women inmates with the outside world. The higher the level of education that an inmates has; the more likelihood the inmates can maintain communication with the outside world. Education was not significant for most of the dependent variables since the level of significance was greater than \( p > .05 \). However, education was significant for telephone calls since \( p = .019 \). In Florida, incoming inmates are tested on their educational level. Those incoming inmates who fall below the ninth grade level are required to attend G.E.D. classes. Florida reports incoming inmates have an educational level at the seventh grade. This study shows the average educational level to be just under the 12th grade. This discrepancy can be due to several causes. First, the inmates who took the survey are due to the additional education received while incarcerated. Another possible reason is that inmates who did not take the survey were unable to properly read the survey form. This study shows education does help in maintaining communication with the outside world.

5. Age is an independent variable that has a negative influence on the maintaining communication by women inmates with the outside world. This study shows the older an inmate becomes the less communication with the
outside world the inmate has. Telephone calls by women inmates had a significance of $p = .001$. This is highly significant. The effect of age on the remaining dependent variables was not significant ($p > .05$).

6. Maintaining communication with inmate's children has a positive influence on correspondence and telephone calls. However, visitations by women inmates with their children had a negative influence. This indicates that women inmates do not get to see very much of their children while incarcerated. This supports the findings of other researchers (Owen, 1998; Girshick, 1999; Feinman, 1994; Baunach, 1985; and Greer, 2000).

Recommendations

This research seeks to determine how certain independent variables influenced women inmates on maintaining communication with the outside world. Emphasis was placed upon correspondence, visitations, and telephone calls, since these are the only means of communicating with the outside world. The following recommendations are made:

1. This study only used five independent variables (race/ethnicity, age, education, number of children (if any), and sentence remaining). These variables accounted for a limited influence on the dependent variables. Other independent variables should be included in future studies. Some additional independent variables would include:
   a. The cost of telephone calls for inmates,
   b. Distances between the prison and the inmate's home,
   c. The inmate's infractions while in prison,
d. The inmate’s financial resources while in prison,
e. Prior incarcerations,
f. Occupation before being incarcerated,
g. Drug and/or alcohol abuse,
h. Marital status before being incarcerated, and
i. The type of crime committed.
j. Abuse in the home.

2. It is suggested that this study be replicated. Next time, the researcher and/or the Department of Corrections should encourage more inmates to participate in the study. Generalization could only be done because this sample reflected the state population as to race/ethnicity, age, and time remaining on sentence. This study lacked population statistics about education, and the number of children the inmate has, if any.

3. It is recommended that this study be replicated in other states. It would be interesting to find out how differing state policies and rules affect communication with the outside world. Florida is a proactive state and it encourages inmates to communicate with family and friends on the outside world. However, not all states have proactive policies. Only a few states provide information about inmates on the Internet. Some states limit the amount of visitations, telephone calls, and mail an inmate can get.

4. It is recommended that the Florida Department of Correction list the inmate’s education level and occupation prior to incarceration on their Web site when inmates commence their incarceration.
5. It is suggested that this study not be limited to women inmates but should also be are conducted with male inmates. It would be interesting to find how male inmates compare to female inmates in communicating with the outside world. Some of the researcher’s qualitative studies indicate visitations by male inmates are much greater than it is for female inmates, however, they did not address male correspondence and telephone calls.

6. It is recommended that a follow up study be made to see if maintaining communication with the outside world while in prison helps reduce recidivism after the inmates are released. This would require long term monitoring that is beyond the reach of this study.

7. One of the women inmates suggested that telephone calling cards be furnished to family members so they can make calls to inmates, but this is not feasible under prison rules and budget restraints. However, it is suggested that prepaid calling cards could be provided to inmates at their or family expense. This would make telephone calls cheaper than collect calls. This would be particularly beneficial to inmates who family lives outside the United States.

This study at the beginning of this research considered pen pals. This was dropped since there was not enough data to make any statistical analysis. This is a new phenomenon. Commencing in 1997, Internet providers were soliciting women inmates to place web pages on the Internet. This service is free to women inmates. The Internet provider makes money from selling the inmate’s address to people in the outside world. This service is provided to help those women inmates who do not have family and/or
friends or have been abandoned by family and/or friends to establish relationships with people in the outside world. Some of the inmates who made comments on the survey wanted pen pals while other inmates had mixed emotions about pen pals. The response rate on pen pals was very small. There are many reasons for this small response rate on pen pals. First, it has not taken hold in the free world. People on the outside world may view inmates as dishonest, untrustworthy, and just plain bad. Second, people on the outside world may not know of the Internet sites. The comments that the women inmates put on the web site may not interest the viewer. Other factors affecting pen pals are age, race/ethnicity, and length of the inmate's sentence.

Future qualitative research should focus more on communication with the outside world and not be limited to just prison life. One prisoner remarked that if they do not have support from the outside then it would be twice as difficult when they were released from prison (Owen, 1998). Comments on the survey found that communication with the outside world was important. Without communication with the outside world, the inmates feel depressed and hopeless. One inmate said that they could not survive without support from the outside. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (1998) found inmates with strong family relationships are more likely to reintegrate successfully into society after serving their prison sentence.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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SURVEY

NAME:  
DC#:  
FACILITY:  


2. What is your educational level? (Circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 Post Graduate

3. Do you have any children? Yes: _ No: _ If Yes, how many? Under 18: _ 18 and Over: _

4. Do you receive and send letters and etc. to anyone outside of prison? Yes: _ No: _

5. What are the Average Number of People who send and receive letters and cards to and from you on a monthly basis?
   - Children ___ Per Month
   - Family & Relatives ___ Per Month
   - Friends ___ Per Month

6. What is the Average Number of Letters and Cards do you get from the following on a monthly basis?
   - Children ___ Per Month
   - Family & Relatives ___ Per Month
   - Friends ___ Per Month

7. What are the Average Number of People who make visitations with you on a monthly basis?
   - Children ___ Per Month
   - Family & Relatives ___ Per Month
   - Friends ___ Per Month
   - Other ___ Per Month

8. What is the Average Number of Telephone calls do you make to the following?
   - Children ___ Per Month
   - Family & Relatives ___ Per Month
   - Friends ___ Per Month
   - Other ___ Per Month

If you have used an Internet Provider for finding pen pals, then please answer the following:

9. How many Internet providers have you used? Number: ___

10. Do you receive and send correspondence (letters, etc.) to Pen Pals? Yes: _ No: _

11. What is the Average Number of Pen Pals and the Average Number of Letters and Cards you receive from Pen Pals on a monthly basis?
    Average Number of Pen Pals ___ Average Number of Letters ___ Per Month

12. Write any comments you may wish on the back of this survey.