

**EXAMINING THE NATURE OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THAI MALE  
PRISONERS AND FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ITS AETIOLOGY**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis investigates the nature of aggressive behaviour in Thai male prisoners and factors that contribute to its aetiology. The first part of the thesis, Chapters 1 and 2, provides information on prison aggression in western countries, the rationale of the study and the background of Thai prisons, including ██████████ Remand Prison where the study took place. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model is introduced as the framework for the study. The review of literature was conducted on the scope of risk factors related to aggression among adult male prisoners worldwide. Twenty-one papers were included into the review.

The second part of the thesis, Chapter 3 –7, studies prison aggression and factors related to it among Thai adult male prisoners. Twenty-six aggressive and 26 non-aggressive adult male prisoners were recruited into the study by the prison staff using the Direct Aggressive Behaviour Checklist. The files of these participating prisoners were assessed for their general characteristics, and then the prisoners from both groups were interviewed using structured and semi-structured interviews (using Stimuli Organism Response Consequences Analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) to identify further characteristics. The different findings between the aggressive and non-aggressive groups were then analysed.

The findings show significant factors related to prison aggression among Thai adult male prisoners in different levels of the Ecological Model. In the individual level, young age, history of child abuse, history of gang affiliation before imprisonment, psychological variable, substance abuse, low education level, criminal history and having tattoos were found to be risk factors for prison aggression. In the relationship level, prison gang membership and being the group leader were significantly related to prison aggression. In the community level, poor prison environment, poor prisoner grading and poor prison staff attitude were risk factors for prison aggression. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are also discussed for further study and development.

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1:	Introduction	1 - 26
Chapter 2:	Risk factors for physical aggression in adult male prisoners: A systematic review	26 - 65
Chapter 3:	Identifying aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners	66 - 77
Chapter 4:	Examining the characteristics of aggressive male prisoners and aetiology of their aggressive behaviour	78 - 110
Chapter 5:	Aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners' functional assessment on their perspectives towards the aggressive incidents in the prison	111 - 146
Chapter 6:	Understanding how aggressive and non-aggressive Thai prisoners make sense of their behaviour in prison	147 - 176
Chapter 7:	General discussion	177 - 197
	References	198 - 211
	Appendices	212 - 255

## List of Tables

### Chapter 1

1.1.	Level of prisoners according to each type of assessment	21
------	---	----

### Chapter 2

2.1.	Search terms	28
2.2.	Inclusion/exclusion criteria	31
2.3.	Summary of principal findings from the empirical studies included in the systematic review	35

### Chapter 3

3.1.	Number of consenting prison staff from each unit	67
3.2.	Statistical results from the test	75

### Chapter 4

4.1.	Number of aggressive prisoners (AP) and non-aggressive prisoners (NAP) from each unit	81
4.2.	Rates of characteristics as measured for prisoners in the AG (n - 26) and NAG (n - 26) and bivariate between-group analysis	95
4.3.	Comparison of NAS-PI and RPVS between aggressive and non-aggressive groups	100

## Chapter 5

5.1.	Perspective towards stimuli	123
5.2.	Organismic variables	127
5.3.	Behaviour	130
5.4.	Consequences	135

## Chapter 6

6.1.	Superordinate and subordinate themes identified for aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners: Making sense of the impact of prison on behaviour	152
6.2.	A comparison of superordinate and subordinate themes between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners: Making sense of violent behaviour	158

## List of Figures

### Chapter 1

- |      |   |    |
|------|---|----|
| 1.1. | Ecological Model from the PRISM study         | 11 |
|      | (adapted from Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008) |    |

### Chapter 2

- |      |  |    |
|------|--|----|
| 2.1. | Study selection process                                | 34 |
| 2.2. | Aggression-related factors within the Ecological Model | 56 |

### Chapter 3

- |      |                               |    |
|------|-------------------------------|----|
| 3.1. | Flowchart of procedural steps | 70 |
|------|-------------------------------|----|

### Chapter 4


- |      |  |    |
|------|--|----|
| 4.1. | Flowchart of procedural steps  | 84 |
| 4.2. | Number of aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners<br>who consented from each unit      | 96 |
| 4.3. | Prisoners categorised by age group   | 96 |
| 4.4. | Prisoners categorised by education level   | 96 |
| 4.5. | Prisoners categorised by criminal history  | 97 |
| 4.6. | Prisoners categorised by offences  | 97 |
| 4.7. | Prisoners categorised by length of incarceration                                       | 97 |
| 4.8. | Prisoners' characteristics compared between<br>aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners | 98 |



## Chapter 5

5.1.	Flowchart of procedural steps	115
5.2.	Ecological Model illustrating information from the SORC analysis	144

### List of Appendices

Appendix A:	Permission to conduct this research study in  Remand Prison	212
Appendix B:	Syntax	213
Appendix C:	Quality Assessment Form	214
Appendix D:	Data extraction form	216
Appendix E:	Information sheet for prison officers	217
Appendix F:	Consent form for prison officers	219
Appendix G:	Eight example case scenarios	220
Appendix H:	Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (DABC)	221
Appendix I:	Information sheet for all prisoners	225
Appendix J:	Consent form for prisoners	231
Appendix K:	Interview schedule for demographic data	232
Appendix L:	Demographic Data record form	236
Appendix M:	Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory	237
Appendix N:	Revised Pro-victim Scale	244
Appendix O:	Interview schedule for SORC analysis	245
Appendix P:	Information sheet for aggressive prisoners for IPA	246
Appendix Q:	Information sheet for non-aggressive prisoners for IPA	249
Appendix R:	Consent form for IPA	252
Appendix S:	Interview schedule for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	254

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This thesis examines the nature of aggression in Thai male prisoners and factors that contribute to its aetiology within the Thai penal system, which is different to that in the UK and other western countries. Semantically, the terms used to describe particular behaviour are varied, e.g., violence, aggression, disruption (Gendreau & Archer, 2005), and have distinct etymologies. Aggression derives from *ad gradi* (Latin, meaning to attack or move forward) while violence derives from *violentia* (Latin, meaning to inflict damage). Therefore, the term providing a definition that covers the scope of this study needs to be considered. In John Archer and Kevin Browne's 1989 article, the terminology of such behaviour was thoroughly discussed. Aggression was described in terms of three domains, which were intent, injurious behaviour and emotion, whereas violence was described as an action that causes physical injuries or property damage (Archer & Browne, 1989). It can be seen that the definition of aggression covers a wide scope of action. Therefore, from this point of view violence can be described as physical aggression, which is just a subtype of aggression (Archer & Browne, 1989). Berkowitz has defined aggressive behaviour as any action that deliberately aims to cause physical or psychological trauma. The goal of such action is viewed as not only to cause injury but also to create an impression, coerce, or as a form of dominance (Berkowitz, 1993). There are a number of commonly known sub-types of aggression. Institutional aggression is one of them, which will be described in more detail.

## **Institutional aggression**

Institutional aggression is an act or an attempt to do harm to others that happens in institutional settings, where there are solid social roles, rules and restrictions, (e.g., prison, military, hospital). The spectrum of aggression ranges from verbal or psychological to physical assault and sexual aggression (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008). Apart from the personal factors, the situational context also plays an important role in stimulating institutional aggression (Gadon, Johnstone & Cooke, 2006). Among psychology theories, three models are frequently used to explain the aetiology of institutional aggression, concerning both dispositional and situational factors. Firstly, the Deindividuation model describes that, when individuals become a part of a large group or a crowd, they tend to lose their sense of identity and take the group identity into their own (e.g., Le Bon, 1895). This makes people dare to act aggressively, which they normally would not do. As it is an act in the name of the group, deindividuated persons consequently do not feel responsible for their actions (Festinger, Pepitone & Newcomb, 1952; Diener, 1979). Secondly, the Deprivation model explains that institutional aggression occurs when individuals have their fundamental rights and freedom taken away, e.g., liberty, autonomy, heterosexual relationships (Sykes, 1958; Hochstetler & DeLisi, 2005). The lack of rights and freedom is completely compatible with the characteristics of life in the prison, which, as explained, can lead to stress and frustration (Paterline & Peterson, 1999). According to Berkovitz's (1993) Frustration-Aggression theory, it would follow that such feelings of frustration can result in aggressive behaviour.

Both theories weighted situational factors more than dispositional factors in their accounts of aggression. However, the Importation model described by Irwin and Cressey (1962) suggests that individuals import their ideas, attitudes, and values including aggressive behaviour, from their social background outside the institution. They argued that the institution or the prison itself doesn't cause aggression. Irwin and Cressey (1962) classified prisoners into three subcultures based on their personal backgrounds, which are the criminal, the convict and the straight subcultures. Prisoners from the convict subculture were described as most likely to become aggressive. Prisoners in this subculture usually have a long history of deprivation and prison involvement and want to have a position of power in the prison system. This group is the most likely to import thoughts and values into the prison. Prisoners from the criminal subculture tend to follow their subculture's norms, which are related to being aggressive, and value trust among their peer group. In contrast, prisoners in the straight subculture tend to be one-time offenders and are the least likely to be aggressive. Usually, they have never been part of the convict or criminal subculture.

A further model has integrated the three aforementioned theories of Deprivation, Importation and Coping: Agnew's (2001) General Strain Theory (GST). This theory explains that strains or stressors can lead to an individual experiencing negative emotions, such as frustration and anger. These negative emotions are experienced as pressure, and crime and delinquency can be one of the coping strategies used by an individual in reacting to the strain experienced (Agnew, 2001). GST identifies three types of strain: these are 1) the removal of positive stimuli, 2) the presence of negative stimuli, and 3) the inability to achieve goals (Agnew, 2001;

Belvins, Listwan, Cullen & Jonson, 2010). GST provides greater depth to the Deprivation Model by categorising the three types of strain a prisoner might experience. The model also explains the Importation Model through its hypothesis that an inmate's response to prison strain is a result of their criminal cultures and values prior to the imprisonment. The Coping Model can be integrated into the GST through the explanation that social support and human resources decrease the negative impact of criminogenic strains (Belvins, et al., 2010).

One of the classic examples of institutional aggression is Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Simulation, conducted in 1973. The experiment aimed to answer the question of whether a person was violent because of their own violent nature (disposition) or because of the situational forces. The participants, who were all university students, received psychological evaluation before the experiment and all of them were found to be psychologically healthy and thus able to participate. Then they were divided into two groups and assigned different roles as prison guards and prisoners. Both groups were given uniforms and numbers according to their roles. The experiment had to be terminated early because of the prison guards' progressive violent acts towards the prisoners. Zimbardo (2007) explained that the label or uniform dehumanised the participants and made them see only "*us and them*". The deindividuation eventually allowed the prison guards to act as they were labelled: aggressively (Zimbardo, 2007).

The case of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq is a recent example of the same process, in which the prisoners were tortured and dehumanised. Zimbardo also suggested that the prison guards' aggressive behaviour towards these prisoners was the result of a bad system. It was the poor prison environment that made 'good soldiers do bad

things'. However, Zimbardo added that such incidents were the consequence of three interacting factors: status and power, revenge and retaliation, and deindividuation. The prison guards involved were low-ranking officers who operated on the night shift when there was no superior supervisor available. Additionally, the prisoners had allegedly killed the guards' fellow US soldiers. Therefore, from the guards' perspective, this could justify their brutal actions. Furthermore, both guards and prisoner were labelled by their roles, which made the guards feel less responsible for their actions (Zimbardo, 2007).

### **Prison aggression worldwide**

The rate of aggression in UK prisons has been recorded for a number of years by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and shown to be an issue worthy of attention and further investigation. Between 2002 and 2012, prison statistics for various types of violent assault show incidents per 1,000 prisoners rose from 163 in 2002 to a peak of 193 in both 2006 and 2008, before declining to 167 in 2012 (Ministry of Justice, 2013). However, the figure for homicide in UK prisons has not fluctuated much since 1980 at 0 – 4 deaths per total prisoner population per year (Ministry of Justice, 2013). In terms of assaults on prison staff, the figures were similar to those for prisoner-to-prisoner assaults. The incidents per 1,000 prisoners rose from 40 in 2002 to a peak of 46 in 2005 before continuously decreasing to 34 in 2012. Serious assaults by male prisoners have consistently been much higher than in female prison populations (Ministry of Justice, 2013). Although under-reporting by prisoners might result in the NOMS reporting system not being completely accurate, the system

represents recorded figures on known assaults from which annual rates can be monitored and compared.

In the US, more attention has been paid towards sexual violence in prison settings than other types of aggression. During 2007-2009, there was a slight decrease in the annual average percentage of sexual violence reported by inmates, from 4.5% to 4.4%. This included reports on both inmate-to-inmate and staff-to-inmate sexual misconduct. Female prisoners were found to have a higher rate of victimisation (US Department of Justice, 2010) than men. When considering homicide, the figure showed that, during 2000-2009, homicide was the least common cause of death in US prisons, and males accounted for more than 99% of the cases (Noonan & Carson, 2011). The homicide rate has remained constant at 3-5 deaths per 100,000 prisoners (Noonan & Carson, 2011). However, the figure for homicide in UK prisons has not fluctuated much since 1980 at 0 – 4 deaths per total prisoner population per year, which is equal to 0 – 4.73 deaths per 100,000 prisoners. Additionally, similar to other parts of the world, there have been concerns over correctional officer safety in the US, as prisoners often fashion weapons from harmless items such as toothbrushes and locks, which are then used to attack officers. Between 1988 and 1995, the reports of officer assaults increased and become more severe, with 14 officer deaths in 1995 (US Department of Justice, 2007). However, the US also has the highest rate of incarceration in the world.

However, thorough official statistics on prison aggression are not available in all parts of the world. For example, aggression in Thai prisons is not well recorded despite it being an important issue. Accurate data collecting processes have not yet been



established, with the Department of Corrections report only providing figures on 10-year staff/prisoner ratios, prisoner population by gender, number of convicted prisoners by type of offence, number of prisoners by type of prisoner and some details of each prison setting. Therefore, aggression in Thai prisons is not officially monitored in any way and is only occasionally reported in the news, such as the incidence of riots in Thoongsong District Prison (Bangkok Post, 2013, The Thailand News, 2011), Pattani Provincial Prison (Fredrickson, 2011, The Nation, 2011) and Samutsakorn Provincial Prison (The Thailand News, 2013), which included various types of aggression, e.g., bodily assaults, arson, and property damage. Prison aggression therefore leads to loss of governmental budget and human resources. Moreover, during the collection of data for previous research in Thai prisons, the researcher was personally informed by a number of prisoners about the various types of aggression taking place in Thai prisons that are not captured in the official reports.

Considering the recognition and importance placed on the prevention of aggression in prisons in many other parts of the world, it is surprising that the official report on aggression and violence among Thai prisoners is still limited and that an aggression prevention scheme has not been implemented. Therefore, this thesis aims to understand the nature of various types of aggression in Thai male prisons and its aetiology based on the aforementioned definition of aggression as “the action of threats and/or physical harm to self and others, rape, arson, robbery and riot” (Edgar, O’Donnell & Martin, 2003). The definition also helps determine the scope of study in all chapters of the thesis, bar the systematic review chapter where a narrower focus is taken on physical acts of aggression.

## **Justification for the thesis**

Since aggression in prisons similarly leads to direct and indirect costs such as injuries and budget in western countries, it is intriguing to study aggression and its aetiology in Thai prisons. However, in the Thai prison setting the data on aggression in prisons is very limited and not up-to-date. Additionally, the understanding of aggression and violence in this setting is far less advanced. Therefore, a systematic study specifically focusing on aggression in Thai prisons is a useful starting point for future research and might be beneficial to the design of appropriate prevention schemes. Moreover, this study might also help prevent future incidents of rioting and escape that happen regularly in Thai prisons, and detect the early signs of violence, since it always starts at an individual level but can then spread extensively.

## **Aims of the thesis**

Since the main purpose of this study is to explore the risk factors for aggression with a particular focus on the Thai prison setting, the aims of this study are stratified and described in brief as follows:

1. To examine the characteristics of a selection of identified aggressive Thai male prisoners (in comparison to non-aggressive ones) and the nature and aetiology of their aggressive behaviour;
2. To examine the personal and social experiences of the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners identified.

## **Ethics**

All empirical studies reported in this thesis were ethically approved by the University of Birmingham Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) Ethics

Committee (reference number ERN\_13-0499). Additionally, the researcher was also granted permission to conduct this research study in [REDACTED] Remand Prison by the [REDACTED] Remand Prison Governor (see Appendix A).

## **Theoretical framework of the thesis**

### *Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model*

Human behaviour has long been proposed to be the result of an individual interacting with different levels of their environment. For instance, recently, the General Aggression Model (GAM) also proposed that a person's aggressive behaviour is broadly a result of biosocial-cognitive factors (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Such biosocial-cognitive factors range from long-term developmental background to situational factors. However, among various human behaviour study models, e.g., GAM, HCR-20, VRAG, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Model of Human Development was the first to describe how factors that contribute to the development of human behaviour occur at five levels. These five levels give a clear perspective of how factors interact with each other:

1. *Individual level*: this level describes factors pertinent to the individual, such as gender, race, genetics, and mental disorder.
2. *Microsystem (Relationship level)*: this level refers to interpersonal interactions that impinge upon individual development, such as interactions with peers and teachers at school or with family members.
3. *Mesosystem and Exosystem (Community level)*: this level refers to those factors that exist within the individual's community and environment that can

impinge upon their development, such as social services, social classes and parental employment. The mesosystem is the dynamic connections between the microsystem and exosystem.

4. *Macrosystem (Societal level)*: this level represents the larger-scale context in which an individual lives that can also affect their developmental process (e.g., political systems, cultural values).
5. *Chronosystem*: this level involves gradual changes in society over time or across generations (e.g., people's habit of using technology).

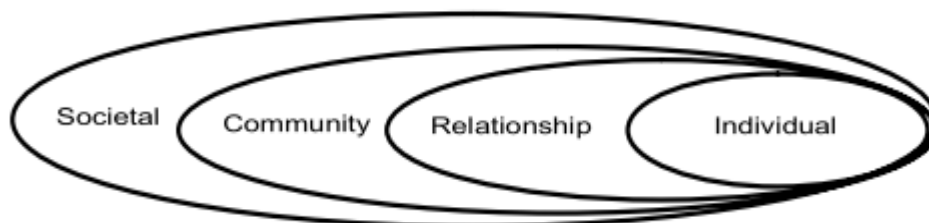
For the conceptual framework, the Ecological Model was chosen over other aforementioned institutional aggression theories because those theories only address the problem of institution aggression from a single aspect and thus do not provide a holistic account. In contrast, the Ecological Model provides a multi-level explanation of human behaviour and is more encompassing.

The model has been used to explain many different types of behaviour, such as child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), child abuse (Lynch & Chiccetti, 2002), street gang criminal behaviour (Harkins & Dixon, 2010), and intimate partner violence (Dutton, 1995, 2006). Since this model has been used to explain other forms of aggressive behaviour, it was chosen to provide a framework for this review to assess the role of risk factors on male prisoner aggression and whether factors at each level have received sufficient empirical investigation. Since the aim of this thesis is to understand prison aggression and how it may relate to prisons in Thailand, this ecological model is particularly suitable because sub-cultural factors of the Thai prison environment may well feature in aggression, which will be accounted for at the

exosystem level. There have been some examples of aspects of the Ecological Model being applied to the study of prison violence in western prison populations, as described below.

### **Application of the Ecological Model to prison violence**

In 2008, Johnstone and Gadon conducted the PRISM study in the Scottish Prison Service, which examined situational factors associated with risk. It utilised the Ecological Model to provide a focus on situational factors in addition to factors that existed at other levels of the model. The model that was used in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.1. The rationale for the focus on situational factors was that much of the contemporary research was concerned with individual risk factors (e.g., mental disorder, substance abuse) and overlooked important situational risk factors.



*Figure 1.1. Ecological Model from the PRISM study (adapted from Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008)*

This focus on individual factors can be clearly seen in the design of risk assessment tools that aim to predict violence risk, which highlight individual, often static, risk factors as important (e.g., Violence Risk Appraisal Guide (VRAG) (Mills, Kroner & Morgan, 2011). Using an ecological model, other dynamic, situational risk factors were also deemed important when predicting prison violence (e.g., living

conditions, prison environment, and staff actions). Results suggested that, by altering the prison environment and daily activities, institutional violence could be reduced. Although the study used the Ecological framework, it aimed mainly to focus on the effects of social environment (relationship and community level) upon prisoner behaviour. It did not give weight to the individual factors or the interaction of factors between multiple levels, e.g., the individual and relationship level.

The study of gendered violence and safety in US correctional facilities for women (Owen, Wells, Pollock, Muscat & Torres, 2008) also used an ecological framework to interpret data and design a violence prevention scheme. This study intentionally looked at the issue of abuse and victimisation. It stated that all the risk factors of institutional violence interact with and affect each other within four levels of this ecological model (internal risk factors and three different layers of external risk factors). Risk factors in each layer can differ, depending on the context of the institution. Additionally, personal history factors, such as child abuse, can be either mitigated or exacerbated by other external factors located at different levels, such as lack of social support and social norms. This study also identified some risk factors that are different from those found to be relevant in male correctional facilities (e.g., acceptance of physical chastisement, male-dominant family). Combined with other models, such as the Escalation Model (which theorises that aggression typically starts from preventable conflicts which, when left unsolved, escalate over time) (Owen et al., 2008), the Ecological Model informed the design of a prevention programme for a women's facility.

The aforementioned studies highlight that Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model provides an effective framework for the study of prison settings. It can be adapted as follows to provide a framework for investigation of prison aggression:

### 1. Individual level

Apart from general characteristics such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, attitudes, beliefs and emotional states, individual level factors that influence male aggression in prison are: current offence (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011; Sorensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods, 2011), criminal history, history of violence during previous incarceration (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Lee & Edens, 2005; Walters & Crawford, 2013) and history of drug abuse (Walters & Crawford, 2013).

### 2. Microsystem (Relationship level)

In the prison context, interpersonal relationship could be demonstrated as staff-prisoner relationships, prisoner-prisoner relationships and prisoner-family relationship. A number of studies have investigated prison gang interactions, which are also a form of prisoner-prisoner relationship, and have proved that it increases prisoner aggression (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Sorensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods, 2011; Wood, Moir & James, 2008; Worrall & Morris, 2012).

### 3. Mesosystem and Exosystem (Community level)

Considering the prison context, examples of factors relating to aggression are stressful prison environment (e.g., crowded prison, lack of resource) (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Morris, Carriaga, Diamond, Piquero

& Piquero, 2012) and prison management (e.g., poor staff/inmate ratio) (Lahm, 2009; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995).

#### 4. Macrosystem (Societal level)

This level of the Ecological Model represents the wider cultural values and beliefs towards the prisons and the prisoners, which could directly and indirectly relate to aggressive behaviour formation.

#### **Characteristics of Thai prisons**

Before going through the details for each chapter of the thesis, it is important to explain the context of the Thai penal system, which is different from prisons in western countries. This review aims to provide an overview of the male prisons in Thailand to describe the system that prisoners enter into and the characteristics of Thai prisons, based on two resources, prison annual records and direct observation. This will illustrate what Thai male prisons look like to the prisoners and staff. The information in this part has been acquired from the Thai Department of Corrections.

#### **Thai prisons**

As explained below, Thai prisons are very different in their nature to those in the UK or other western countries in terms of structural and environmental factors. Therefore, any understanding of aggression in the Thai prison setting needs to recognise this and account for it if the prevention of aggression in this unique setting is to be achieved.

Prisons in Thailand are under the control of and administered according to the same guidelines from the Thai Department of Corrections, Ministry of Justice. At the latest figure, in May 2013, there were 312,585 prisoners in Thailand, 267,181 males



and 45,404 females (Department of Corrections, 2015). These prisoners are distributed to different types of correctional settings which are 34 central prisons, four remand prisons, 49 provincial prisons, 27 district prisons, 24 correctional institutions, 5 houses of relegation and 1 detention house (Department of Corrections, 2013). The majority are convicted for narcotics offences (56.42%), property offences (24.84%) and offences against life (6.63%) (Department of Corrections, 2013).

Staff-to-prisoner ratio has always been a problem in Thai prisons. During the past 10 years, staff-to-prisoner ratios have fluctuated between 1:15 to 1:22 (Department of Corrections, 2013). However, the actual ratio on each work shift could fall to approximately 1:30, as the total number of prison staff has to be divided into shifts. In contrast, staff-to-prisoner ratios in the UK fluctuated between 1:2.4 and 1:2.9 during 1997 to 2009 (UK Parliament, 2009)

The majority of convicted prisoners in Thai prisons are incarcerated for drug offences (56.42%), identified by the Thai Ministry of Justice as an Offence Against Narcotics Law (Department of Corrections, 2013). Drug offences in Thailand – the term includes both possessing and trafficking – are categorised as serious offences (Thailand Drug Act BE 1967). Most crimes have incomparable sentencing to that in the western world with many crimes having hugely disproportionate consequences. However, recently, there has been an attempt to divert prisoners possessing small amounts of drugs to rehabilitation programmes rather than imprisoning them.

### **Thai culture in general and in the prison context**

While prisoners in other countries may choose to keep themselves separate from other prisoners, it is common for Thai prisoners to form groups, which they call

*"houses"*. Each house has its own leader, who is promoted by his own fellows. The number of house members varies from two to more than 40. Each house has been established through the prisoners' own will; no prison authority has been involved. The purpose of a house is for its members to share their food and take care of each other like brothers. New house members are recruited mainly based on their neighbourhood, as prisoners from the same residential area are asked to join a particular house. The newcomer can choose to accept or reject this offer. Some prisoners become house members because they were in the same gangs prior to imprisonment.

The house leader's role is to govern the house, take care of his fellows, end any in-house conflict, and negotiate with any other leader when there is conflict between houses. Usually, any conflict is swiftly put to an end by the house leader(s). In return, house leaders receive respect, status and reputation. The issue of respect is very important in Thai culture and governs general interpersonal behaviour and physical contact. For example, Thai people believe that the head, being the highest part of the body, should be treated with respect. Therefore, touching or slapping someone's head is considered very rude and disrespectful. The exception to this is where an elder touches the head of a younger person. (In Thai culture, great respect is paid to older people.) It is also considered very rude and disrespectful to touch or point to the feet, as they are the lowest part of the body.

Tattoos are also a common feature in Thai prison culture. In Thai prisons, a tattoo can have many meanings: for some, it is the symbol of their group, which represents 'family' to them. It therefore provides a sense of belonging but can also

relate to gang affiliation. Some prisoners stated that they had a tattoo to release the pressure of living inside a crowded prison, whilst others explained that it was a solution to boredom. Since tattoos are quite common in Thai prisons, they are worth studying, as prison-themed or prison-made tattoos have been found to be significantly related to institutional behavioural problems and recidivism (Lozano, Morgan, Murray & Varghese, 2011). Additionally, Phelan and Hunt's (1998) study in the Californian prison system found that prison tattoos referred to gang membership, status and accomplishments.

### **Remand Prison, a sample of the Thai prison setting**

The data collection in this thesis took place in Remand Prison because of the large population size and variety of prisoner characteristics. Although a remand prison, the majority of prisoners in have actually been convicted, and there were no remand prisoners in the study sample. According to the protocol of the Thai Department of Corrections, all new prisoners must be assessed and categorised in terms of security level and rehabilitation purposes at the point of admission at each prison. Therefore, as the data collection process was conducted in Remand prison, the author gives a thorough description of Remand Prison and its procedures below to. There is also a discussion about the differences in theoretical protocols, the application of protocols, and the obstacles to applying them in prisons.

Remand Prison is located in Bangbon district, Bangkok. Founded in 1994, it originally housed 200 male prisoners who had been transferred from Bangkok Remand Prison. Within 19 years, the total number of prisoners rose greatly to 5,781.

Nowadays, ██████████ Remand Prison's infrastructure is divided into six units (wings) by type of prisoner and their offences.

Each wing is divided into cells, where prisoners live together. These cells are effectively cage-like structures, with approximately 25 – 50 prisoners per cell. The size of each cell varies between approximately 5 - 6 metres by 10 – 20 metres and the number of cells in each wing varies between 10 and 20 depending on the size of the wing. The cage-like structure of each cell makes it easy for the prison officers to observe the prisoners.

There are currently 184 prison officers working in ██████████ Remand prison. During each shift, there are five prison officers working on a small wing and seven prison officers working on a large wing, which makes the staff/prisoner ratio even more disproportionate at 1:30. In the daytime, prisoners have to attend prison activities as assigned, e.g., kitchen work, occupation training, or interact in a common area where they can be observed by the prison officers (██████████ Remand Prison, 2013).

### **Prison layout**

As mentioned earlier, there are six units in ██████████ Remand Prison, and each of them is a large two-to-three storey building, surrounded by a fence. It is divided according to the prisoners' current offences and the unit's role. The number of units in each prison might vary, but ultimately they serve the same purpose: to manage various types of prisoner.

Unit 1 is for short-term prisoners, (usually those with sentences of fewer than five years) and prisoners who are about to be released. There is a preparation programme for prisoners before they are released.

Unit 2 is for prisoners who need high security and close observation.

Unit 3 is for prisoners who have committed drug offences (mostly drug abuse). Ideally, there is a rehabilitation programme for prisoners with substance withdrawal symptoms. However, practically, this unit also houses prisoners who have committed other offences and prisoners who have been transferred from other units.

Unit 4 is for prisoners who have committed drug offences (mostly drug trafficking). In addition, this unit contains small shoe and woodwork factories run by the prisoners, and occupational training officers for prisoners who have skills or who are interested in occupation training.

Unit 5 is for newly admitted prisoners. All new prisoners have to go to this unit when they first arrive before being assigned to other units that fit their needs. This process usually takes between two to five weeks.

Unit 6 is for prisoners who do not meet the criteria for any of the other units, and these prisoners are assigned to the paper bag factory.

After a new prisoner is admitted into unit 5, he will be assessed and assigned to the proper unit within a one-month period. Moreover, among these units, units 1, 2 and 3 have less capacity for housing the prisoners. The prison population in unit 1, 2 and 3 is approximately 500-600 prisoners per unit, whereas that of units 4, 5 and 6 is more than 1,000 prisoners per unit, which inevitably results in overcrowded

conditions in these units. As a result, the prisoners do not have personal space and privacy, neither during the day nor at night.

### **Prisoner classification**

Once new prisoners are admitted into the prison (at unit 5), they are assessed before being moved to their designated unit. These are common regulations in all Thai prisons. There are multiple processes for assessing each prisoner, which serve different purposes. There are two main assessments for each prisoner at the admission point. The first assessment, which is theoretically aimed at behavioural control and a rehabilitation plan, will be conducted by an organisational committee. The second classification, which is aimed at assessing a prisoner's benefits and rights, will be carried out by a smaller group – the prison officers' committee – at the unit level.

Additionally, as in ██████████ Remand Prison, there are two groups of prisoners: sentenced prisoners and offenders who are detained on remand. The protocols used with these two groups are different in the following ways:

1. Sentenced prisoners: strategies and assessments used are aimed at behaviour control and rehabilitation.
2. Remand prisoners: strategies and assessments used are aimed at behaviour control.

Each type of assessment leads to different prisoners being categorised for different purposes, which are shown in the following table.

*Table 1.1. Level of prisoners according to each type of assessment*

For the safety and behavioural control dimension	For the rehabilitation dimension
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. highest level of security, e.g., serious offences, long-term sentence (more than 15 years), misconduct during imprisonment</li> <li>2. high security</li> <li>3. medium security</li> <li>4. low security, e.g., near-term prisoners, good manners, short-term sentence</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no risk of reoffending</li> <li>2. suitable for rehabilitation</li> <li>3. difficult to rehabilitate</li> <li>4. special groups, e.g., foreign, physically or mentally disordered or elderly prisoners.</li> </ol>

Remand prisoners would just be rated on the behavioural control dimension and therefore given a score between 1 and 4 but that sentenced prisoners would have a behavioural control score as well as a rehabilitation score. It requires a dynamic process from admission to release, which consists of:

1. Gathering information on prisoner background, assessment of and classifying the prisoner.
2. Planning a proper rehabilitation plan for each prisoner (supposed to be tailor-made), e.g., treatment for drug abuse, occupation training.

3. Implementation of the plan.
4. Follow-up process.
5. Repeating the analysis and classification.
6. Planning the release programme.

A multidisciplinary committee, e.g., prison governor, prison officers, occupational therapist, education officer, psychologist, social welfare officer, medical officer, is required to evaluate each prisoner. This is aimed to holistically evaluate each prisoner and provide a suitable programme for them. Theoretically, after being categorised, prisoners are sent through different channels that serve different categories and are re-evaluated every three to four months in a fairly dynamic way.

### **Prisoner grading**

Another dimension on which all prisoners need to be assessed is the prisoner grading, which is based purely on their behaviour in the prison. Six grades define a prisoner's characteristics: excellent, very good, good, neutral, poor and extremely poor. After they are assessed and assigned to the proper unit, all prisoners are given a neutral grade. Every six months (every June and December) each prisoner will be re-graded according to prison officers' opinions. Although it is aimed at classifying prisoners' behaviour, the classification result is not used for either assessment or rehabilitation purposes. Nevertheless, higher-graded prisoners will receive a reduction in their sentences. An excellent prisoner will receive three months' reduction of his/her sentence per year of imprisonment, whereas prisoners graded poor or extremely poor will not receive any reduction. This grading system has been newly implemented in the prison, as a solution to prisoners' misbehaviour. However,



there is no difference in terms of visitation or other rights or benefits. All prisoners have the same rights regarding visits from family and friends. This right is only removed as a punishment, either as the only punishment or combined with other modalities of punishment, e.g., being moved to a more crowded unit.

This system of grading prisoners is similar to the UK Prison Service's Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) system. The IEP system, introduced in 1995, aims to reward good behaviour and generally control prisoners' behaviour. It is administered through different levels of "rewards" depending on a prisoner's behaviour (Ministry of Justice, 2013).

### **The problem of prisoner classification and the prisoner stream system in Thai prisons**

It is obvious that this classification process requires a lot of staff from multi-disciplinary backgrounds to work on it. However, considering the fact that the number of staff working in prisons is limited and not every prison has all the required professions, this makes it very difficult in practice. Ideally, the Thai Department of Corrections' protocol for prisoner classification aims to be an effective tool to evaluate each prisoner holistically and pave the way to tailor-made rehabilitation programmes which ultimately improve prisoner behaviour and reduce the recidivism rate. However, practically, it is difficult and barely possible to do so as it requires time, a team of multi-disciplinary prison workers, and a rigorous follow-up process.

Additionally, there seem to be repetitive processes and overlap between these two evaluations, which are also time-consuming. Therefore, in practice, prison officers choose a short cut by ticking evaluation forms based on what they know about

particular prisoners themselves, rather than through any committee's opinion. As a result, every six months, only the poorly behaved prisoners will be downgraded, and those who are not recorded as misbehaving will be upgraded. This does not follow the protocol, which states that every prisoner has to be evaluated every six months.

## **Overview of the thesis**

Having outlined the background and theoretical framework of the thesis, an overview of the chapters will now be provided.

Chapter 2 is a systematic review of previous literature on prison aggression among male prisoners internationally and the factors related to it. The majority of the previous research is from western countries. Factors found from these studies were classified based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model.

Chapter 3 describes the tool that was used in the study reported in Chapter 4, the Direct Aggressive Behaviour Checklist (DABC), to identify aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners. This chapter gives details on the tool's design, piloting and testing for its reliability and validity.

Chapter 4 provides details about the characteristics of recruited aggressive and non-aggressive male prisoners. Most of the information was obtained from file review and some was from interviews with the prisoners. Additionally, the differences between the two groups are compared.

Chapter 5 uses the Stimuli, Organism, Response and Consequences (SORC) for of analysis to discuss the aggressive prisoners' perspectives on their aggressive incidents in the prison. This chapter, focusing on the aggressive group only, uses semi-

structured interviews to further identify other factors that can affect prisoners' aggressive behaviour, e.g., environmental factors, childhood background.

Chapter 6 focuses on the differences between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners in how they differentially make sense of their actions, using semi-structured interviews to do so. Five prisoners from each group participated in interviews which were then analysed using the method of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Chapter 7 is a summary of the findings of the whole thesis in comparison to what has been found in the previous literature. Recommendations and the limitations of this thesis are explored and discussed.

## Chapter 2

### Risk Factors for Physical Aggression in Adult Male Prisoners: A Systematic Review

#### Introduction

This chapter aims to explore risk factors for the perpetration of physical aggression by men in prison. Research into this phenomenon has predominantly been conducted in the western world, yet no review has attempted to collate this information or review it systematically. The Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1994) is adapted as a framework to explore risk factors for male prisoners' physical aggression and their interactions at each level of the model.

#### The current review

A preliminary search for previous literature reviews that have examined *"factors related to physical aggression in prison"* was conducted by searching electronic databases including PsycINFO, Web of Science and PubMed. No previous reviews were found except a critical review by Schenk and Fremouw (2012) of individual characteristics related to prison violence. However, this review mainly focused on prisoners' individual and clinical features, which were young age, racial minority, low education level, criminal history, and psychological variables, thereby neglecting the other levels of the Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, a need was identified for a systematic literature review of prison aggression drawing on research representing all levels of the Ecological Model as well as interactions between multiple levels.

## **Aims and objectives**

This chapter aims to systematically review the empirical research on factors associated with an increased likelihood of physical aggression in adult male prisoners. The Ecological Model was used as a framework to structure and interpret the results.

## **Measure**

### **Sources of literature**

The following electronic databases were selected for the systematic literature review.

1. PsycINFO (Ovid) [1967 to October Week 2 2014]
2. Web of Science (ISI) [1900 to 2014]
3. PubMed [January 1900 to October 2014]
4. MEDLINE (Ovid) [1946 to October Week 2 2014]
5. Social Sciences Citation Index (ISI) [1900 to 2014]
6. Embase (Ovid) [1974 to 2014 October 08]
7. Geobase [1900 to 2014]

The databases are from various academic fields as factors relating to prisoner behaviour are studied by multiple disciplines. The majority of databases mainly focus on the social sciences. However, Medline and Pubmed are medical databases that tap into psychological disorders that could affect behaviour. Additionally, Geobase is a geography database chosen as it may contain papers that study the effect of the prison environment on prisoner behaviour. The search was originally conducted in August 2013 and updated in October 2014 to collect more recent studies.

## Procedure

### Search strategies

A standardised search strategy was employed within each of the electronic databases using the search terms described in Table 2.1. A wide range of synonyms and terms were used that are associated with physical aggression to capture as broad a literature as possible. The actual syntax used in each search is described in Appendix B. Due to time constraints, the search of all databases was limited to English language articles only. Wildcard characters were used to ensure textual variations of terms were captured. The results of each search were saved in Reference Manager.

*Table 2.1. Search terms*

Prison*		Aggress*		Factor
Jail		Violen*		Cause
Correction*		Bully*		Causal
Penal		Victim*		Risk
Detention		Misconduct		factor
Detainee	And	Perpetrat*	And	Attitude
Remand		Environment		Predictor
Incarcerat*		Abus*		
Inmate		Assault		
Secure unit		Harm		
Institution*		Infraction		
Penitentiary		Harassment		
		Misbehavio*		

## **Study selection**

After completing the searches of the electronic databases, duplicates were removed. The author subsequently assessed the titles and abstracts in order to remove irrelevant papers. Then, exclusion and inclusion criteria were applied for further screening (see Table 2.2). Female prisoners and juvenile offenders were excluded as the review focused on adult male prisoners. Only studies that had investigated physical aggression as a variable were included. Additionally, violent incidents had to have taken place inside the prison, and could not include self-harm or suicide. This inclusion criteria was informed by the definition of aggression adopted in this thesis, which is “the action of threats and/or physical harm to others, rape, arson, robbery and riot” (Edgar, O’Donnell & Martin, 2003) but focused on only the mental, verbal and physical acts of aggression. In addition, self-harm and suicide were not included in this study as aggression towards others is more commonly found in Thai prisons. In addition, self-harm and suicide in prison are another major area of study which is worthy of exploration in its own right in a future systematic review. Included studies could be case-control, cross-sectional or qualitative in design, but opinion pieces, editorials, literature reviews and case reports were excluded. In addition, since different authors used different terms to define physical aggression such as prison misconduct and bullying, only papers that strictly assessed physical aggression were included. After applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria, where papers needed further assessment (e.g., in terms of the behaviours measured), the author obtained and read the full-text articles before deciding whether to include or exclude them. Additionally, the reference lists of relevant articles were hand-searched

to identify any further papers that had not appeared in any database search. The authors of the resulting papers were contacted to enquire about any further publications that may be available. This resulted in a further three papers which were then scrutinised using the same inclusion and exclusion criteria.



Table 2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

	<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
1. Participants	Male offenders, Age 18 years and over	Female prisoners Juvenile offenders
2. Comparators (Where relevant)	Prisoners who are not physically aggressive during incarceration	None
3. Exposures	Factors/characteristics that contribute to prison physical aggression	None
4. Outcome variables	Prison physical aggression, violence or assault	Aggression, violence or assaults that happened before incarceration, self- harm, suicide
5. Study design	Case control, cross- sectional qualitative study	Opinion, case report, editorial, literature review
6. Language	English	Non-English

## **Treatment of data**

### **Quality assessment**

After applying the inclusion/exclusion criteria and assessing the full text for relevance, each paper was assessed for the quality of the study and its methodology using the Quality Assessment Form (see Appendix C). The design of this form was informed by the Cochrane Collaboration and Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2011) guidelines for assessing each stage of a study in both qualitative and quantitative research (e.g., looking for selection bias, attrition bias, performance, detection bias, credibility transferability and confirmability). For each stage of analysis, listed items were assessed on a scale of 0 – 2 to determine overall quality of each study in the area of prison aggression. Each item was scored as follows:

0 = no/condition not met

1 = partly/condition partially met or insufficient information

2 = yes/condition fully met

Scores were summed to produce a total score (which was also converted into a percentage) for each paper. In order to review only good-quality papers, a cut-off point of 70% was chosen. This cut-off point was chosen because it was an average calculation based on previous theses and published systematic reviews (Fjeldsoe, Neuhaus, Winkler & Eakin, 2011; Jones, 2011). Twenty-one studies received a percentage score greater than 70% (Range: 76-84%).

## **Data extraction**

In order to systematise the data within the reviewed studies, a data extraction form (see Appendix D) was designed and utilised. This allowed the author to collect the data from the different studies in an objective way (e.g., aims of the study, study design, population, methodology, analysis methods used and limitations).

## **Results**

Figure 2.1 summarises the process of the systematic literature review. Ultimately, 21 papers were included in the review. The studies by Owen, et al. and Cooke, Johnstone and Gadon, both in 2008, provided guidelines for assigning each factor to different levels of the Ecological Model. Details of this assignment can be seen in Table 2.3.

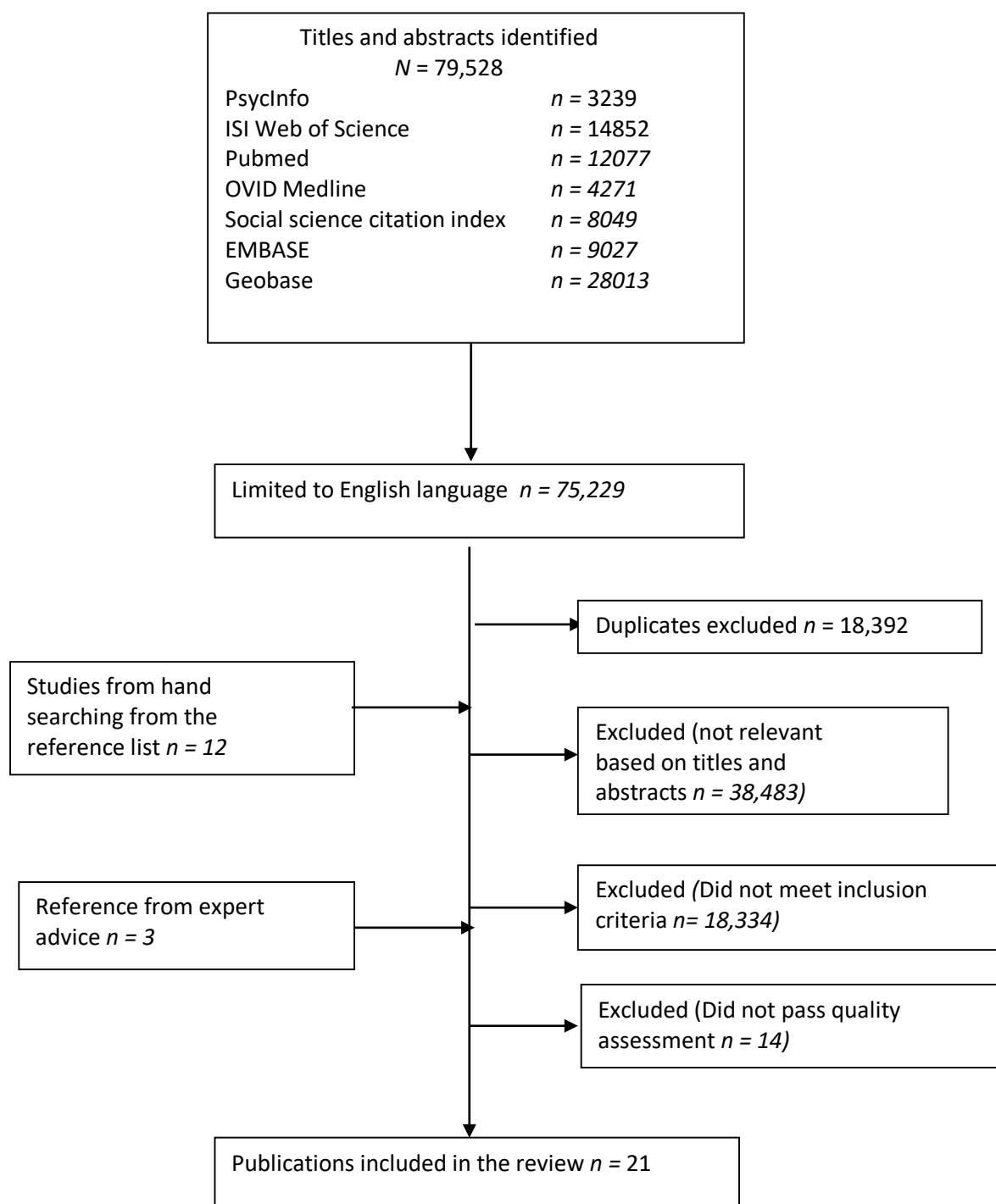


Figure 2.1. Study selection process

*Table 2.3. Summary of principal findings from the empirical studies included in the systematic review*

<b>Authors &amp; location</b>	<b>Aims of study</b>	<b>Population &amp; setting</b>	<b>Measurement tools</b>	<b>Factors increasing physical aggression perpetration</b>	<b>Level of Quality ecological model explored</b>	<b>score</b>
<b>Allison &amp; Ireland (2010) UK</b>	To explore the relationship between social and physical environmental factors supportive of bullying and levels of bullying	<b>n = 261</b> Adult male prisoners in a Category B prison	1. Direct and Indirect Prisoner Checklist-Scaled Version Revised (DIPC-SCALED-r; Ireland, 2007) 2. Prison Environment Scale (PES; Allison, 2007) 3. Brief Measure of Fear of Bullying Scale (BMFBS; Allison & Ireland, 2009)	Physical and social environmental factors, (e.g., supervision, rules, security, population, organisational structure, prisoner supportive attitude towards aggression, material goods, prisoner subculture)	Individual, and community level	79%
<b>Cooke, Johnstone &amp; Gadon (2008) UK</b>	To explore the relationship between situational risk factors and institutional violence within the prison settings and develop an assessment tool (PRISM) for situational risk factors	<b>n = 26</b> (18 were current and ex-employees of 5 Scottish Prisons and 8 were currently incarcerated prisoners (with history of violence) in 5 Scottish prisons	A 22-question semi-structured interview for staff and an 18-question semi-structured interview for prisoners (Gadon, Johnstone & Cooke, 2008)	Five domains of situational risk factors: history of institutional violence, staff features, organisational factors, physical environment and case management	Individual and community level	81%

<b>Cunningham &amp; Sorensen (2006) USA</b>	To investigate the predictive ability and extend the use of RASP-Potosi and review factors that relate to prison physical aggression	<b>n = 14088</b> adult male prisoners from 123 prison facilities in Florida DOC	1. Risk Assessment Scale for Prison (RASP-potosi; Cunningham, Sorensen & Reidy, 2005) 2. Retrospective coding for prisoners' behaviour	Younger age group, short-term sentence, low education level	Individual level	78%
<b>Cunningham &amp; Sorensen (2007a) USA</b>	To study the factors related to prison physical aggression	<b>n = 136</b> recently incarcerated male capital inmates in Texas prisons	Staff's observation of violent incident based on definition provided	Young age, previous incarceration, concurrent robbery or burglary in capital offence	Individual level	84%
<b>Cunningham &amp; Sorensen (2007b) USA</b>	To identify the predictive factors for violent misconduct in closed custody inmates	<b>n = 24514</b> adult male inmates in closed custody in a Florida prison	A retrospective review based on operational definition of prison misconduct	Young age, short-term sentence, prison gang affiliation, prior prison violence and prior prison term	Individual and relationship level	84%
<b>Gaes &amp; McGuire (1985) USA</b>	To study the relationship between prison crowding, age and other variables and assaults in prison	<b>627</b> observations of assault in 19 federal male prisons	Federal Bureau of Prison report during 33 months' observation	Crowded environment was related to inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults in comparison to age	Community level	76%

<b>Griffin &amp; Hepburn (2006) USA</b>	To study the relationship of prison gang affiliation and physical aggression in early years of imprisonment	<b>n = 21581</b> adult male inmates from Arizona prisons	Formal prison records of gang membership criteria (3-year observation) 2. A dichotomous indicator of an official record of major infraction (assault, fights, threats and weapons)	During the first 3 years of imprisonment, prison gang affiliation played a more important role in prison aggression than young age and previous criminal history, which were also significant predictors for prison misconduct	Individual and relationship level	79%
<b>Lahm (2008) USA</b>	To identify the risk factors of non-deadly Inmate-on-inmate assaults at individual and prison levels	<b>n = 1054A</b> adult male inmates from Kentucky and Tennessee prisons	self-report form of prisoner engaging in non-deadly inmate-on-inmate assault during the past 12months	Among other significant predictors, young age was the strongest predictor. More assaults took place in a crowded place or a place with high numbers of younger prisoners	Individual and community level	80%
<b>Lahm (2009) USA</b>	To identify the risk factors of inmate-on-prison staff assaults in individual and prison levels	<b>n = 1054</b> adult male inmates from 30 prisons in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee	A self-report form of prisoner engaging in non-deadly inmate-on-staff assault during the past 12 months	Younger age was the strongest predictor. Prison violence took place more in prisons where higher proportions of non-white prisoners and larger staff-to-inmate ratio existed	Individual and community level	80%
<b>Lee &amp; Edens (2005) South Korea</b>	To examine alternative factors that relate to prisoners' violence during their imprisonment	<b>n = 777</b> adult male inmates from prisons across South Korea	A self-report form regarding the prisoner engaging in prison misconduct (Lee &Edens, 2005)	There were 2 types of factors that predict the risk of prison violence, dynamic factors (delusional thoughts and correctional officer's evaluation of risk) and static factors (criminal records and rule infraction during incarceration)	Individual, relationship and community level	73%

<b>McCorkle (1992) USA</b>	To explore the relationship between prison violence and inmate lifestyle and behaviour	<b>n = 300</b> Adult male prisoners in a maximum security facility	A prisoner's passive precautionary behaviour questionnaire (McCorkle, 1992)	Aggressive prisoners were usually in young age group who earned privileges from the prison	Individual level	76%
<b>McCorkle, Miethe &amp; Drass (1995) USA</b>	To identify the structural and environmental factors that relate to prison violence	adult male prisoners from 371 US correctional institutions	Staff report on 3 types of prison violence (inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults and riot)	Poor prison management (e.g., lack of prison programme, disproportionate staff-inmate ratio) were related to inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults, whereas structural and environmental factors were related to prison riot	Community level	81%
<b>Morris, Carriaga, Diamond, Piquero &amp; Piquero (2012) USA</b>	To study the effect of prison strain on prisoners' misconduct behaviour	<b>n = 6328</b> adult male inmates from 47 Southern States US prisons	Staff report on prison misconduct	Prison environmental strain (fearful, threatening and violent environment, e.g., loss of privacy, overcrowded condition, lack of resources) relates to prison misconduct	Community level	79%
<b>Neller, Denney, Pietz &amp; Thomlinson (2006) USA</b>	To examine the link between trauma and prison violence	<b>n = 93</b> adult males prisoners from a US Midwest maximum security facility	1. Traumatic Event Questionnaire (TEQ; Vrana & Lauterbach, 1994) 2. Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979)	History of traumatic events and witnessing serious prison violence	Individual level	83%



<b>Ohlsson &amp; Ireland (2011)</b> UK	To explore the relationship between physical aggression and offending motivation, and factors that relate to aggression	<b>n = 206</b> adult male prisoners from a Category C training prison, UK	1. Multidimensional Anger Inventory (MAI; Siegel, 1986) 2. Aggression Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ; Ireland, 2008) 3. Offending Motivation Questionnaire (OFQ; Gudjohnsson & Sigurdsson, 2004) 4. Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1991)	Current violent offence, financial status, compliance, anger provocation, long-term sentence and underlying motives	Individual level	82%
<b>Sorensen, Cunningham Vigen &amp; Woods (2011)</b> USA	To identify the characteristics of the perpetrator and factors associated with inmate-on-staff assaults	<b>n = 79</b> inmate-on-staff assaults caused by 96 male inmates in US prison settings	Coding information extracted from Emergency Action Centre (EAC) database	Young age group, black ethnicity, prison gang affiliation, having committed a violent offence	Individual, and relationship level	82%
<b>Turner &amp; Ireland (2010)</b> UK	To assess the relationship between prisoners' intra-group bullying and personality characteristics and beliefs about physical aggression	<b>n = 213</b> adult male prisoners from Category B prison	1. Direct and Indirect Prisoner Checklist-Scaled (DIPC-SCALED; Ireland & Ireland, 2008) 2. International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1999) 3. Revised Expagg scale (Archer & Haigh, 1997)	The perpetrator group was found to have high instrumental aggressive beliefs and neuroticism, low agreeableness, low conscientiousness and low openness to experience, and history of indirect aggression	Individual level	81%

<b>Walters (2011) USA</b>	To examine whether the relationship between major mental illness and prison violence was mediated by criminal thinking	<b>n = 2487</b> 1. adult male inmates in a US medium security correctional facility	General Criminal Thinking score (GCT) from Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles (PICTS; Walters, 1995)	General criminal thinking significantly mediated the relationship between major mental illness and prison violence	Individual level	77%
<b>Walters &amp; Crawford (2013) USA</b>	To study Major Mental Illness (MMI) and violence history (VH) as predictors for institutional violence and recidivism	<b>n = 2627</b> adult male prisoners from medium secure correctional settings	Psychiatric diagnosis list	History of violence and major mental illness	Individual level	79%
<b>Wood, Moir &amp; James (2008) UK</b>	To study the relationship of gang affiliation and prison bullying	<b>n = 141</b> adult male prisoners from a category B prison in south-east England	1. Direct and Indirect Prisoner Behaviour Checklist (DIPC-R; Ireland, 2002) 2. Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement Scale (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia, 2001) 3. Prisoner Gang Activities Questionnaire (Wood, 2002)	A prisoner who is involved in gang-related activities has higher risk for prison bullying	Relationship level	84%
<b>Worrall &amp; Morris (2012) USA</b>	To study the relationship of in-prison gang integration and inmate-on-inmate violence	<b>n(1) = 2000</b> <b>n(2) = 2169</b> adult male prisoners who were incarcerated for at least 3 years	Prison staff report of violent incidents	Prisoners involved with in-prison gang affiliation were found to have higher risk of inmate-on-inmate violence than those who were not	Relationship level	78%

## Overview of Reviewed Studies

### *Settings*

All of the selected studies were conducted within prison settings of varying security in the UK and US, with the exception of one that was conducted in multiple prisons in South Korea. Five studies were conducted in UK prisons; three of these were Category B prisons (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Turner & Ireland, 2010; Wood, Moir & James, 2008); one was a Category C prison (Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011); and the fifth was conducted in a number of Scottish prisons (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008).

Sixteen of the selected studies were conducted in the US; twelve of these spanned multiple prison settings (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Gars & McGuire, 1985; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009; Morris et al., 2012; Sorensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods, 2011; Walters, 2011; Walters & Crawford, 2013; Worrall & Morris, 2012); and two were conducted in a maximum security prison (McCorkle, 1992; Neller, Denney, Pietz & Thomlinson, 2006).

### *Study participants*

The 21 studies were conducted with adult male prisoners, as specified in the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Only one study included both prisoners (eight male prisoners) and prison employees (18 current and ex-prison employees) (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008). The sample sizes in each study varied from 26 (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008) to 24,514 participants (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b). Two studies did not mention the exact number of participants, instead reporting observations of assaults from over 19

federal prisons (Gaes & McGuire, 1985) or rates of prison violence per 100 prisoners among 371 US correctional settings (McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995). Three studies had fewer than 100 participants (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Neller et al., 2006; Sorensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods, 2011). Seven studies had between 100 and 1000 participants (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Lee & Edens, 2005; McCorkle, 1992; Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011; Turner & Ireland, 2010; Wood, Moir & James, 2008). Eight of the 21 selected papers had more than 1,000 but less than 10,000 participants (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009; Morris et al., 2012; Walters, 2011; Walters & Crawford, 2013; Worrall & Morris, 2012). Finally, there were two studies that had more than 10,000 participants (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b).

### *Measurement tools*

Although these studies all had the same goal: to study factors that relate to prison physical aggression, they used different tools to measure violence and aggression and to collect data on exploratory variables. The measurement tools can roughly be categorised into two types: tools that were designed and used in multiple studies, and tools that were designed for the purpose of use in that particular study.

A good example of standardised tools that were designed and used in multiple studies is the different versions of the Direct and Indirect Prisoner Behaviour Checklist (DIPC). Three studies utilised different versions of the DIPC (the DIPC-Scaled, the DIPC-SCALED-r and the DIPC-SCALED). These versions of the DIPC tool listed acts of direct and indirect aggression (physically, sexually, verbally, theft-related and psychologically), their frequency, and which participants had been involved. Additionally, they were tested for

validity and reliability and were used along with other assessment tools (e.g., the Prison Environment Scale (Allison, 2007); the Brief Measure of Fear of Bullying Scale (Allison & Ireland, 2010); the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg, 1999); Revised Expagg Scales (Turner & Ireland, 2010); the Mechanism of Moral Disengagement Scale (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Regalia, 2011); and the Prisoner Gang Activities Questionnaire (Wood, Moir & James, 2008)).

Additionally, other standardised tools were also used by researchers to study factors that related to prison aggression (e.g., Aggression Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ-I); the Multi-dimensional Anger Inventory (MAI); the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) in Ohlsson and Ireland's 2011 study; Risk Assessment Scale for Prison (RASP) in Cunningham and Sorensen's 2006 study; the Traumatic Event Questionnaire (TEQ); and Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) in Neller et al.'s 2006 study). These tools were used as self-report forms except for RASP, which was completed by the researchers. The advantage of using these tools is that they have established reliability and validity, except for AMQ-I, which still needs further evaluation to assess its validity and reliability. However, this type of tool may not be tailor-made for specific prison environments.

Other types of measurement tools were specifically designed for use in particular studies. Operational definitions were used to clarify the terms 'criminal acts of violence' or 'inmate misconduct' in the data collection process, mostly based on previous literature. A number of the selected studies set the operational definition and used this as a measurement tool to collate consistent data on prison violence misconduct for both cohort and retrospective studies. The definitions were used by researchers when reviewing a

prisoner's file data and for both staff and prisoner reports to ensure data were collected systemically and consistently. These definitions generally matched the description of physical aggression which formed one of the inclusion criteria. The studies that used this type of tool were Cunningham and Sorensen (2007a,b); Cooke, Johnstone and Gadon (2008); Gaes and McGuire (1985); Griffin and Hepburn (2006); Lahm (2008); Lahm (2009); Lee and Edens (2005); McCorkle (1992); McCorkle, Miethe and Drass (1995); Morris et al. (2012); Sorensen et al. (2011); Walters and Crawford (2013); and Worrall and Morris (2012). All used tailor-made measures for each study in order to focus on variables of interest. However, these studies did not pilot their measures, which brings the reliability and validity of their tools and data into question. Additionally, some of these studies did not state the exact types of acts that were considered to be aggression, but instead used a general definition (e.g., Walters & Crawford, 2013). While this definition did reflect the definition used for the inclusion criteria, it would have been informative had the authors also included a breakdown of the actual acts on which they were collecting data.

In terms of measurement tools that were designed by the researchers for their specific study, these tools could be completed by the prison staff (McCorkle, 1992; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Lee & Edens, 2005) the prisoners (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; McCorkle, 1992) or the researchers themselves (Walters & Crawford, 2013). The method of data collection used with these tools varied (e.g., it was used as part of a questionnaire pack (McCorkle, 1992) or was delivered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008, Lee & Edens, 2005)). Although such measures improve the systematic nature in which data are collated, some studies did not report that

the tool had been piloted or that its validity and reliability had been established (McCorkle, 1992; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008).

### ***Personal and environmental factors involved in prison physical aggression***

Collectively the reviewed studies revealed multiple factors that contribute to prison aggression and which sit at three different levels of the Ecological Model. Some results for the same factor were contradictory, which will be discussed below.

#### *1. Individual level*

##### *1.1. Age*

Whilst conducted with different population sizes in different settings, all studies unanimously showed similar results: that prisoners in younger age groups were at higher risk of engaging in prison aggression. When looking in greater depth at age ranges, there were some differences in the ages of prisoners at risk. McCorkle's (1992) (quality score 76%) study with 300 adult male prisoners in maximum security facilities suggested that prisoners under 21 years of age were the most likely to perpetrate prison violence, followed by the 21 – 25 year olds ( $p < .001$ ). This study produced the same finding as two of Cunningham and Sorensen's 2007 studies ( $p < .001$ ), though the latter were conducted with completely different population sizes, 136 recently incarcerated male inmates in Texas prisons and 24,514 male inmates in close custody in Florida prisons (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b) (quality scores 84% and 84%). However, in two of Lahm's studies in 2008 (quality score 80%) and 2009 (quality score 80%), it was suggested that being in the younger age group (less than 25 years old) was the strongest predictor for inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-prison staff assaults ( $p < .05$ ). The age range was wider in Sorensen et

al.'s (2011) study (quality score 82%), which stated that the highest-risk age group was the youngest one (20 – 29 years old) ( $p < .001$ ). Nonetheless, Cunningham and Sorensen's (2006) (quality score 75%) research, conducted with 14,088 adult male prisoners in 123 Florida prison settings, showed that prisoners aged less than 35 years had a higher risk of aggression than older prisoners.

## 1.2. Psychological variables

The reviewed studies have cited different psychological factors associated with prison violence (e.g., major mental illness, delusional thoughts, anger, instrumental aggressive beliefs, history of trauma and criminal thinking). The results of these studies demonstrated that the same factors played a significantly important role in prison aggression. Two studies in different international populations and prison settings proved the role of major mental illness and delusional thoughts to be strong predictors of prison misconduct (Lee & Edens, 2005; Walters & Crawford, 2013) ( $p < .01$ ) (quality scores 73% and 79%) and ( $\chi^2(3, N = 772) = 24.60, p < .001$ ) respectively. Both studies suggested stronger effects were found when these factors were combined with a history of violence ( $p < .01$ ). This corresponded with Walters (2011) (quality score 77%), who investigated 2,487 male inmates in a US medium-secure facility and found general criminal thinking to be a significant mediator of the effects of major mental illness on prison violence.

Similarly, Neller et al.'s (2006) study with 93 adult male inmates in a US Midwest maximum security facility suggested that a history of trauma and witnessing serious violence were important predictors for perpetrating violence. The results from multiple regression analysis showed that prisoners with life histories of traumatic events would significantly



become more violent in prison than those who did not have such trauma history ( $F(1, 79) = 4.25, p = .043$ ). Furthermore, prisoners who witnessed serious violence would become more likely to perpetrate violence than those who did not witness serious violence (Neller et al., 2006) (quality score 83%).

The effects of thinking patterns on violence were also discussed in Turner and Ireland (2010) (quality score 81%), who investigated 213 adult male prisoners in a Category B prison. The result from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1999) subscales showed that prisoners with instrumental aggressive beliefs, low agreeableness, conscientiousness and intellect ( $p < .01$ ), and high neuroticism (emotional instability) ( $p < .05$ ) had a higher chance of being categorised into the pure bully group. Similarly, Ohlsson and Ireland's (2011) (quality score 82%) study also found that affective state (anger) was significantly and positively related to core aggression motivation ( $F(1, 204) = 9.31; p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$ ).

### 1.3. Substance abuse

Few studies investigated this factor. Walters and Crawford (2013) (quality score 79%) examined the effect of major mental illness and violence history on prison misconduct. Although it was not the main purpose of the study, it was weighted as one of the important variables that can affect a prisoner's violent behaviour. It was proved that major mental illness and history of violence, when co-morbid with substance abuse or dependence, can increase the risk of prison violence.

#### 1.4. Education level

Only one selected study examined the relationship of literacy level to prison aggression, which was Cunningham and Sorensen's (2006) study. The study was conducted with 14,088 adult male prisoners in 123 Florida prison settings using the extended version of the Risk Assessment Scale for Prison (RASP) to examine its predictive ability and review factors that relate to prison physical aggression. This study used the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as a measurement and the cut-off point is at 9.0 or more, as 12 years in school or General Education Development (GED) classes. It was found that prisoners with  $TABE > 9.0$  were less likely to engage in prison misconduct during the first year of imprisonment than those with  $TABE < 9.0$  ( $p < .001$ ). Literacy level was one of the two best predictors for future misconduct (the other being age group) (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006) (quality score 78%).

#### 1.5. Current offence

There are two aspects of current offence that should be considered, type of offence and length of prison sentence. In terms of type of offence, findings differed between studies. Ohlsson and Ireland (2011) (quality score 82%) showed a relationship between current violent offence and prison aggression. This study investigated 206 adult male prisoners in a Category C training prison in the UK. From the Aggression Motivation Questionnaire (AMQ) analysis, it was concluded that prisoners with violent offence types were more likely to experience pleasure from their aggression than prisoners with non-violent offence types ( $F(1,201) = 7.01, p < .01, r = .11$ ). This is consistent with Sorensen et al.'s (2011) study, which aimed to identify risk factors for prison staff assaults. Based on 79 assaults, findings

significantly suggested that prisoners with violent offences were four times more likely to perpetrate assaults against staff ( $p < .001$ ) (Sorensen et al., 2011) (quality score 82%). Furthermore, Cunningham and Sorensen's (2007a) study investigated 136 recently incarcerated men in Texas prison settings in 2007. It aimed to study the specific factors that related to prison misconduct. They found that prisoners with drug offences were significantly less violent in comparison to prisoners with other types of current offences (e.g., property, public order, and violent offence) ( $p < .001$ ). In addition, prisoners with concurrent robbery or burglary in the index offence had a higher risk of engaging in prison misconduct than prisoners with other types of offences (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a) (quality score 84%).

Considering the length of incarceration, findings from the selected studies were quite controversial. Ohlsson and Ireland (2011) found that prisoners serving long-term sentences (more than 10 years) had a higher risk of engaging in institutional violence than prisoners with short-term sentences ( $p < .05$ ). However, Cunningham and Sorensen (2006) studied 14,088 male prisoners in 123 prisons in Florida and found that younger prisoners with a short-term sentence (less than five years) had an increased chance of prison misconduct in comparison to prisoners serving longer sentences (more than five years). The prisoners with the shortest-term sentences (less than five years) had a significantly higher risk of being involved in prison violence ( $p < .05$ ) (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006). These findings also corresponded with their 2007 study with a larger group of inmates, 24,514 male prisoners in closed custody in Florida prisons. Logistic regression found that the shorter the term of sentence, the higher the risk of prison violence, especially for those with

sentences of less than five years ( $p < .001$ ) (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b) (quality score 84%).

#### 1.6. History of violence during previous imprisonment and criminal history

Previous research has consistently found that prisoners with a history of violent crime pose a higher risk of engaging in prison misconduct in comparison to prisoners without a violent history. Cooke, Johnstone and Gadon (2008) (quality score 81%) studied the relationship between situational risk factors and institutional violence among 26 participants (18 current and ex-prison employees and eight current prisoners) in five Scottish prisons. The study ultimately produced a risk prevention strategy called Promoting Risk Interventions by Situational Management (PRISM). A history of institutional violence was included in one of the five important domains of PRISM. The study found that the characteristics of violent history that should be taken into consideration were: whether it took place in the last two years; escalation of violence; diversity of violence (e.g., change in type, victim); and change of complaint from the prisoners themselves. History of institutional violence became one of the strongest factors to predict violence in current incarceration.

Walters and Crawford (2013) (quality score 79%) also supported this finding in an experiment with 2,627 adult male prisoners in medium-secure correctional facilities. Cox Regression showed that history of violence, when co-morbid with major mental illness, could significantly increase the risk of aggression in current imprisonment ( $\beta = .110$ ,  $p < .05$ ). History of violence alone also predicted recidivism in its own right. The importance of this factor was supported by Turner and Ireland (2010) (quality score 81%), who demonstrated

the importance of understanding different types of aggression among 213 adult male prisoners in a Category B prison in the UK, using DIPC-SCALED, EXPAGG and IPIP as measurements of prisoner intra-group bullying. The study outcome revealed that history of indirect aggression significantly increased the rate of perpetration and victimisation in current imprisonment.

In terms of prior arrest or conviction, the reviewed research suggested a strong relationship between number of previous arrests/convictions and prison violence; the more arrests the higher the risk ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ). Specifically, prisoners who were arrested for greater numbers of interpersonal violent offences were more likely to be violent in prison. Considering history of violence during previous incarceration, it was clear that prisoners with a history of violence during their last imprisonment were significantly more likely to engage in prison violence during their current prison term ( $\beta = .626, p < .01$ ). If there was a history of involvement in major prison misconduct, the risk of violence during current incarceration was increased. This is also consistent with Lee and Edens (2005) (quality score 73%), who examined aggression in multiple prison settings across South Korea. Criminal history and rule infraction were described as the important static risk factors for prison misconduct. It was found that prisoners with previous criminal history or rule violations had a significantly higher risk of engaging in prison violence ( $\chi^2(7, N= 777) = 50.21, p < .001$ ).

This finding is consistent with that of Cunningham and Sorensen (2007a), who explored characteristics that relate to prison misconduct among a group of 136 male prisoners in Texas prisons. Findings showed that recently incarcerated prisoners with a history of prior imprisonment had a significantly higher risk of prison misconduct than those

without such a history (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a) (quality score 84%). Interestingly, the authors found similar results in an additional study with 24,514 male prisoners in Florida prisons (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b) (quality score 84%). They found that history of violence during previous incarceration significantly predicted risk of violence in current imprisonment ( $p < .01$ ). Moreover, this study demonstrated that prisoners with a history of prior imprisonments also had a significantly higher risk of being involved in prison violence during current incarceration ( $p < .01$ ).

## *2. Relationship level*

### *2.1. Gang affiliation*

Five studies focused on prisoners' current activity in prison gangs. These studies support the importance of gang affiliation as a predictive factor of violent prison misconduct. Griffin and Hepburn (2006) (quality score 79%) found a significantly stronger relationship between gang affiliation and prison misconduct than age group and criminal history, especially during the first three years of imprisonment ( $p \leq .01$ , one-tailed). This is consistent with Cunningham and Sorensen's (2007b) (quality score 84%) study of 24,514 adult male inmates in closed custody in Florida prison settings. A logistic regression analysis demonstrated a relationship between factors and prison misbehaviours. The results suggested that prison gang affiliation was a strong predictor for prison misconduct ( $p < .001$ ). This is also consistent with their later, 2011, study, which explored 79 inmate-on-staff assaults, caused by 96 inmates, and supported the significant effect of gang affiliation on higher rates of inmate-on-staff assaults ( $p < .01$ ) (Sorensen et al., 2011) (quality score 82%).

Wood, Moir and James (2008) (quality score 84%) and Worrall and Morris (2012) (quality score 78%) have also provided support for this relationship ( $z = 3.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

## 2.2. Race and ethnicity

As the studies looked at race and ethnicity as ethnic groups, the concept of race and ethnicity therefore falls into the relationship level. The issue of race and ethnicity and their relevance to prison misconduct was considered in two studies. Sorensen et al. (2011) (quality score 82%) found black ethnicity to be associated with inmate-on-staff assaults. Additionally, race and ethnicity were highlighted in research by Lahm (2009) (quality score 80%), who found that having a larger proportion of non-white prisoners was a significant predictor for higher risk of inmate-on-inmate assaults. However, these findings could vary from this study as it was conducted in Thai prison settings among groups of Thai prisoners only.

## 3. *Community level*

Studies that explored the impact of prison environment on prisoners' violent behaviour revealed four important variables, as discussed below.

### 3.1. Poor prison environment

Allison and Ireland (2010) and Cooke, Johnstone and Gadon (2008) (quality scores 79% and 81%) provided descriptions of environmental factors in prison that could significantly affect prisoners' behaviour. To be more specific, an increase in the prison population can affect the quality of staff supervision and their ability to detect bullying. It can also lead to differing temporal patterns of risk, with high-risk times when more assaults happen coinciding with poorer levels of staff supervision (i.e., on weekends compared to

weekdays). Similarly, certain staff characteristics can be associated with a higher risk of prisoner aggression (i.e., staff inexperience, lack of staff training, and low morale). Poor prison management and poor prison structure has also been found to significantly increase risk of prison aggression. Material goods, which can become a form of currency, can also increase the likelihood of violence. Although the two studies were conducted in different settings and utilised different groups of participants (a group of 261 adult male prisoners in a Category B prison and a group of both prisoners and current and ex-prison employees in five Scottish prisons respectively), they both found that environmental factors significantly relate to bullying behaviour, victimisation and prison misconduct ( $p < .05$ ).

### 3.2. Poor staff/inmate ratio

Two studies found that poor staff/inmate ratio and staff characteristics significantly related to assaults by prisoners. McCorkle, Miethe and Drass (1995) (quality score 81%) investigated 371 US male correctional facilities and found that poor staff-inmate ratio, poor staff turnover rate and the ratio of white to black staff members were strong risk factors for both inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults. The staff ethnicity ratio and programme involvement were significantly related to prisoner assaults on both other inmates and staff ( $p < .05$ ). Likewise, Lahm (2009) (quality score 80%) studied 1,054 adult male prisoners in 30 prisons in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee and found that inmate-on-staff assaults significantly increased in prisons where there were larger staff/inmate ratios and a larger proportion of non-white inmates ( $p < .05$ ).

### 3.3. Lack of resources



Morris et al. (2012) (quality score 79%) investigated 6,328 adult male prisoners in 47 US. Southern state prisons to explore the effect of prison strain on prisoners' behaviour. Prison environmental strain was described as a prison environment that was frightening, threatening and violent (e.g., due to deprivation, loss of privacy, lack of resources and overcrowding). Results were analysed at both inmate and prison levels. It was found that prison environmental strain significantly led to prison misbehaviour, although severity of the violence could vary depending on prisoners' individual characteristics.

### 3.4. Overcrowding

Overcrowding in prison was typically reported as a strong predictor for prison misconduct in several studies (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Morris et al., 2012) (quality score 79%, 81% and 79%). Additionally, Gaes and McGuire (1985) (quality score 76%) focused on the relationship between prison overcrowding and prison assaults. In terms of assaults, the authors divided them into four sub-categories: inmate-on-inmate assault without weapon; inmate-on-staff assault without weapon; inmate-on-inmate assault with weapon; and inmate-on-staff assault with weapon. The study was conducted in 19 prisons over 33 months. Results showed that prison crowding had a stronger relationship with prison assaults than prisoner's age ( $.05 < p < .10$ ). Furthermore, Lahm (2008) (quality score 89%) found the same result and further demonstrated that this factor can be enhanced by a higher proportion of young inmates ( $p < .05$ ).

## 4. Societal level

None of the studies in the review considered factors at the societal level.



*Figure 2.2. Aggression-related factors within the Ecological Model*

## Discussion

### *Main findings*

All of the selected studies were marked with a high-quality score as a result of only slight bias in all domains. They similarly showed clear search questions and aims, a clear and reproducible research methodology, proper assessment and good statistical tools used. Each outcome answered the study objectives. Higher-quality studies from the review (>80%) showed useful information about participants' backgrounds, and validated and reliable measurement tools. Additionally, they were presented with a wide consideration of factors, usually from more than one level of the Ecological Model. The higher quality studies produced outstanding results which provided extra-weight to the findings. These factors were young age, intra-prison gang affiliation, characteristics of current offence (length of incarcerations and types of offence) and past history (such as previous incarceration, previous prison violence, history of traumatic life events and witnessing prison violence) were strongly related to prison aggression (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Neller, Denney, Pietz & Thomlinson, 2006; Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011; Sorrensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods; 2011, Worrall & Morris, 2012).

The reviewed studies showed that there are a number of factors at different levels of the Ecological Model that significantly increase the likelihood of prison violence. The Ecological Model is arguably a useful framework to help organise and understand the pertinent factors and how they may interact with each other. The following summarises the variables found to be of significance using the Ecological Model as a framework, before discussing each level in depth below:

1. Individual level: younger age group, psychological factors, history of substance abuse, education level, current offence, history of violence during previous incarceration and criminal history.
2. Relationship level: race and ethnicity, gang affiliation.
3. Community level: poor prison environment, poor staff/inmate ratio, lack of resources and overcrowding.

### *Individual level*

In terms of the individual level, all seven studies that examined age unanimously suggested that the younger the age group the higher the risk of prison violence. However, the term '*young age*' varied among the relevant studies, ranging from under 21 to prisoners in their twenties and so lacked consistency. Nonetheless, this effect of young age group fits with previous literature in the general aggression domain, which has shown being under 22 years of age to be a risk factor for general aggression (Renfrew, 1997).

There are a number of factors that could be classified as psychological variables (e.g., mental disorders, anger provocation, psychopathy, intellect and high neuroticism). Seven studies studied such factors. They suggested that prisoners with general criminal thinking, history of traumatic events, supportive attitude towards aggression, anger provocation, instrumental aggressive beliefs, delusional thoughts and major mental illness are at increased risk of prisoner aggression. These psychological factors are highlighted in the general aggression literature as increasing risk. For example, anti-social behaviour and cognition has been consistently related to violent and criminal behaviour (Berkowitz, 1993; Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Furthermore, traumatic experiences, such as child maltreatment,

have been shown to contribute to the increased likelihood of later aggressive behaviour (e.g., Dixon, Hamilton-Giachritsis & Browne, 2005).

Four studies examined criminal history (e.g., prior prison term, violence during previous incarceration) and its relationships with prison aggression. These studies showed a higher risk of prison aggression among the prisoners with such history (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006). Again, this is consistent with the general aggression literature, which demonstrates that past violent behaviour is a good predictor of future violence (Berkowitz, 1993; Renfrew, 1997). Two studies of Cunningham and Sorensen in 2006 (quality score 78%) and 2007b (quality score 84%) suggested that prisoners with short-term sentences had a higher risk of prison violence than those with longer sentences, which was contradictory to Ohlsson and Ireland's 2011 study (quality score 82%) that showed a higher risk among the prisoners with long-term sentences. Another study found that prisoners with poor economic status were more likely to be aggressive during imprisonment, and one study examined literacy level and its impact on prisoners' behaviour, suggesting that a low literacy level increased the risk of prison violence. Indeed, a lack of educational achievement and poor-socioeconomic status have been found to increase the risk of aggression in other domains (e.g., intimate partner violence) (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt & Kim, 2012).

The selected studies provided conflicting results about the type of offence and length of incarceration on prison violence. Although prisoners with a past violent offence had a higher risk of prison violence in comparison to those with a non-violent offence history, it is possible that this effect could be explained by a labelling effect (Schrag, 1971; Wellford,

1975). That is, prison staff can be more likely to detect and assume violent behaviour by prisoners with a known past history of violence. This level of observation may in return increase prisoners' stress and aggression. Turning to the length of incarceration, findings concerning this were not consistent across studies. Prisoner behaviour is multi-factorial; therefore, variables should not be considered in isolation but rather in conjunction with other variables.

### *Relationship level*

Turning to consider the relationship level, findings from five studies consistently showed that gang affiliation was a significant risk factor for prison violence. This is consistent with gang literature, which shows that young people's aggression increases whilst in a gang and decreases on exiting it (Thornberry, 1998; Howell & Egley, 2005). Indeed, there is something special about the gang that increases such behaviours, which authors have suggested may be due to typical group process effects such as group think, deindividuation and diffusion of responsibility (Harkins & Dixon, 2010). However, identifying gang membership was problematic in most of the studies, and was based on prison intelligence (Maxson & Klein, 1996).

In terms of race and ethnicity, the two studies that mentioned this issue were both from the US, making it difficult to ascertain the effects of ethnicity elsewhere in the world. These two studies noted that a higher proportion of non-white prisoners increases the risk of prison aggression (Lahm, 2009; Sorensen et al., 2011). Moreover, both studies highlight the importance of prison staff being sensitive towards racial differences. Consideration should be given to the placement of prisoners in prisons with diverse race and ethnicity, and

the tensions this may cause should be considered in policy, to reduce the instance of aggression. However, only these two studies reported on this issue, and outcomes were likely affected by the geographical distribution and background of the particular prisons studied. Further research is therefore arguably warranted to investigate this issue. Also, considering this study, it was conducted in a Thai prison where the majority of prisoners were Thai and the sample size was rather small. Therefore, the result could be different from the previous studies.

#### *Community level*

A number of factors were identified that could fall into the category of environmental stress. Eight studies examined factors in this level. Each study identified slightly different social or environmental factors yet all were significantly associated with prison aggression (e.g., overcrowding, material goods, prison staff's supervision and their attitude towards prisoners). Collectively, however, the outcomes highlight that these variables can increase or decrease prisoners' stress and indirectly affect their behaviour, as described in General Strain Theory (GST). This phenomenon can also be explained by Frustration-Aggression theory, which hypothesises that individuals could be driven to display aggressive behaviour when frustrated or angry (Berkowitz, 1993; Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Sears, 1939). Berkowitz (1993) further described frustration as a result of not achieving goals, or not receiving what is anticipated or desired. Although not all frustration leads to aggression, the theory suggests that all aggression is rooted in frustration. Considering the prison settings, prisoners' needs such as personal space, privacy, resources, and time with their loved ones may not be met. Therefore, poor prison

conditions, both physical and psychological, could lead to a prisoner experiencing frustration and acting aggressively. Additionally, Displaced Aggression theory can also be applied to this scenario. Displaced Aggression can be described as aggressive behaviour directed towards a human target, usually weaker, that did not provoke the aggression in the first instance (Dollard et al., 1939). Displaced aggression is reportedly more violent when it happens in a negative setting (Marcus-Newhall, Pedersen, Carlson & Miller, 2000). Prison can arguably be perceived as a negative environment. Therefore, according to this theory, there is a high potential for displaced aggression in prison. It can be seen that both Displaced Aggression and Frustration-Aggression approaches discuss anger and its expression. The difference is the focus on the target or the arousal. Both theories look at expressive aggression as the way to relieve anger or as cathartic.

#### *Societal level*

None of the selected studies discussed possible factors at the societal level. The societal level, or macrosystem, represents a wider consideration of the role of the community or wider societal values. This is arguably more difficult to research than individual factors. However, factors such as subculture or culture and government policy may be important in understanding human behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the role of specific cultures in prison aggression, as described in Chapter 1 in the Thai governmental policy about prisoners and treatment, is clearly different in Thailand than in the western world (██████████ Remand Prison, 2013). Prisoners are re-evaluated for their risk grade every six months in Thai prisons. In reality, this is achieved by a group of prison officers grading the prisoner, rather than a multi-disciplinary committee, as should be the case



according to the Thai Department of Corrections guidelines. As a result, bias and labelling of prisoners can easily occur. Prisoners graded at higher risk levels are transferred to poorer conditions and their level may well become a self-fulfilling prophecy in such environments.

Studies on aggression among other sample groups have used the Ecological Model as a framework for investigation and have demonstrated that societal level factors can have an impact on aggression, e.g., media influence, social norms, community support (Hong, Kral, Espelage & Allen-Meares, 2011; Boxer, et al., 2013; Slep, Foran & Heyman, 2014). As Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that these factors could be a “*cultural blueprint*” that could shape the social structure (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), society’s normative beliefs towards prisoners and prison aggression and socioeconomic status are worth further study for their relation to prison aggression.

#### *Strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed literature*

There were a number of challenges encountered when trying to conduct the literature review. As noted earlier, not all authors gave clear definitions of the variables they were measuring. For example, while it could be established that a study was measuring physical aggression, the term ‘*violent offence*’ was not actually defined: no criteria were provided to describe to which acts this referred and a finer-grained description would be helpful to readers.

#### **Conclusions and further implications for practice**

It is clear from this review that several variables at different levels of the Ecological Model contribute to an understanding of which prisoners are at higher risk of institutional

aggression. This has implications for prioritisation of resources and design of prison environments to limit such aggression. Whilst some factors pertinent to the individual increase risk for aggression, factors at the relationship and community level are also at play, suggesting that the design of the prison space and the resources allocated to prisons are important to make them safer environments where rehabilitation can effectively take place. For instance, to deal with the problem of overcrowding, the expansion of the prison area and distribution of prisoners to less crowded prisons should be considered to provide more personal space and reduce stress. The design of treatment programmes and activities that tackle prisoners' needs and therefore rehabilitate them are needed. Additionally, the number of staff in prisons needs to increase to allow for closer supervision of prisoners. Ideally, this investment should be in staff who are trained and experienced so they are able to not only offer supervision but also contribute to the rehabilitation of prisoners.

As described in Chapter 1, the Thai prison environment and the prisoners' quality of life is not of a high standard. Therefore, research that has implications for the design of Thai prison environments and the reduction of physical stress within these could be helpful for reducing prison violence. However, although this review sheds light on factors related to prison aggression in the western world, there is little understanding of how well these factors translate to Thai prison environments. More work to understand this is warranted. In terms of the implications of this review for further study in Thai prisons, it is important to adjust variables to fit the Thai context. For example, since poor literacy was found to be a predictor of prison violence, the education threshold used to conduct this study should be adjusted to fit the Thai education system. Additionally, since the majority of prisoners in Thai prisons

have been convicted of drug offences and have a history of substance abuse, further study in Thailand should consider investigation of these factors.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Identifying Aggressive and Non-aggressive Prisoners**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to address objective one of the thesis, to develop a reliable methodology by which prison officers can identify aggressive and non-aggressive male prisoners in a set time period. This phase of the research necessitated the design of a checklist that prison officers could use reliably over time to identify aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners, and selection of another measure to accompany this checklist to assist in the coding of aggressive acts. It was planned that the researcher would train officers in the administration of the checklist and then test the psychometric properties of the checklist. This provided the important first step of the proposed body of research as it ensured that the prisoners who would be recruited to take part in the larger study could be identified in a reliable and valid manner.

This chapter aims to present the reader with a description of the methodology employed to recruit and train prison officers in the identification of aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners, the rationale behind the development of the checklist, measures implemented, and the statistical analysis that examined the psychometric properties of the checklist.

## Method

### Sample

Of the 68 male prison officers who work with the prisoners in each of the six units (wings) within ████████ Remand Prison, 12 consented to participate in this study (a 17.6% response rate). All participants were Thai male prison officers aged between 32 and 54 years old ( $M = 43.42$ ,  $SD = 6.50$ ). All units of the prison were represented by at least one officer, as depicted in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1. Number of consenting prison staff from each unit*

Prison unit	Number of participating staff
Unit 1	3
Unit 2	3
Unit 3	2
Unit 4	2
Unit 5	1
Unit 6	1

Units 1 – 3 house prisoners in a less crowded state, with approximately 400 – 600 prisoners in each unit. In contrast, the number of prisoners residing in units 4 – 6 ranges from 1100 to 1500 in each unit. It is clear from Table 3.1 that prison officers from the crowded wings were slightly less likely to participate in the study. Those staff who declined to participate explained to the researcher that this was because they did not have time, due to their very high workload looking after the volume of prisoners on their unit.

## **Procedure**

### **Training officers**

At the outset of this study, the researcher visited every unit in [REDACTED] Remand Prison and held a small group talk with prison officers in each one. This was to explain the nature of the research and what would be required from participating officers. At this talk the staff were also provided with a written information sheet (Appendix E). If they wished to participate in the research, they were then asked to provide their written informed consent (see Appendix F).

Information and consent sheets were provided at the talk and a box at the back of the room was provided for officers to return either a signed or blank consent sheet. The researcher then approached only those who chose to consent. This process was repeated two to three times to ensure all prison officers, e.g., those working on different shifts, were approached.

Since the role of the officers in the study was to be the observer and recorder of violent incidents within their own wing, the number of prison officers required was flexible. However, as large a number as possible was desirable since it would enable the researcher to identify a larger number of violent prisoners for parts 2 and 3 of the research. All 12 prison officers who consented to take part were invited to a 30-minute training session at an office area outside of the prison units. Here they were trained on how to use the designed Monitoring Prisoner's Aggressive Behaviour Tool, which consisted of the Direct Aggressive Behaviour Checklist, a tool for monitoring aggressive behaviours developed by the researcher (see measures section) and the Prisoner Behaviour Rating Scale (Cooke, 1996).

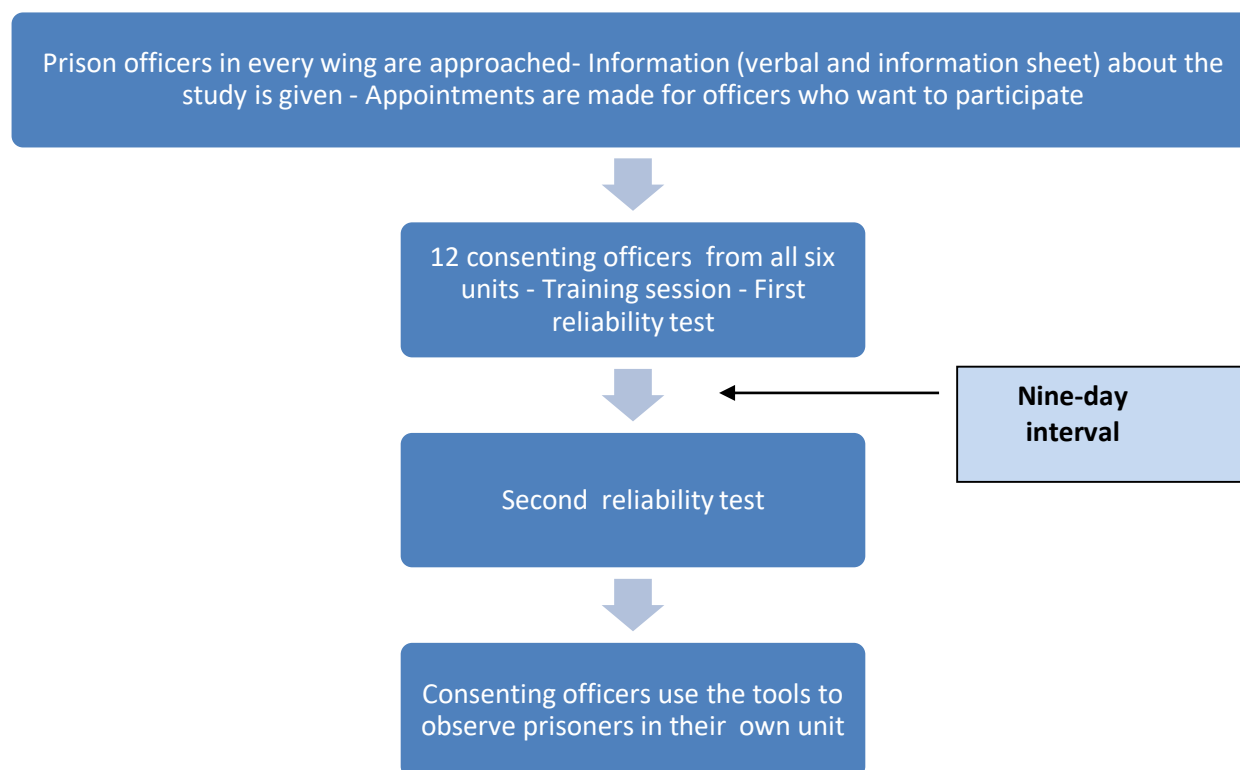
The session included explaining the importance of this part of the study and how to use the tool. The prison officers were instructed that, when using the tool, they were to only record what they had directly observed themselves, and not to include details that they had been told by others. This was to make sure that the obtained data was reliable. There was also time for questions and answers during the training session, in case officers had questions about the tool. The officers were then given eight fictitious written case scenarios (see Appendix G) to use to complete the DABC. This was to ensure that the prison officers understood how to use the checklist and to provide the first step in testing its reliability. The case scenarios covered various types of violence in prison and were representative of the kind of scenarios that the prison officers would likely encounter when using the tool in practice. The officers all received the same case scenarios, allowing for a test of inter-rater reliability of the DABC.

The prison officers were only asked to complete the checklist using the provided scenarios and were not asked to complete the Prison Behaviour Rating Scale (PBRs), as this is a well-established and reliable measure, although how to complete this measure was described in detail.

On completion of the coding, the officers were thanked for their participation and provided with a debrief sheet. After the first session, due to the time constraints, the researcher and the participants agreed to have the second meeting in nine days' time. At the second meeting, the officers repeated the same procedure with the case scenarios and

the checklist, allowing for an assessment of the DABC's test-retest reliability<sup>1</sup>.

A schematic of the process followed in the study can be seen in Figure 3.1.



*Figure 3.1. Flowchart of procedural steps*

## Measures

The Monitoring Prisoner's Aggressive Behaviour Tool can be found in Appendix H. It consists of four sections. The first three comprise the Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (DABC) designed by the researcher, and section four comprises the PBRs (Cooke, 1996). The

<sup>1</sup>Kline (1986,2000) recommends that the interval between test and retest be should be at least three months; however, it was not feasible to leave such a long gap because the researcher had a very limited timeframe in which she had permission to collect data at the prison (totalling six months). Kline (2000) also recommends that at least 100 participants take part in a test-retest assessment; however, a much smaller number of participants had to be used in this study, as the number of prison officers working at ██████████ Remand prison is very limited.



eight case scenarios used to train the participants and test reliability can be seen in Appendix G, though the real situation could be more complex as the officers may miss the initial aggressors.

Originally, all measures used in this study were developed in English then translated into Thai by the researcher and checked by a professional translator. Following this, they were all translated back into English by another professional translator to make sure the same meaning was preserved. Afterwards, the checklist and case scenarios were piloted with five Thai people who do not work in a prison setting before they were given to the prison officers.

The eight case scenarios (see Appendix G) were based on different types of violence and designed to match certain types of violence described in the checklist. This was to ensure that training and testing covered all possible violent incidents that could occur in prison and their outcomes. During the piloting of the case scenarios and measures, all pilot participants gave correct answers on the checklist for each scenario.

### **Monitoring Prisoners' Aggressive Behaviour Tool**

#### **Design of Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (DABC)**

This formed sections 1-3 of the designed tool (see Appendix H). Considering the competing pressures the officers experience in their resource-limited and potentially dangerous environment, it was important that the DABC was quick and easy to complete whilst remaining reliable. To achieve this, the researcher designed the tool as a checklist so that officers could easily identify which box related to the aggression witnessed and simply place a tick in the relevant box

The DABC was designed to have its two initial sections placed side by side in order to monitor information on both the perpetrator and any other person(s) involved in the aggressive incident. It consists of a checklist of behaviours to identify psychological aggression, physical aggression, sexual aggression, weapon used, arson or riot that the officer may witness whilst working with prisoners. Each type of aggressive act listed in the checklist is clearly described to aid the accurate and reliable identification of aggressive acts that could occur in different circumstances.

The types of aggression included in the checklist were developed from a review of studies of violence in prison (Edgar, O'Donnell & Martin, 2003). The methods used in the Revised Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, McCoy & Sugarman, 1996) were then used as a guide by which to structure and monitor both perpetrator and victim behaviours and clearly list acts of aggression that would reliably constitute each form of aggression, which officers could objectively code. The CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996) is a revised and improved version based on the original version of the Conflict Tactic Scales. It aims to measure aggressive acts by perpetrators and victims of aggression in violent intimate relationships. The CTS2 has good validity and reliability (alpha range of .79 - .95) and clear objective wording of a range of aggressive acts (Straus, et al., 1996).

Psychological aggression was characterised by occurrences including 'used language to insult, tease, humiliate or show disrespect to another person', 'shouted at or yelled at someone', 'used language to vilify, control or command another person to do something against their will', 'destroyed something belonging to another person' and 'used language to threaten to hit, throw something at, kill or physically hurt another person in some way'.

Sexual aggression was characterised by occurrences including 'any form of non-consensual sexual contact', 'inappropriate non-penetrative sexual touching of another person (fondling, masturbation of other person)', 'used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex' and 'used threats to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex'.

Physical aggression was characterised by occurrences including 'threw something at/twisted arm or hair of/pushed/grabbed/slapped someone', 'hit with objects or fist/threw them down on the floor or against the wall/kicked/physical restrained' and 'beat up/punched/grabbed the neck and choked/burned or scalded'.

The checklist also provided a free text area where officers could record any other violent incident that did not fit the groupings/descriptions in the checklist. 'Weapon used', 'arson' and 'riot' were also included in the checklist as violent acts as they featured in Edgar, et al.'s (2003) review of prison violence. The definition of these terms was based on the same literature to provide a clear explanation for the officers (see Appendix H). In terms of weapon used, the checklist provided two options: use of the weapon to attack others or in self-defence.

Last section of the tool collected details of injury, death and any other loss (e.g., destroyed property) that could happen to the perpetrator, victim(s) or others as a result of the violent act. In terms of level of injury, the CTS2 was also used as a guide for creating an injury scale (mild, moderate, severe and life-threatening). It provided details and examples of possible injury at each level (Straus, et al., 1996). A blank space was left in each row for the officers to include any additional observations (Appendix H).

### **Prisoner Behaviour Rating Scale (Cooke, 1996)**

The original Prisoner Behaviour Rating Scale (PBRs) developed by Cooke (1996) was used for Section 4 of the Monitoring Prisoner's Aggressive Behaviour Tool. The PBRs was designed to measure three different domains of disturbed prisoner behaviour (anti-authority, anxious-depressed and dull-confused). It was originally used in the Scottish Prison Service with 890 adult male prisoners. Each of the three domains are characterised by different items. This tool has previously been shown to have both adequate test-retest and inter-rater reliability (Cooke, 1996). Additionally, it has been shown to have predictive validity (Cooke, 1998). Not all three domains of prisoner behaviour were relevant to the current study – only the domain of anti-authority was used, as Question 4 of the measure.

### **Results**

The aggressive incidents were counted only when the information in all domains in the DABC was recorded and the aggressors could be identified by the prison staff. The result from the prison officers' records showed that all of the aggressive incidents were targeted at other prisoners only and each lasted less than five minutes before being stopped by the prison officers and/or other prisoners. There were two types of prison aggression, psychological and physical, without weapon involved. In terms of psychological aggression, 23 aggressive prisoners were reported as having shouted, yelled, showed disrespect, commanded or threatened to hurt the victims. Considering the physical aggression, 14 prisoners used pushing, slapping someone's head, throwing something at the victim and punching. Five victims were reported as having mild physical injuries, which were small

scratches and bruises. Among the total 26 aggressors, 11 used both psychological and physical aggression.

The prison officers' responses on the checklist were categorical; therefore, the statistic used to assess both inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability was Cohen's Kappa coefficient. On identifying the aggressive behaviours in the eight scenarios at two different time points using the DABC, all 12 participants gave the same answers as they did in the first week, which were all similar and correct. The prison officers therefore agreed perfectly with one another across all eight scenarios (perfect inter-rater reliability) as well as with themselves over time (perfect test-retest reliability). In both cases this produces a kappa of 1.0 (see Table 3.2).

*Table 3.2. Statistical results from the test*

	Kappa's coefficient	Percentage agreement (%)
Inter-rater reliability	1.0	100
Test-retest reliability	1.0	100

## **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations with this study that need to be acknowledged. The number of participating officers was limited compared to the number of prisoners being observed, hence it is possible that not all aggressive incidents were observed and recorded. This would make the real incidence of prison aggression higher than recorded here. Additionally, staff members might not have been able to witness an incident from the

beginning. They could only record what they had directly witnessed, which might not have been how the incident started. This could mean that the initial aggressor remains unidentified or the wrong person could be identified as the aggressor/victim. Furthermore, there was no incentive provided for the participating staff. Participation would have been an onerous task and without an incentive, participants may have lacked motivation to conduct the observations. However, despite these limitations, the DABC seems to be the only reliable source of information about aggression within the institution studied. This is because there was no formal adjudication in the prison. Only some incidents, e.g., riots, strikes, escape attempts, were adjudicated, and no examples of these happened during the six-month period of data collection. Therefore, the researcher had to rely on the participating officers to observe and record acts of aggression.

In addition, the identification of psychological aggression and sexual aggression relied solely on the prison staff hearing or witnessing the incident clearly, due to their covert nature. This could also result in incidents being missed or the wrong person being labelled as the aggressor/victim.

## **Conclusion**

Parts 2 and 3 of this research necessitate the accurate identification of aggressive prisoners. This identification could only be conducted by prison officers who are responsible for caring for a very large number of prisoners at any one time. The objective of this preliminary study was, therefore, to design an easy-to-use tool which was not time consuming, due to the prison officers' workload. A checklist was designed and successfully

piloted with native Thai speakers. A sample of prison officers was then trained in how to use the tool and inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability assessed. Perfect agreement across the 12 prison officers was found, providing confirmation of inter-rater reliability. Test-retest reliability was also perfect, with a nine-day interval between test and retest. These results confirmed that the prison officers understood and could use the tool as intended and in a consistent manner. As outlined in the Limitations section, it is likely that the tool would underestimate the occurrence of some aggressive acts, however as there was no suitable alternative source of such information, this tool continued to be used in the studies whilst being mindful of its limitations.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Examining the Characteristics of Aggressive Male Prisoners in the Thai Prison**

#### **System and Aetiology of Their Aggressive Behaviour**

##### **Introduction**

As was highlighted in the systematic literature review, no previous study has examined aggression in Thai prisons and there were few studies conducted in Asian countries overall. The review in Chapter 2 found a number of individual factors that have been related to prison aggression, including young age, psychological variables such as thinking patterns and anger, substance abuse, education level, current offence, history of violence during previous imprisonment and criminal history (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Gars & McGuire, 1985; Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009; McCorkle, 1992; Morris et al., 2012; Neller, Denney, Pietz & Thomlinson, 2006; Sorensen, Cunningham, Vigen & Woods, 2011; Walters, 2011; Walters & Crawford, 2013; Worrall & Morris, 2012). There are a number of reasons why these findings might not generalise to the Thai context. For example, the majority of offences committed by Thai prisoners are drug-related offences and levels of substance abuse are much higher in Thailand. The traditional beliefs and social norms that govern behaviour in Thailand are also different to those that operate in the UK. Therefore, it can be expected that individual factors that contribute to prison aggression in Thailand could be different from the previous studies.

Anger and provocation have been found to be strongly related to aggression and misconduct in prison (Hollin, Marsh & Bloxsom, 2010; Jones, Thomas-Peter & Gangstad,



2003; Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011; Suter, Byrne, Byrne, Howells & Day, 2002). It was therefore important to explore the role of anger in aggression by Thai prisoners. Having an empathic attitude towards victims has been found to be related to victimisation and interpersonal aggression in western prisons (Palmer & Begum, 2006). This has never been explored in the Thai context, which is known for quite being an empathic society. Therefore it was explored here.

There are some additional factors that are very common among Thai prisoners which have been linked to prison aggression in past studies. These include the clear operation of hierarchies within the prison (e.g., houses, as explained in Chapter 1), which is very similar to the structure of prisoners' previous gang outside the prison. Tattooing is also a common practice and has been associated with prison aggression as frequently it symbolises intra-prison gangs/houses (Zamani et al., 2007; Hellard, Aitken & Hocking, 2007). Variables were selected for comparison between the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners according to the Ecological Model to make sure that all levels were represented.

Therefore, this chapter aims to explore the characteristics, behaviour and psychological factors of prisoners described in Chapter 3. Specifically it aims to answer two research questions:

- a) What are the characteristics of aggressive Thai male prisoners in comparison to those of non-aggressive Thai male prisoners and do these factors differ from what has been found in western prisons?
- b) What are the differences in terms of anger, provocation and attitude towards aggression between the two groups of Thai prisoner?

## Method

### Sample

In total, as a result of the findings mentioned in Chapter 3, 26 aggressive and 26 non-aggressive male prisoners were recruited and formed the sample for the present study. The aggressive group (AG) was selected by the participating prison staff by observing and using the DABC (in Chapter 3). The aggressive prisoners had to show an aggressive act that met any of the descriptions in the DABC within a six-month period from the middle of August 2013 to the middle of February 2014. The DABC was scored and used to identify aggressive prisoners based on a tick in any one domain. Once the staff identified an aggressive prisoner, they also had to choose one non-aggressive prisoner from the prison population. The non-aggressive prisoner could be from either the staff's own unit or another unit. The selection of the non-aggressive prisoner was based on the participating staff's recognition of the prisoner's behaviour as not being aggressive during incarceration. If the selected non-aggressive prisoner showed any sign of being aggressive during the study, he was removed from the non-aggressive group.

All aggressive group participants were of Thai ethnicity and aged between 20 and 55 years old ( $M = 29.50$ ,  $SD = 8.30$ ). Participants in the non-aggressive group were also of Thai ethnicity, and aged between 22 and 54 years old ( $M = 34.08$ ,  $SD = 7.22$ ). Further details of participants' demographic information will be described in the results with line charts demonstrated. All prisoners provided written consent to participate in the study. This consent had to be signed with the prisoner's name and will be kept confidentially by the researcher only.

The prison is divided into separate units and prisoners are sent to each unit according to the protocol as described in Chapter 1 of this thesis. In brief, units 1–3 provide less crowded conditions for the men, with approximately 22–30 people in one cell. In comparison units 4–6 house twice as many prisoners in more unsanitary conditions. Table 4.1 shows which unit of the prison men in the aggressive group and non-aggressive group were from. The aggressive prisoners came almost exclusively from the more crowded units, with the majority of prisoners (58.3%) assigned to the aggressive group from unit 4 in comparison to the majority of non-aggressive group prisoners, who were from units 2 and 3 (65.4%).

*Table 4.1. Number of aggressive prisoners (AP) and non-aggressive prisoners (NAP) from each unit*

Variable		AP (N,%)	NAP (N,%)
Unit	1	0 (0.0%)	5 (19.2%)
	2	1 (3.8%)	9 (34.6%)
	3	1 (3.8%)	8 (30.8%)
	4	14 (53.8)	0 (0.0%)
	5	7 (26.9%)	0 (0.0%)
	6	3 (11.5%)	4 (15.4%)
Total		26 (100%)	26 (100%)

## **Procedure**

During the six-month period of August 2013 to February 2014, after the prison officers in all units (units 1- 6) had identified each aggressive and non-aggressive prisoner by using the Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist, the recruited prisoners were visited by the

researcher in order to provide information about the study. Each time any prison officer identified an aggressive prisoner, they were also asked to choose a non-aggressive prisoner for an interview. The non-aggressive prisoners were chosen based on their history since being admitted into the prison. They could be from the particular officer's unit or from another unit, as long as their record with regard to violent history could be examined. They were to have no history of violence and aggression or being involved in any such incidents. Although the length of time a prisoner had been incarcerated did not form part of the selection process, all of the non-aggressive prisoners had been incarcerated for at least one year and the majority of them had almost reached their full prison term. Additionally, although the amount of overcrowding varied among units, it was not a controlled factor as it was also one of the studied factors. Therefore, it can be seen that the majority of chosen non-aggressive prisoners were from the less crowded unit.

Then both aggressive and non-aggressive groups were verbally informed about the study by using the information from the information sheet (see Appendix I), as they were not allowed to receive any document from an outsider. The information included mentioning that their prisoner files would be reviewed for some certain characteristics. If they agreed to participate then they were presented with the consent form (see Appendix J) to sign. All of the recruited prisoners from both groups consented to join the study. After that, all participants' data/questionnaires (aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners) were labelled with a research number instead of their names, in order to maintain their confidentiality. Although the study was divided into three sub-studies, practically, the

interviews were carried out during the same visit, to make it easier because of the visiting process.

The files of recruited prisoners from both groups were reviewed to extract prisoner history and demographic characteristics. These items were based on the systematic literature review on physical aggression in prison and its aetiology in Chapter 2. The prisoners' confidentiality could be maintained during this process but it was not possible for them to be anonymous. Following this, each group of prisoners were administered a small semi-structured interview to collect further data. This covered any history of childhood abuse, gang affiliation outside and inside the prison, tattooing and substance abuse (in case it was not recorded in the prisoner file). The design of the semi-structured interview in relation to history of child abuse was guided by the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS-PC), which included psychological aggression, physical assaults, sex abuse and neglect. Each topic was stratified and simplified by giving examples. In terms of history of alcohol and substance abuse, the questionnaire was designed to collect data on types, length of use, frequency, amount and consequences (see Appendix K for questions regarding tattooing and their hierarchical ranking). Each prison was then administered a set of measures (described in the Measures section below). On completion of the interview, the prisoners were thanked for their participation and provided with a debrief sheet containing details about how and where to seek help in case of stress due to the study.

A schematic of the procedure followed in order to execute this study can be seen in Figure 4.1.



*Figure 4.1. Flowchart of procedural steps*

## Measures

The participating prisoners' personal files were reviewed by the researcher to extract characteristics as noted on Appendix K. After the file review, the prisoner with the same research number underwent a semi-structured interview to find more characteristics that were not provided in the file. They were also administered the following measures.

### *Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory (NAS-PI)*

The Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory (see Appendix M) was used in this study as a psychometric tool to assess anger. NAS-PI 1994 is a revision of the original 1976 version, which aimed to assess the various components of anger as outlined in the model (Culhane & Morera, 2010). The NAS-PI 1994 is a two-part, self-report measure of anger, which assesses anger in multiple dimensions. It consists of four domains, which are

cognitive, arousal, behaviour and anger provocation (Culhane & Morera, 2010). In each domain, there are 4-5 subscales consisting of 4-5 items each, which makes 48 items for the NAS part and 25 items for the PI part. These sum to a NAS and PI total score.

NAS-PI was applied in this study as it has been successfully applied to multiple research studies in various settings, e.g., among undergraduate students (Culhane, Osvaldo & Morera, 2010) and among forensic psychiatry patients (Hornsveld, Muris & Kraaijmaat, 2011), in many countries, e.g., the Netherlands, Australia, Sweden, Canada, the UK and the US (Baker, Van Hasselt & Sellers, 2008; Burns, Bird, Leach & Higgins, 2003; Culhane & Morera, 2010; Hornsveld, Muris & Kraaijmaat, 2011; Jones & Thomas-Peter, 1999; Lindqvist, Daderman & Hellstrom, 2005; Mills, Kroner & Forth, 1998; Suter et al., 2002). Additionally, it has also been successfully used in prison settings (Novero, Loper & Warren, 2011; Suter et al., 2002).

In terms of validity and reliability among the incarcerated population, a study in 1998 in Canada by Mills, Kroner and Forth addressed this topic. Two study groups, general admission and violent admission offenders (n= 204), from a prison in Ontario were assessed. The study tested the reliability of NAS-PI by using one-month test-retest correlations, the alpha coefficients and the intra-scale correlations. The validity was examined together with other anger measurement tools, e.g., STAXI, MAI, AQ. In terms of validity, strong correlations were found between the NAS-PI and these similar anger measurement tools (Mills, Kroner & Forth, 1998). In addition, a study was also conducted in three prison settings in Florida, US, among 1308 offenders (959 males and 349 females) to test the psychometric properties of NAS-PI. It proved the tool's reliability and validity in both genders (Baker, Van

Hasselt & Sellers, 2008). Additionally, it has also recently been accredited as one of the most validated anger measurements (Baker, Van Hasselt & Sellers, 2008).

However, there has been no previous study using NAS-PI in the Thai population. Therefore, the NAS-PI was translated into Thai by the researcher and rechecked by a professional translator, then back-translated by another translator. Then the translated version was piloted with five Thai people to ensure that the translated tool could be correctly understood before being used with the prisoners.

#### *Revised Pro-victim Scale (RPVS)*

The Revised Pro-victim Scale (see Appendix N), was utilised to study attitude towards bullying as it is also one type of aggression. RPVS is a modified version of the 20-item Pro-victim Scale, which initially was developed by Ken Rigby, an Australian psychologist, in 1991 (Karna, Voeten, Little, Poskiparta, Kaljonen & Salmovalli, 2011; Rigby, 1997; Sutton & Keogh, 2000). It is a 10-item self-report questionnaire aimed at measuring supportive attitude towards victim and anti-bullying attitude in school bullying (Sutton & Keogh, 2000). The tool was either used directly (Sutton & Keogh, 2000) or after revision (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cwie, 2003) in studies in many countries to study school bullying, e.g., UK, Italy, Greece and Finland (Karna et al., 2011; Psalti, 2012).

Although it was originally aimed at studying school bullying, previous studies have also used RPVS to conduct a study among incarcerated populations (Ireland, 1999; Palmer & Begum, 2006). Before administering RPVS to the prisoner population, Ireland modified it by altering the wording and adding more items to suit the context, following which she



tested the revised tool's reliability and validity. Along with the Direct and Indirect Prisoner Behaviour Checklist, the Pro-victim Scale revealed that different attitudes towards victimisation existed among prisoners (Ireland, 1999). Moreover, RPVC, together with the Direct and Indirect Prisoner Behaviour Checklist were used to study the relationship between moral reasoning, pro-victim attitude and interpersonal aggression (Palmer & Begum, 2006).

Hence, it is interesting to utilise this tool in the current study, combined with previously mentioned tools. The RPVS was reworded (from students to prisoner population) and translated into Thai by the researcher and rechecked by a professional translator, then back-translated by another translator. Then the translated version was piloted with five non-prison related people before being administered to the prisoners to ensure that the tools can be understood after being translated.

## **Results**

### **Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of aggressive male prisoners in comparison to non-aggressive male prisoners?**

All obtained data was listed and grouped and is presented in Table 4.2 and in detail in Figures 4.2 – 4.8.

#### **1. Age**

There is a significant difference between age group and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 7.29, p < .05, \phi = 0.73$ . Younger prisoners (20 – 29 years old) were more likely to be in the aggressive group than in the non-aggressive group.

## 2. Ethnicity

All of the participants in both groups were Thai.

## 3. Underlying disease and history of mental health problems

3.1. There is no significant relationship between underlying physical disorder and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52)= 1.85, p>.05$ . Only a minority of prisoners from the two groups had underlying physical health problems. The only violent prisoner with a history of physical health problems was recorded as having hypertension (3.85% of aggressive group), whereas there was one case of asthma, one case of HIV infection and two cases of hypertension in the non-aggressive group (15.38% of non-aggressive group). All of them were continuously treated at the healthcare unit within the prison setting.

3.2. None of the prisoners from either group had a history of mental health problems.

## 4. History of childhood abuse

This factor focuses on psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Each type of abuse is listed with 4-5 occurrences that describe it. One hundred per cent of both groups had experienced psychological abuse in their childhood. The difference is, in the aggressive group, prisoners experienced 3-5 occurrences, whereas the non-aggressive group experienced not more than two occurrences.

The physical abuse was graded into minor, severe and very severe, based on the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale scoring system (Straus, Hamby, McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). The study focused on history of severe and very severe physical abuse between the two groups. There was a significant relationship between history of severe physical abuse

in childhood and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 14.77, p < .05, \phi = 0.75$ . It is therefore clear that a prisoner with a history of severe physical abuse in childhood is more likely to be associated with prison aggression. Fifteen out of the 26 aggressive prisoners had experienced severe physical abuse, whilst only two out of the 26 non-aggressive prisoners had, with fewer occurrences of this type of abuse. Additionally, four aggressive prisoners had experienced very severe physical abuse, whilst no participants from the non-aggressive group had.

There was a significant relationship between history of neglect in childhood and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 6.93, p < .05, \phi = 0.52$ . Prisoners who were neglected in their childhood were more likely to be associated with prison aggression. Additionally, 24 of the 26 aggressive prisoners experienced neglect, with mostly 3-5 occurrences of this type of abuse, whilst 16 out of 26 non-aggressive prisoners experienced it, with fewer occurrences. All participants from both groups similarly denied any history of sexual abuse in their childhood.

#### 5. History of gang affiliation outside the prison

There was a significant relationship between history of gang affiliation and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 22.26, p < .05, \phi = 0.93$ . Prisoners with a history of gang affiliation were associated with prison aggression. The majority of aggressive prisoners (22 out of 26) had a history of gang affiliation before imprisonment. In contrast, only five out of the 26 non-aggressive prisoners had such a history. Additionally, most of the prisoners from both groups who were gang members were found to have low education level and have

committed drug offences. The aggressive prisoners who were gang members were also found to have multiple convictions, which will be described later.

#### 6. Hierarchical ranking

Regarding the hierarchical ranking inside the Thai prison, as explained in the introduction to the thesis, prisoners live together in a group called a “house”. Each house has its own leader, who is promoted by his own fellows. To establish the potential impact of ranking on aggression, prisoners were asked if they were a house leader or not. There was a significant relationship between being a house leader and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52)=8.50, p<.05, \phi = 0.57$ . Prisoners who were the leader of their peer group (or as they called themselves as “*house leaders*”) were more likely to be associated with prison aggression than those who were not. From the 26 participants in the aggressive group, 14 were house leaders, whereas, in the non-aggressive group, only four were house leaders.

#### 7. History of substance abuse

Ideally, there were designated units for prisoners with different characteristics, for instance, units 3 and 4 were for prisoners with drug offences. However, practically, prisoners were distributed across the units, regardless of their designated purpose, due to the extent of overcrowding. As such it is difficult to determine the specific needs of the offenders based on their designation. There was a significant relationship between history of substance abuse and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52)=9.03, p<.05, \phi = 0.59$ . Prisoners who had a history of substance abuse were more likely to be associated with prison aggression. The majority of the aggressive group were found to have a history of substance abuse, and this was also the case for half of the non-aggressive group. Unsurprisingly, the majority of

prisoners from both groups with a history of substance abuse had also committed drug offences. In the aggressive group, three prisoners denied having a history of substance abuse. Sixteen prisoners from this group abused more than two types of substance, with the maximum being six types; 18 of them used amphetamine, either alone or combined with other substances; 22 of them had abused substances for more than a year, with the maximum being 12 years. Two of them experienced visual and auditory hallucinations, and persecutory delusions when taking substances, but neither of them went for medical advice.

In the non-aggressive group, 13 prisoners denied a history of substance abuse. Seven members of this group abused more than one type of substance, with the maximum being four types; nine of them used amphetamine, either alone or combined with other substances; nine of them had abused substances for a year or more, with the maximum being 10 years. Three of them experienced visual and auditory hallucinations when taking substances, but none of them went for medical advice.

## 8. Education

There was a significant relationship between education and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(2, N=52) = 26.66, p < .05, \phi = 0.72$ . Prisoners with a lower education level (elementary level) were more likely to be associated with prison aggression than those with a higher education level. The majority of prisoners from the aggressive group were found to have a lower level of education, elementary level, and none of them had higher education than vocational certificate, whereas the non-aggressive group had a higher education level, secondary school. Additionally, four out of the 26 non-aggressive prisoners had a bachelor's degree and another two had a master's degree. The prisoners from both groups who only had

elementary or secondary levels of education had history related to gang membership and drug offences.

#### 9. Employment

There was a significant relationship between employment status before imprisonment and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 21.64, p < .05, \phi = 0.91$ . Unemployed prisoners were more likely to be associated with prison aggression. It was also found that most of the unemployed prisoners from both groups had committed drug offences and all of the gang members had been unemployed before imprisonment. The participants from the two groups had different employment histories. The majority of the aggressive group had been unemployed before imprisonment whilst, in contrast, only 10 out of the 26 members of the non-aggressive group had been unemployed.

#### 10. Criminal history

There was a significant relationship between criminal history and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 7.58, p < .05, \phi = 0.54$ . Prisoners who had a history of multiple convictions (more than two convictions) were more likely to be associated with prison aggression. History of previous conviction was grouped into first-and-second conviction and multiple convictions (more than two convictions). The highest number of multiple convictions for an aggressive prisoner was 11 convictions. In contrast, for the majority of the non-aggressive prisoners, 20 out of 26, this was their first conviction. For the members of this group who had been previously convicted, none were found to have more than four convictions. Most of the prisoners from both groups with more than one conviction were found to have been

arrested under the same offence over a short period of time, mostly relating to drug offences.

#### 11. Current conviction (type of offence and length of incarceration)

Since the majority of prisoners from both groups were similarly found to have committed drug offences (12 non-aggressive and 14 aggressive prisoners), the types of offence were grouped into drug-offence and non-drug-offence (see details in Figure 4.6). Statistics showed that there was no significant relationship between the two groups of offence and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 0.31, p < .05$ . There was no obvious difference in terms of criminal offence between the two groups.

In terms of length of incarceration, the numbers of prisoners from both groups were distributed almost equally. The majority of each group was found to have long-term sentences. Statistics showed that there was no significant relationship between length of incarceration and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 2.08, p < .05$ . The only slight difference was that no non-aggressive prisoners were found to have short-term sentence (less than two years of imprisonment).

#### 12. Tattoo

There was a significant relationship between tattoo and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 14.76, p < .05, \phi = 0.75$ . Prisoners with a tattoo were more likely to be associated with prison aggression. In contrast, only 11 out of the 26 participants in the non-aggressive group have one. From these two groups, the size and number of tattoos varied from a small single tattoo on an unexposed part of the body to multiple large tattoos all over the body, including

scalp and face. Most of the prisoners had more than one tattoo, which they mostly acquired after imprisonment.

### 13. Prisoner grading before the aggressive incidents

There is a clear relationship between the aggression and the level of grading, although it has to be acknowledged that the grading is based on and influenced by the level of aggression. It may seem tautological but it actually provides support for the decision making process. It is apparent that there was a significant relationship between prisoner grading and prison aggression,  $\chi^2(1, N=52) = 23.11, p < .05, \phi = 0.94$ . As described earlier, in Chapter 1, there are six grades of prisoner. Among the aggressive group, the majority of them, 16 prisoners, were from the extremely poor grade, whilst none of the participants from the non-aggressive group were from this grade. Prisoners from the extremely poor grade were more likely to be associated with prison aggression.



Table 4.2. Rates of characteristics as measured for prisoners in the AG (n = 26) and NAG (n = 26) and bivariate between-group analysis

Factors	AG	NAG	$\chi^2$	effect size( $\phi$ )
Aged 20-29 years	17	6	7.29*	0.73
History of gang affiliation	22	5	22.26*	0.93
Education			26.66*	0.72
<i>Elementary school</i>	15	2		
<i>Secondary school</i>	10	13		
<i>Vocational certificate and higher</i>	1	11		
Unemployed	23	10	21.64*	0.91
History of substance abuse	23	13	9.03*	0.59
3 <sup>rd</sup> conviction and more	12	3	7.58*	0.54
Type of offence			0.31	
<i>Offence against narcotics law</i>	14	12		
<i>Multiple offences</i>	4	2		
Incarcerated for two years or more	24	26	2.08	
Leader of the house	14	4	8.50*	0.57
Tattoo	24	11	14.76*	0.75
Childhood abuse				
<i>Severe physical abuse</i>	15	2	14.77*	0.75
<i>Neglect</i>	24	16	6.93*	0.52
Extremely poor prison grade	16	0	23.11*	0.94

\* $p < .05$

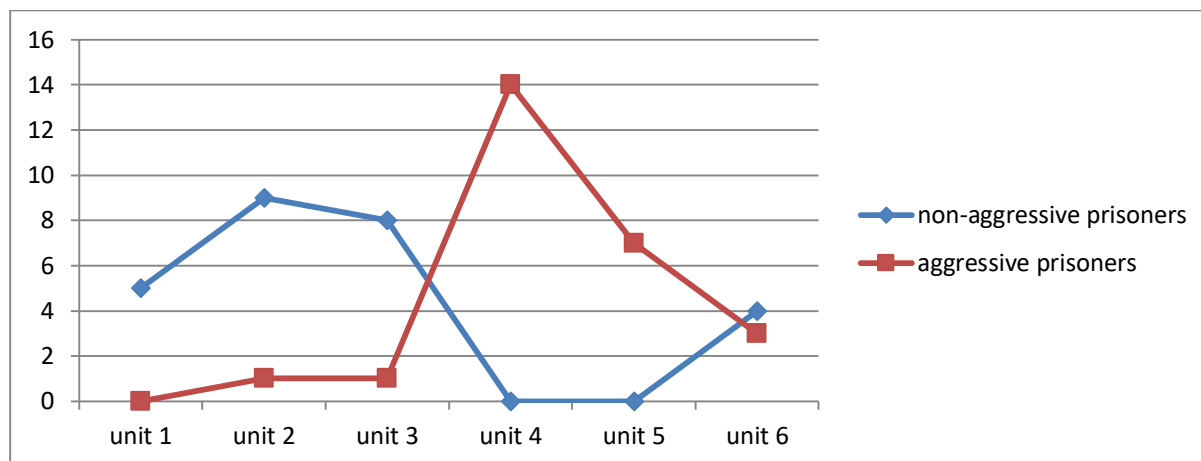


Figure 4.2. Number of aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners from each unit

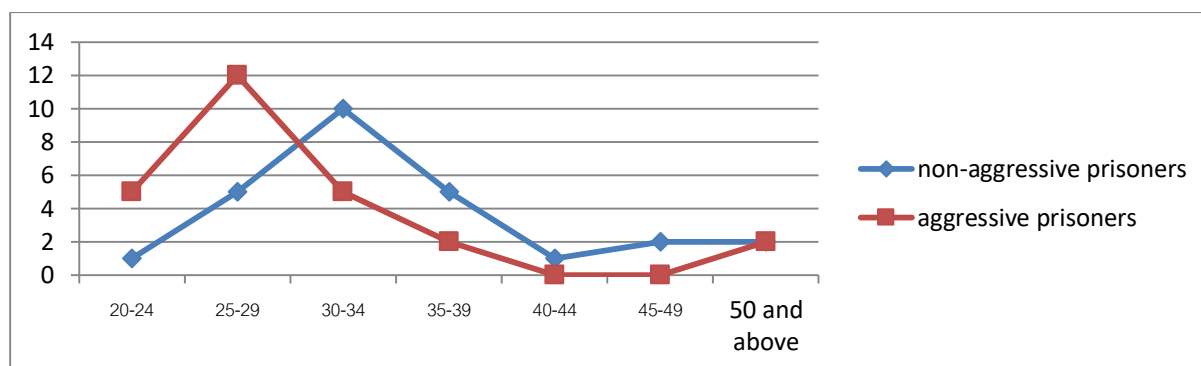


Figure 4.3. Prisoners categorised by age group

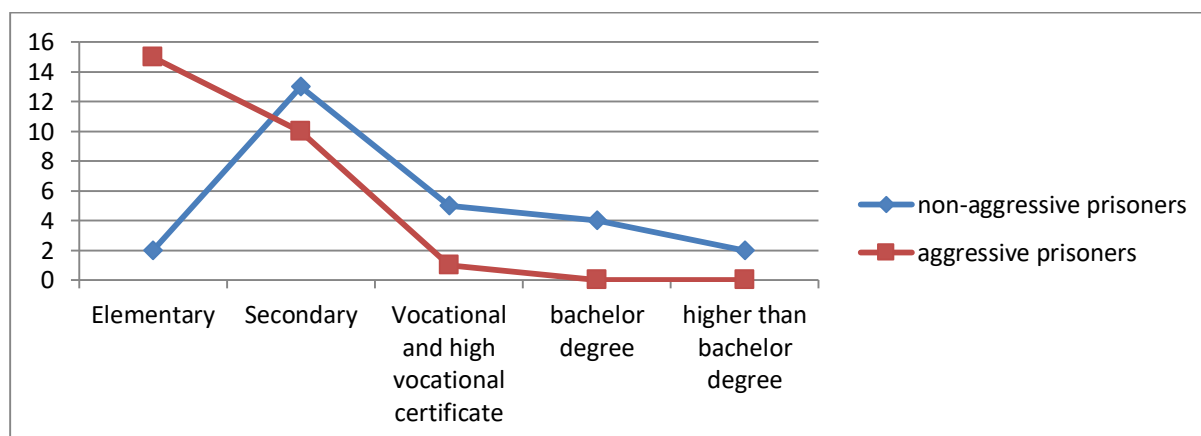


Figure 4.4. Prisoners categorised by education level

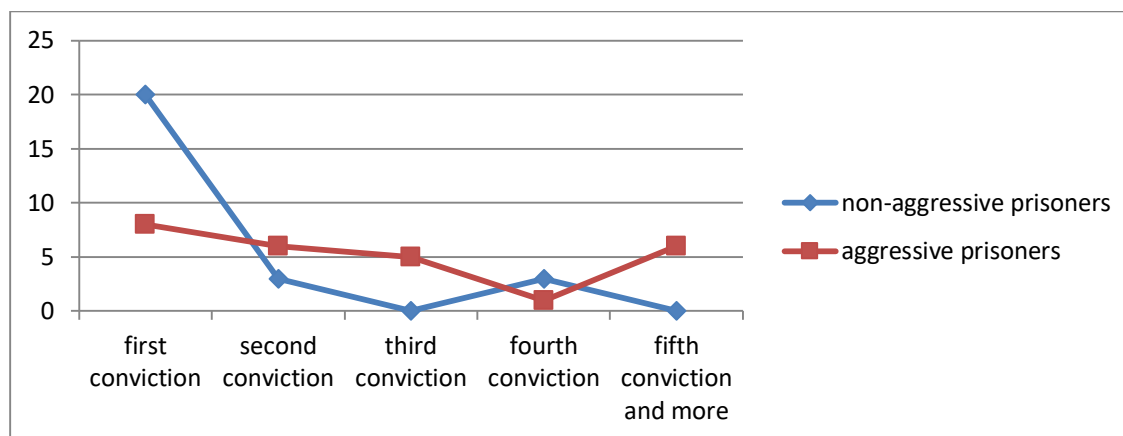


Figure 4.5. Prisoners categorised by criminal history

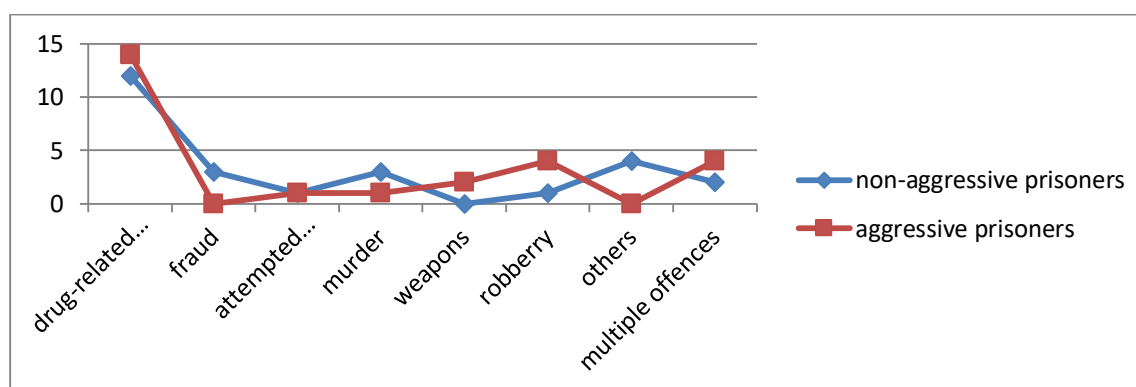


Figure 4.6. Prisoners categorised by offences

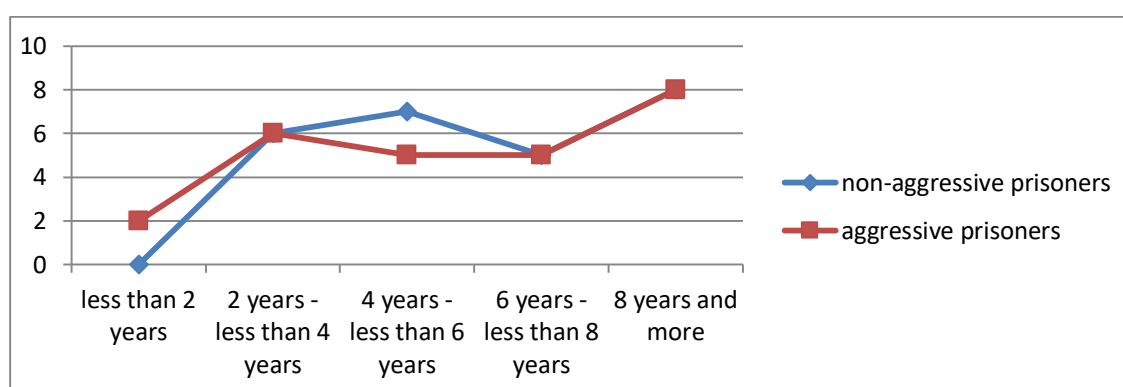
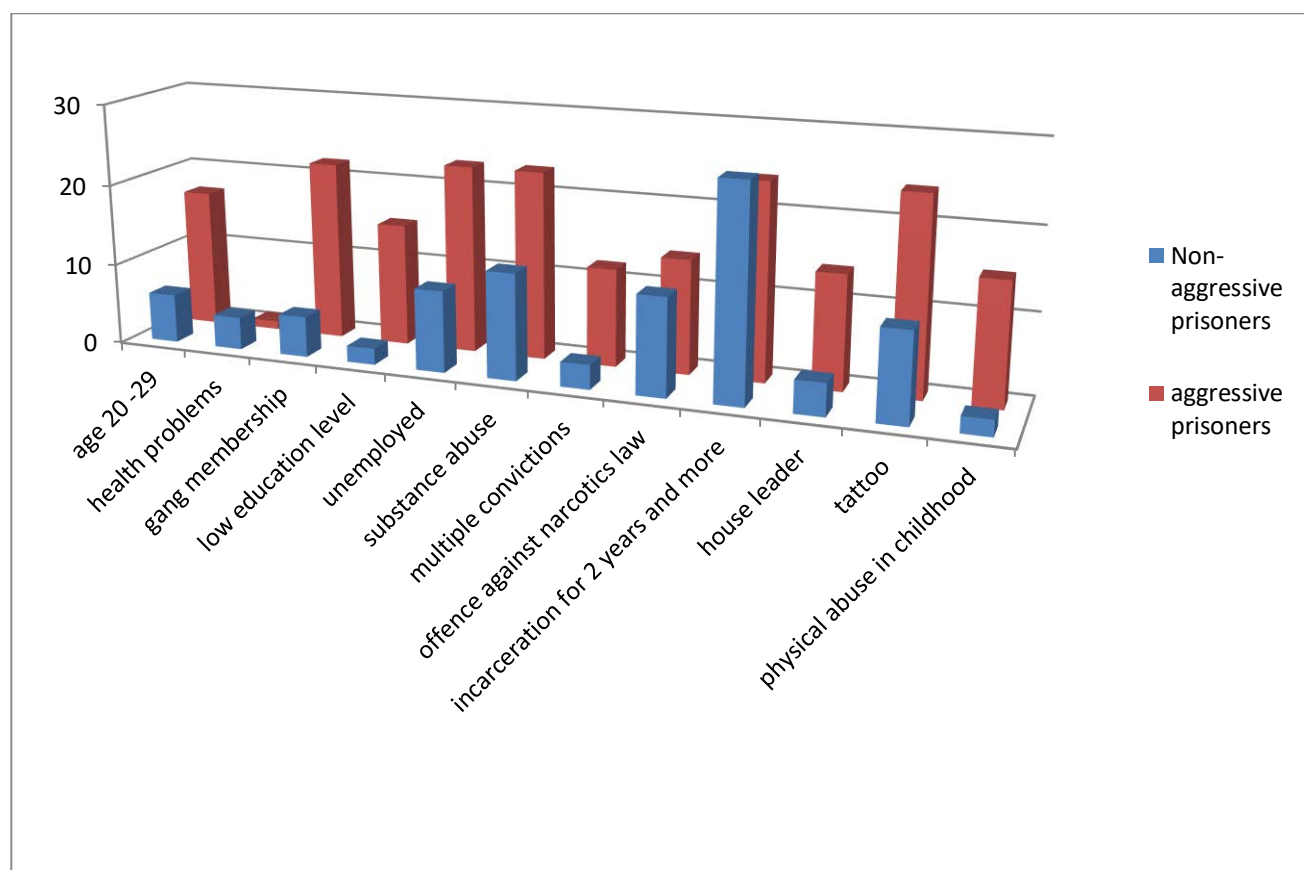


Figure 4.7. Prisoners categorised by length of incarceration



*Figure 4.8. Prisoners' characteristics compared between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners*

**Research Question 2: What are the differences in terms of anger, provocation and attitude towards prison victimisation?**

**1. Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory**

In the aggressive group, the score did not vary much among the three domains. In the cognitive domain, which tests anger justification, rumination, hostile attitude and suspicion, the highest score is 41 and the lowest is 28. In the arousal domain, which tests anger intensity and duration, somatic tension and irritability, the highest score is 39 and the lowest is 23. The gap is widest in the behaviour domain (impulsive reaction, verbal aggression, physical confrontation and indirect expression), as the highest score is 43 and

the lowest is 20. In comparison, in the non-aggressive group, the predominant difference in score was the cognitive domain, with the highest score at 32 and the lowest at 17. In the arousal domain, the non-aggressive group has the highest score of 25 and the lowest score is 17. In the behaviour domain, the highest score is 22 and the lowest is 17. There was a significant difference in the M and SD scores for aggressive and non-aggressive groups in all domains, which showed that aggressive prisoners had a more hostile attitude, irritability and impulsive actions than the non-aggressive ones (see Table 4.3). This is the important thing. Although regardless of normality the samples are still very small and so any statistical result needs to be interpreted with caution because small groups are not representative. The obtained data was tested for normal distribution prior to testing research question 3 to ensure that parametric tests could be run. The data was examined by using the probability plot and it was normally distributed. Since the number of participants in each group was limited, 26 in each, and the two groups were independent, the researcher chose an independent samples T-test to compare the two study groups, as presented in Table 4.3.

## 2. Revised Pro-victim Scale

The aggressive group has a mean score of 21.5, SD = 4.81, with the lowest score at 15 and the highest score at 30, whereas the non-aggressive group has a mean score of 26.92, SD = 2.40, with the lowest score at 18 and the highest score at 30. The data was normally distributed, examined by using the probability plot. There was a significant difference in RPVS score for the aggressive group and the non-aggressive group, which showed that the aggressive prisoners had less empathy than the non-aggressive group (see Table 4.3).

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*Table 4.3. Comparison of NAS-PI and RPVS between aggressive and non-aggressive groups*

Measure	Aggressive		Non-aggressive		t(50)
	M	SD	M	SD	
NAS					
Cognitive	35.5	3.00	25.12	2.90	12.43*
Arousal	31.15	3.95	18.46	1.87	14.52*
Behaviour	35.62	5.89	19.31	1.51	13.41*
PI	65.5	8.05	34.31	2.89	18.24*
RPVS	21.5	4.81	26.92	2.40	-5.04*

\*  $p < .05$

## Discussion

The study explored the characteristics and behaviour of the aggressive prisoners compared to the non-aggressive ones and to identify aetiology of prison aggression based on the Ecological Model. From the study result, regardless of the methodological problems, which will be discussed in the following part, it can be seen that a number of factors were significantly related to prison violence. However, there were some factors for which, although they were found to be linked to prison violence in previous studies, no significant relation was found in this one, e.g., current conviction, length of incarceration, and history of physical and mental disorders. This will be further discussed by using the Ecological Model to group these factors.

### 1. Individual level

This level consists of multiple factors. In terms of prisoner's age, the result is consistent with the previous studies: the younger the prisoner, the higher the risk of prison misconduct (Cooper & Werner, 1990, Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Schenk & Fremouw,

2012). The majority of the aggressive group are under 30 years old, unlike the age of the majority of the non-aggressive group. Turning to consider history of child abuse, it is also consistent with the previous research that history of child abuse, especially sexual abuse, is a strong predictor for future violence in adulthood and emotional regulation difficulties (McGrath, Nilsen & Kerley, 2011; Stevens et al., 2013). Although all participants from both groups had similarly experienced minor physical abuse, the aggressive group had significantly experienced more severe abuse in childhood, including psychological abuse (neglect).

In terms of ethnicity, the two groups did not vary, as 100% of them were Thai. Additionally, concerning mental disorder, none of the participants in either group in this study had an official record of psychological illness, although a few prisoners experienced hallucinations when using drugs. Thus, it is not possible to calculate the difference. However, this can also be explained as the healthcare system in Thai prisons is not very proactive, especially with regard to mental health. Those who were diagnosed as having a psychiatric disorder were mostly identified before imprisonment. Moreover, there is no mental health screening in prison. As a result, it is possible that there are prisoners with psychiatric problems who are not diagnosed.

However, in terms of anger, provocation and attitude towards victimisation, it can be seen that there were significant differences between the aggressive and non-aggressive groups in all domains. These were consistent with Schokman, et al.'s study in 2014, conducted among 284 male and female high-school students in Australia to examine emotional intelligence (EI) and pro-victim attitudes and their role towards victimisation. The

result showed significant association of EI dimensions, pro-victim attitudes and bullying behaviour. Adolescents with strong pro-victim attitude, lower Understanding of Emotions, and greater Emotional Management and Control were less likely to engage in bullying, as these pro-social behaviours led to proper stress-coping strategies (Schokman, et al., 2014). Additionally, the findings from Ohlsson and Ireland's 2011 study, conducted among 206 adult male prisoners, also suggested that, among other factors, anger and provocation were two factors that could significantly predict the aggression and offending motives (Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011).

In terms of substance abuse, the study result also proved its relationship with the increased risk of prison violence. Although units 3 and 4 were aimed at housing prisoners with drug offences, practically, prisoners with these types of offence were distributed to every unit as a result of the high numbers of drug offences. In response, while prisoners were assigned in theory to drug offence units, practically they were distributed across units due to overcrowding. While they were assigned on the basis of drug offences, drug offences include possession and supply which also indicates usage. The majority of prisoners from the aggressive group had a history of more than two types of substance abuse over a number of years. This totally contrasts with the result from the non-aggressive group. The majority of substance abusers from both groups used amphetamine. This is also supported by previous research that indicated that substances, especially CNS stimulation, increased the risk of lethal inter-personal violence in prison (Campbell, 2007).

In terms of education, the education system in Thailand is slightly different from the UK system. It is compulsory for all Thai students to go to elementary school (primary school)



in their early childhood, usually at 5–7 years old. Six years in elementary school is similar to grades 1–6 in the UK system. After that, they move to secondary school, which provides another six years of education, similar to grades 7–12. After year 3 in secondary school, some students may move to a vocational training school. It is obviously seen from the study result that lower education level has a significantly strong link with prison aggression. This is consistent with previous studies. Although the causal effect of education on prison violence has never been thoroughly studied, it has been explained as education could relate to greater opportunities for employment, marriage and social status (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Therefore, education makes an individual feel less need to use violence and helps them understand how not to be violent. Education may also contribute to lower levels of violence because it provides better occupational opportunities and social stability, while lower incomes and deprivation are more commonly associated with the pressures to commit crime.

The study result showed a significant link between poor employment history and risk of prison violence. This could be explained as, like education level, employment relates to social support and security in life (Campbell, 2007; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Additionally, when considering the Thai prisoner context, it was also found that those who were unemployed prior to imprisonment had been constantly involved with drug abuse and drug trafficking and had a criminal history. Not only did this previous history disqualify them from employment, the prisoners also stated that drug trafficking generated more income than other 'jobs'.

Prisoners with multiple convictions (convicted more than twice) have a significantly higher risk of prison misconduct than those with one or two convictions. This is consistent with the study of Cunningham and Sorensen in 2007 that the greater the history of previous conviction and/or arrest and/or incarceration, the higher the risk of committing a violent act in current prison confinement (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007). This is also supported by the Schenk and Fremouw study that prisoners with a history of violence or weapon used in the community prior to imprisonment were more likely to engage in prison misconduct (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, the current study's result showed no significant difference between the groups in terms of type of conviction and length of incarceration, which can also be seen from Figures 4.6 and 4.7, as the line charts have almost the same alignment. This is different from previous literature, which indicated that prisoners who had committed a less serious offence, e.g., a property offence, were more likely to be associated with violence in prison than those who had committed a serious offence, e.g., drug offence, murder (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012).

Nonetheless, this could be explained as the majority of the prisoners from both groups share the same offence, drug offence. This makes the current conviction not significant in this study, and is consistent with the Thai Department of Corrections' prisoner statistic that more than 50% of the prisoner population have committed a narcotics offence (Department of Corrections, 2013). The Thai Government takes a very intolerant view of drug use and drug trafficking, while for the Thai people it is a very lucrative income due to the strong tourist industry which only serves to maintain the drug industry. Northern

Thailand is very much in what is termed the Golden Triangle, and is a centre of world heroin production and marijuana production. This is surely an important factor. It would inevitably impact on the number of people convicted of drug offences and the lengths of incarceration. The rest of the prisoners' offences were almost evenly distributed across a number of offences. The prisoners who had committed multiple offences (more than one type of offence) from both groups had similarly committed a drug offence, along with other various offences, such as offence against life (murder or attempted murder) or offence against social security. However, since prisoners who had committed a drug offence are also linked to a history of substance abuse, this factor should not totally be ignored.

In terms of length of imprisonment, previous studies have suggested that prisoners with a short-term sentence (less than five years) have double the risk of prison violence that prisoners with a long-term sentence (more than 20 years) (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, as described in Chapter 2, prisoners in Thailand are distributed to any prison based on multiple factors. One of them is the length of incarceration. Therefore, most of the prisoners in ██████████ Remand Prison do not have long-term imprisonment or life sentences. This is why there is no significant difference between the two groups.

## 2. Relationship level

In this context, gang affiliation and hierarchical ranking could be considered as sharing the same spectrum. The information regarding this issue was collected during the interview. Among most of the prisoners from the aggressive group, gang affiliation was not only present in their history before imprisonment, they also regrouped after being

imprisoned and were ruled by the same hierarchical system. This can be explained by the nature of two local gangs within Bangbon district, where the prison is located. Orod and Ratburana are the two main gangs that reside in this area, with 2,000 to 5,000 members in each gang. The gangs are known to have a long history of being rivals. This also became one of the causes of aggression within the prison, which will be mentioned in detail in the interview part. The gang affiliation and hierarchical ranking significantly predict prison violence, and this is also consistent with previous studies (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). The study of Worrall and Morris in 2012 suggested that intra-prison gang affiliation is significantly related to a higher chance of inmate-to-inmate violence, which is similar to this study's result.

Considering the hierarchical ranking inside Thai prisons, the researcher has focused on the difference between leader and non-leader prisoners that relates to aggression in prison. Being a house leader or a gang leader could be problematic in some certain groups. To maintain the leadership image and to gain respect from their house members, the house leader must be able to end all conflicts caused by their peers. Therefore, it is easy for them to take responsibility for another's trouble. This is consistent with the study of Gaes et al. in 2002, which indicated that the core members of intra-prison gangs were associated with more prison misconduct and inmate-to-inmate assaults than the peripheral members (Gaes et al., 2002).

Additionally, tattoos, especially acquired after imprisonment, also significantly related to higher risk of engagement with prison violence. Among a number of Thai prisoners, tattoos significantly represent their gang, which can only be acquired by being a

gang member. Although tattoos and piercings among prisoners are quite common globally (Hellard, Aitken & Hocking, 2007; Zamani et al., 2007), there has been no previous study focusing on the relationship between tattoos and prison violence. Most of the studies that have mentioned this have emphasised the risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases (Abiona, Balogun, Adefuye & Sloan, 2010; Hellard, Aitken & Hocking, 2007; Zamani et al., 2007).

The hierarchy in prison also fits with the nature of human social organisation (Berkowitz, 1993). There are many dimensions that explain the goal of the existence of hierarchy in human social organisation. However, two of the most outstanding reasons are to gain power and status. Power is described as taking control of a group and its limited resources by using various methods of influence, e.g., rewarding, coercing, authority. Status is described differently as to gain privilege, esteem and respect from inferiors (Blader & Chen, 2012). This concept of status and power explains the behaviour of the house leaders, as they need to maintain their social status and power in their groups, especially in big groups with high competition. They had to offer protection to their inferiors and prove that they could take responsibility in inter-gang problems. In return, they earned respect, esteem and privilege from their inferiors, which stabilised their social status. By this form of reciprocity, a hierarchy existed in the prison. This helps to explain the dynamic result of NAS-PI and RPVS. Five aggressive prisoners (19.23%) did not perceive their action as aggression but rather as defending their honour. They described that they were actually protecting the weak, who were their peers, from a hostile aggressor. This made five of aggressive prisoners (19.23%) answered 'agree' with the statements "*it makes me angry when others are picked*

*on without reason” or “I like it when someone sticks up for the weak who are being bullied”.*

Mostly, these types of answer came from house leaders. Some said if they had not been the house leaders they would not have done anything like it.

### 3. Community level

Considering the prisoner grading, among the six grades of prisoner in [REDACTED] Remand prison, those from the extremely poor grade were found most likely to be associated with prison misconduct. In this case, Wellford’s Labelling theory in 1975 can be used to explain such a tendency: that individuals who were negatively labelled tended to act out negatively, as they were labelled. However, this can also be explained by stating that the behaviour of prisoners given these extremely poor grades fits the profile for Antisocial Personality Disorder, e.g., failure to conform to lawful behaviours, vengeful behaviour, impulsivity (DSM-V, 2013). As a result, more violent acts were found among this group of prisoners.

### Limitations

Lack of official records from the Thai Department of Corrections such as a database on prisoners’ general characteristics makes it difficult to generalise and compare the study results, and there is the possibility that some important factors have been missed. History of violence during previous imprisonment is a good example of this. Previous studies have proved that there is a significant relation between violence during previous imprisonment and risk of prison misconduct in current incarceration (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, there was no record of this in this study, even among the prisoners with multiple convictions.

Additionally, none of the prisoners from either group were diagnosed as having any psychiatric disorder. This could be the result of non-proactive mental healthcare strategies in prison. It is possible that there are a number of undiagnosed mentally disordered prisoners. Only those with strong signs and symptoms of psychosis were identified and treated. Furthermore, there is less variety of offences and ethnicities in Thai prisons compared to prisons in western studies. In addition, since the majority of participating prison officers were from the less crowded units, it is possible that there were a lot more aggressive incidents going on in the crowded units which were unnoticed by the prison staff. Furthermore, there could be a potential sampling bias, since the majority of aggressive prisoners were from more crowded units and the majority of non-aggressive prisoners were from the less crowded ones. To reduce such bias, participants from aggressive and non-aggressive groups should be sampled equally from similar units, for instance, an equal number of prisoners from unit 4 and unit 9. Additionally, prisoners with certain offences, e.g., drug offences, were not allocated to any particular units as planned by the Thai Department of Corrections. Instead, they were designated to any unit. Therefore, it was difficult to compare the effects of some factors, e.g., offence types, overcrowding, prison environment, on prisoners' behaviour. Additionally, there could potentially be problems in categorising minor and severe physical assaults. For instance, "They hit you *on the bottom* with something like a belt, hairbrush, a stick or some other hard object" was categorised as a minor assault whereas, "They hit you *on some other part of the body besides the bottom* with something like a belt, hairbrush, a stick or some other hard object" was categorised as a severe assault.

## Conclusion

Despite the limitations, this study provides the characteristics and behaviour of the aggressive prisoners compared to the non-aggressive ones, based on the Ecological Model. The study focussed predominantly on the individual and relationship levels of the model. In the individual level, age and history of child abuse (both physical and psychological), history of substance abuse, poor history of employment status prior to imprisonment, low education level and multiple convictions are strong links to current prison misconduct. In the relationship level, history of gang affiliation prior to imprisonment links to gang reunion in prison and increasing risk of committing violence, especially for the core member, the head of the gang. In the community level, poor prisoner grading seems to be part of a vicious cycle, which also relates to gang affiliation and violence in prison. Additionally, prisoners with bad grading and tattoos acquired from inside prison also have a higher risk of committing violent acts in prison.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Aggressive and Non-aggressive Prisoners' Functional Assessment on Their Perspectives towards the Aggressive Incidents in the Prison**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to address objective two of the research, which is to understand the nature of violence and aggression among Thai male prisoners. Extending the work from the previous study after both groups (aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners) had been studied. This chapter focuses mainly on prisoners in the aggressive group. This is because studying aggression in prison is not only concerned with the characteristics, types and frequency of the incidents, as it is equally important to understand the context of the prisoners' aggressive action and all plausible causes for it. In order to gain a better understanding of a violent situation, it is important to take into account what prisoners think or believe and what happens before (antecedents) and after an incident (consequences). Therefore, a tool that answers this enquiry should consider the situation which leads up to the event, the internal mechanisms which motivate the person, and ultimately the negative consequences.

This description is contained within the concept of functional approach rather than structural approach, as they are supported by different concepts. Functionalism looks at each human action or behaviour as a result of multiple factors, e.g., environment, childhood history and background, whereas the structural approach considers mainly the action itself (Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009). Structuralism focuses mainly on behaviour resulting from

underlying structural conditions inside the person along with the mental elements observation (sensation, feeling and image) such as Titchener's Introspection (Sturmey, Ward-Hornor, Marroquin & Doran, 2007). Therefore, it leads to different plans for assessment and treatment. Additionally, a functional assessment also studies the relationship of human behaviour and environmental factors such ABC approach and SORC analysis (Sturmey et al., 2007). Regarding the main model of this study, the Ecological Model, it can be seen that functional assessment provides a framework that is consistent with the Ecological Model. Hence, in order to answer the objective of the study, this chapter aims to answer three research questions, as follows:

1. What kind of stimuli, antecedents, could induce aggression in prison?
2. What kind of developmental backgrounds and normative beliefs do aggressive prisoners have that led to prison aggression?
3. What were the positive and negative reinforcements of the behaviours and how did the prisoners look at them?

For that reason, SORC analysis, which is a functional analysis (Sturmey et al., 2007), was the tool used in order to explore and understand prisoners' aggression. It will be further described in the details of the measures section.

## **Method**

### **Sample**

Only the 26 participants from the aggressive group in Chapter 4 were utilised as the sample of this current study. These 26 aggressive prisoners had been selected by the prison

officers based on the officers' observation over the six-month period. The chosen prisoners were identified as being violent during the observation period by prison officers using the Direct Aggressive Behaviour Checklist. All participants were Thai male prisoners aged 20 – 55 years old ( $M = 29.50$ ,  $SD = 8.30$ ). The majority of prisoners were from unit 4 (14 prisoners, 53.8%) and unit 5 (seven prisoners, 26.9%), respectively. Twenty-two out of the 26 prisoners were gang members before imprisonment (84.6%). The majority of them had low literacy levels, had only attended elementary school (grade 6 and below) (57.7%) and had committed offences against narcotics laws (53.8%).

Before starting the SORC interview, these prisoners were provided with an information sheet (Appendix I) and an informed consent form (Appendix J). Only those who consented to participate were allowed to join the study (consent rate 100%).

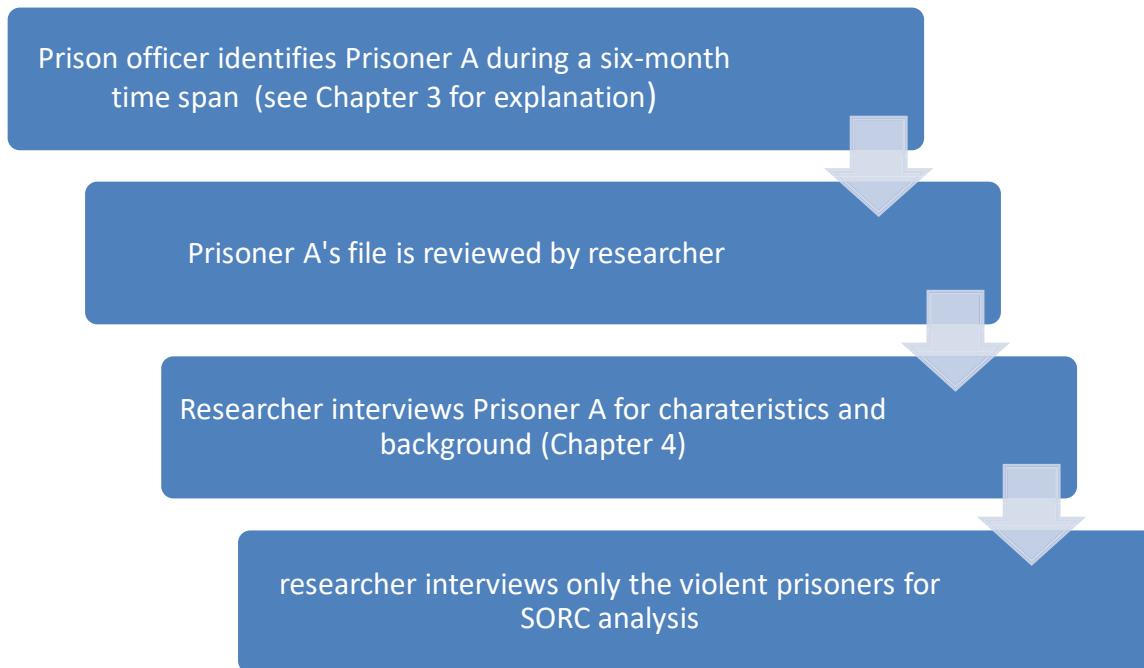
### **Procedure**

The whole study took place during the six-month period of mid-August 2013 to mid-February 2014. After each prisoner was identified as aggressive or non-aggressive by the prison officers, as described in Chapter 3, and consented to participate, they went through the whole interview and file review in one setting. The SORC interview started after each prisoner's file was reviewed and the prisoner went through a demographic interview, as described in Chapter 4. Only aggressive prisoners were interviewed by the researcher in this process using SORC analysis as a semi-structured interview (Appendix O) to gain understanding of antecedents, incident and consequences of their violent actions.

Once a prisoner had been identified as violent by the prison officer, the researcher visited him to provide information about the study and ask for his consent to participate in

the study. The information sheet (Appendix I), which contains the details of this part of the study, was read to the prisoner by the researcher as the prisoner was not allowed to receive anything from the researcher. Then the consent form (Appendix J) for joining this part of the study was given to the prisoner if he wished to participate. The information sheet and consent form were different from the previous part of the study as there were different aims in this part of the study and different sets of questions.

The information from the interview was tape-recorded and transcribed into Thai before being translated into English. Interview transcripts from each prisoner were reviewed individually in order to gain full comprehension in four dimensions of SORC analysis. Significant points from each interview were noted. Additionally, a cross-case analysis was also utilised to mark the similarities and differences among cases. This information found from cross-case analysis could help identify outstanding factors. The obtained information was labelled with research numbers instead of using prisoners' names, in order to maintain their anonymity. Then the documents were securely kept in the researcher's locker.



*Figure 5.1. Flowchart of procedural steps*

## Measures

The tool used in this part of the study was SORC analysis, a functional assessment tool that considers external causes that relate to behaviour formation, e.g., environment, childhood experience. There are also some other types of functional approach, e.g., AB model (which focuses on the relationship of environmental triggers and behaviour), ABC model (Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences) (Hanley, Iwata & McCord, 2003). SORC analysis is an acronym for antecedent Stimuli or setting, Organism, Response and Consequences (Lee-Evans, 1994; Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009). It is a functional analysis that considers various factors before and during the incident and also looks at its consequences, which is quite similar to the ABC model. Additionally, it considers the environmental factors and focuses on the reasons why such behaviour occurred. This SORC

assessment was introduced into the study as it has been claimed that it provides a wider scope of information than other types of functional assessment, e.g., ABC model (Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences), which focuses on immediate antecedents and contextual environment rather than individual's developmental background (Iwata, Kahng, Wallace & Lindberg, 2000). Therefore, using SORC functional analysis would provide details of factors in each layer of the Ecological Model. These factors can be grouped and named according to SORC core domains, which are setting conditions (stimuli), organism, responses (behaviour) and consequences. A combination of these factors results in a behavioural framework for each person who was studied, as follows:

1. S: Setting conditions or Stimuli

The study of setting conditions or stimuli mainly looks at the antecedents or the triggers of aggressive behaviour, which are the factors before the incident (Lee-Evans, 1994). The antecedents specifically linked to certain behaviour were classified as specific triggers, external conditions and internal conditions. Specific triggers could be actions or events that produced certain behaviour. External conditions mostly refer to environmental factors or locations in which the incident takes place that can trigger aggressive actions. Internal conditions are individual factors, e.g., mental health problem, state of mind (Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009; Boer, Eher, Craig, Miner & Pfafflin, 2011). More generally, these are motivations, and so incorporate affect and cognition. Such stimuli are related to behaviour through types of conditioning, which make the behaviour predictable if known stimuli are observed (Lee-Evans, 1994).

## 2. O: Organism variables

Organism variables focus on an individual's background and history, which covers the whole developmental process (Lee-Evans, 1994), unlike the setting conditions, which focus only on the antecedents right before an incident (Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009). The organism variables could be an individual's knowledge, normative belief, attitude, value belief, past behaviours, or experience. These factors interact and result in the individual's social reasoning and development of behaviour that leads to the current action (Lee-Evans, 1994; Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009; Boer et al., 2011).

## 3. R: Response variables or behaviour

Response variables refer to the actual behaviour that takes place, which is the result of the interaction of stimuli and organism variables (Nelson-Gray, Lootens, Mitchells, Robertson, Hundt & Kimbrel, 2009). This requires accurate observation and measure of the response in as much detail as possible, for instance, duration, intensity and frequency (Lee-Evans, 1994; Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009). It has been suggested that there could be other tools that help provide greater details of such behaviour (Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009; Boer et al., 2011), and so these were combined with the information from the prison officers' Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (Chapter 3), in which details of each incident are contained.

## 4. C: Consequences

In this context the consequences refer to both positive and negative reinforcement. Both positive (e.g., gain, reward) and negative (e.g., removal of disadvantages, escape, punishment) reinforcements, which could be either psychological or

physical, are very important to the life-long learning process (Iwata et al., 2000). They eventually pave the way for individual behaviour formation. Reinforcement does not have to follow every response. However, once the behaviour is established, occasional reinforcements are sufficient to maintain such behaviour (Lee-Evans, 1994). This impression also resembles the concept of Pavlov's classical conditioning (Bitterman, 2006; Pavlov, 1927). It has also been suggested that short-term and intermittent responses have a stronger effect on an individual's learning process and behaviour formation than long-term consequences (Lee-Evans 1994; Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009; Boer et al., 2011). Additionally, Thorndike also described reinforcement and punishment in his original Law of Effect that responses that produce desire effect are more likely to take place again. Yet, responses that produce unwanted effect are less likely to take place again in the similar situation (Thorndike, 1927).

Hence, by this notion, the desire effect and the unpleasant effect were later recognised as reinforcer and punisher that led to human behaviour.

It can be clearly seen from its description that the SORC approach was designed not only to understand behaviours and how they have been developed but also to provide effective guidelines for the assessment and treatment of each individual. Additionally, the SORC functional analysis can be used effectively in the study of both aggressive and non-aggressive behaviour (Ireland, Ireland & Birch, 2009). Therefore, it has been utilised in a number of studies, e.g., for the assessment and treatment of personality disorder (Nelson-Gray & Farmer, 1997; Cuper, Merwin & Lynch, 2007; Nelson-Gray et al., 2009). SORC analysis was used for assessment of individuals with personality disorders to provide an individual's



behavioural framework by considering signs and symptoms of personality disorder (PD), according to DSM IV as a Response. Life-long learning history and different physiological factors are organism variables and stimuli and consequences are factors that produce certain behaviour. Additionally, certain authors have suggested using SORC to assist treatment for PD by limiting or adjusting those variables identified by the SORC approach (Cuper, Merwin & Lynch, 2007; Nelson-Gray & Farmer, 1997; Nelson-Gray et al., 2009). Furthermore, SORC analysis has also been utilised for case conceptualisation in mood and anxiety disorder intervention (Hopko, Lejuez & Hopko, 2004), for treatment planning for self-harming behaviour in youth (Goldston, Compton, Mash & Barkley, 2007) and for assessment for relationship dysfunction based on Goldfried & Sprafkin's concept of the SORC model in 1976 (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). In this study, SORC analysis was utilised as a semi-structured interview (Appendix O), in the same setting as the Chapter 4 interview.

## **Results**

### **1. Setting conditions or Stimuli**

#### **1.1 Current situation**

Fifteen aggressive prisoners (57.69%) stated that they were carrying out their routine prison activities, which were not related to the violent incidents, in the common area right before the violent incidents occurred. The majority of them, eight, were called to join the incident by their friends or inferiors. Usually, they did not have prior awareness of what had happened to cause the conflicts. Five out of 15 prisoners were talking or playing

games with their friends. Two prisoners had prior conflicts with their victims, so they had intended to assault the victims at the next opportunity.

Eleven prisoners (42.31%) were facing their opponents (victims). Usually, the prisoners were with their peers. Five of these cases stated that they or their friends were taken advantage of by their victims. Four said they were cheated (gambling, loan shark loans) by the victims prior to the incidents. Therefore, they had to take some action to set an example for other prisoners to see. Two out of these 11 prisoners were house leaders who stated that they were disappointed and disrespected by their inferiors. Thus, they had to prevent their other fellow prisoners from behaving towards them in the same way.

#### 1.2 History with the victim

Fifteen prisoners (57.69%) stated that they had prior conflicts with their victims. However, among this group of prisoners, only four of them said it was a personal conflict. The other 11 prisoners said that it was their friends' or house's conflict, but they had taken it on as their own, as that was what a good friend did. Therefore it can be seen that there were conflicts prior to the aggression and the majority of them were house conflicts or intra-prison gang related conflicts.

Ten prisoners (38.46%) insisted that they did not have prior conflicts with their victims; four of these said that they were just 'playing' with their mates. One prisoner (3.85%) was not certain whether there was a conflict before the incident but he sensed that his victim did not like him.

### 1.3 Trigger (from the participants' perspectives)

The majority of the aggressive prisoners, 12 (46.15%), pointed out that the triggers were minute, e.g., being stared at or teased by the victims. The house leaders in this group suggested that sometimes the fight was started by the new house members, who wanted to be recognised by their peers. However, frequently, those members could not end the situation, and so it was the house leaders' duty to finish it.

Five prisoners (19.23%) said that their triggers were being cheated or taken advantage of by the victims. Usually these incidents were not the first time they had been cheated by the victims. These prisoners said that they had already tried to solve the problem by negotiating but the victims would not change their attitude. Therefore, the aggressors had to use some level of force to give them a lesson and to set an example to other prisoners. Considering the aggressive prisoners' rationale for their behaviours, it can be obviously seen that their actions were more proactive (instrumental) than reactive, as they were goal-oriented. The incidents were related to the gambling or in relation to loans. Therefore, their goals were not only to hurt others but also to gain some form of prison currency, e.g., cigarettes, special food. This is different from other aggressive incidents reported as most of them were reactive aggression.

Four prisoners (15.38%) insisted that there was no trigger as there was no aggression. What they did to the victims was a common thing that they did to others and no one complained about it. Three prisoners (11.54%) said that they became involved in the violence because they saw their peers were in trouble and they had to help them. These

prisoners considered their actions as a good and proper thing to do, and they also wanted their peers to do the same thing if they were in the same situation.

Two prisoners (7.69%), who were house leaders, said that the trigger was disrespect from their inferiors, which they could not allow. They said that, in order to keep good control of the house, they had to respond immediately to such action so that their other inferiors would never do the same thing.

#### 1.4 Prison environment

Only five out of the 26 aggressive prisoners (19.23%) thought that the prison environment was also an important factor that could aggravate aggression in prison. They said that the prison's overcrowded conditions and lack of resources could increase the possibility and frequency of conflict. However, they also stated that environment-related conflicts were more likely to happen between those prisoners with long-running conflicts than between strangers. In contrast, the majority of the aggressive prisoners (80.77%) stated that the prison environment was not an important factor as they thought it was about the personal behaviour. They stated that the problematic people would always be problematic, no matter where they were. However, by saying "*the problematic people*", they meant their victims or opponents. Additionally, they also regarded a stressful environment as just their foes' excuse for getting into trouble.

*Table 5.1. Perspective towards stimuli*

Topic	Number	Percentage
1. context of situation before the incident		
- routine prison activities	15	57.69
- confronting the victim	11	42.31
2. prior conflict with the victim		
- had prior conflict	15	57.69
- did not have prior conflict	10	38.46
- not sure	1	3.85
3. trigger		
- small or irrational matter	12	46.15
- being cheated or taken advantage of	5	19.23
- no trigger	4	15.38
- seeing peers in trouble	3	11.54
- disrespect	2	7.69
4. impact of prison environment		
- prison environment can induce aggression	5	19.23
- prison environment is not related to prison aggression	21	80.72

## 2. Organismic variables

### 2.1 Participants' attitude towards violence

All 26 aggressive prisoners (100%) similarly expressed their point of view that aggression was not a good thing to express, whether inside or outside the prison. However, it could be a solution for some difficult situations. When asked to give some examples of “*aggression*” from their perspectives, usually beating up, physical assaults that caused serious injuries, killing or physical assaults on prison officers were listed. Interestingly, they did not consider verbal, psychological, sexual aggression and some physical assaults that did not cause serious injury as aggression. Additionally, their definition of aggression also depended on the type of victim. If the victims were their inferiors or peers, it was justifiable and “*not that aggressive*”. However, if the victims were their superiors or prison officers, it was true aggression. Some participants (eight prisoners, 30.77%) did not consider their actions as aggression, so they did not support aggression in prison.

### 2.2 Participants' childhood witnessing of violence

All 26 participants (100%) similarly stated that they had witnessed violence during their childhood, both in their families and in their neighbourhood. All of them (100%) had witnessed domestic psychological, verbal and physical violence by their caregivers, siblings, or relatives. Most of the victims in their families were women and children. To be more precise, they had also been victims of more than one type of domestic aggression at least once during their childhood, e.g., psychological, physical and neglect. Interestingly, the majority of the prisoners, 18 (69.23%), in this group were raised by their caregivers, e.g., relatives, step-parents, who became their abusers.

Additionally, 23 prisoners (88.46%) had witnessed various types of violence in their neighbourhood during their childhood, e.g., physical, sexual, psychological abuse. Likewise, most of the victims were women, children and the weak. Fifteen prisoners (57.69%) said that they were a victim of neighbourhood violence at least once.

### 2.3 Participants' witnessing of violence in prison

All 26 aggressive prisoners (100%) correspondingly said that they had seen similar incidents from other prisoners before. Their case scenarios were quite common in the prison and everyone did the same thing as they did. Therefore, they considered their actions as a proper solution. Additionally, they similarly emphasised that whoever found themselves in the same situation would also do the same thing, especially when their opponents did not compromise.

Additionally, since most of the triggers or stimuli were house conflicts, cheating and being taken advantage of, 25 prisoners (96.15%) said that these incidents were common things that could be found either inside or outside the prison. As 21 prisoners in this group (80.77%) were gang members, they had learned the solution during the time they were part of a gang. From their experience, anyone would use the same solution as they did.

However, one prisoner (3.85%), who was also a house leader, said he never saw fellow prisoners in the same situation as his. He had been imprisoned because one of his inferiors had implicated him during a trial. However, he felt this was intolerable and so he had to teach him a lesson.

## 2.4 Participants' psychological and physical wellness before the incident

Twenty-four prisoners (92.30%) said that they were physically intact and had not experienced any physical discomfort before or during the time the aggression happened. One prisoner (3.85%) said that he had hypertension but it was well controlled and asymptomatic, which also corresponded with information from that prisoner's file. One prisoner (3.85%) claimed that he had taken a pill, Valium, bought from a psychiatric prisoner before the incident. According to his comment, it made him feel "*drunk*".

In terms of psychological wellness, 14 prisoners (53.85%) said they did not feel upset or frustrated before the incidents. They described their feeling as "*normal*". Ten prisoners (38.46%) said they had been upset and frustrated by the victims or the victims' peers for a period of time before the incident. Additionally, their frustrations were easily provoked by merely seeing the victims or their friends, as it reminded them of the conflict. These frustrations were caused by prolonged unsolved conflicts between them. Two prisoners (7.69%) said they felt rage against the victims and they needed to take some action to relieve it.



*Table 5.2. Organismic variables*

Topic	Number	Percentage
1. prisoner's attitude towards aggression		
- aggression is not good	26	100
2. witnessed violence during childhood		
- witnessing domestic violence	26	100
- became victim of domestic violence	26	100
- witnessed violence in neighbourhood	23	84.46
- became victim of violence in neighbourhood	15	57.69
3. witness of violence in the prison	26	100
4. psychological and physical wellness before the incident		
- physically intact	24	92.30
- feeling neutral	14	53.85
- feeling frustrated by the victim	10	38.46
- feeling rage against the victim	2	7.69

### 3. Response or behaviour

#### 3.1 Description of what happened

Out of the 26 aggressive participants, only two (7.69%) had shown psychological (verbal) aggression, which included insulting, teasing, humiliating, showing disrespect and yelling at other prisoners. Fourteen participants (53.85%) were reported as physically aggressive, which included pushing, grabbing, punching, kicking, choking and beating up. These resulted in mild to moderate physical injuries which did not require hospitalisation. Ten participants (38.46%) combined psychological (verbal) and physical aggression; in all these cases, the verbal aggression was followed by physical aggression. This, too, resulted in mild to moderate injury without hospitalisation. None of these incidents lasted longer than 5-10 minutes. The victims were all prisoners and no prison officer was assaulted. In addition, there was no prison officer report of arson, riot or weapon used among these participants, which was similar to the information from the participants.

Both verbally aggressive participants claimed that they meant no harm to the victims; they only wanted to make some fun but the victims and the prison officers overreacted. Among the purely physically aggressive group, it is interesting that most of these prisoners were house leaders who participated in these conflicts for their inferiors. They did not have a personal argument or conflict with the victims prior to the incidents. They claimed that it was necessary to protect their friends or their inferiors, although the issues were not directly their own. The other aggressors from this group stated that it was not physical aggression. They were just playing with the victims using a punch or blow to the head (in Thai etiquette, it is rude to touch another person's head).

The prisoners from the combined physically and psychologically aggressive group mostly stated that arguments between the victims and themselves had ended in verbal aggression and physical assaults.

### 3.2 Participants' feelings and thoughts during the incident

The majority of the participants, 17 (63.38%), stated that they were feeling very frustrated and angry at the victims and that they had to do something. Catharsis helped them release the pressure they were feeling. In addition, some of them wanted to give the victims a lesson to induce fear so that the victims would not dare to do 'it' again, and also to set an example to other prisoners. Additionally, some prisoners from this group also stated that they also wanted to prove that they could take care of their fellow inmates.

However, as mentioned earlier, five of these participants (19.23%) did not really feel rage or anger towards the victims during the incidents. They similarly said that they had to prove their code of honour. It was their responsibility to protect their inferiors and other fellow prisoners and it was the best way to end the situation.

Four out of the 26 (15.38%) wanted to play or make some jokes with others, and they thought it was all right to behave in this way. They were surprised that their victims were angry with them.

Additionally, from the prisoners' perspectives, 21 of them (80.77%) similarly said that their victims deserved to be assaulted as they (the victims) were the ones who had started the conflict.

*Table 5.3. Behaviour*

Topic	Number	Percentage
1. description of the incident		
- verbal aggression	2	7.69
- physical aggression	14	53.85
- combined verbal and physical aggression	10	38.46
- no physical injury	2	7.69
- mild to moderate physical injury	24	93.20
2. feelings and thoughts during the incident		
- very frustrated, need to vent	17	63.38
- wanted to make some jokes	4	15.38
- it was a responsibility	5	19.23

#### 4. Consequences

##### 4.1 What happened after the incident

At the time of incident, 22 prisoners (84.62%) were noticed, stopped and separated from the victims by the prison officer who wrote the report. The other four (15.38%) were stopped and separated by their fellow prisoners under the observation of the prison officers. It is interesting that the incidents usually took place in the public area, where a number of prisoners and maybe some prison officers witnessed them. Only a few incidents took place in the cells. As mentioned earlier, there was neither a private area nor privacy in the prison. Therefore, the prisoners were mostly observed all the time, despite the fact that the number of prison officers was limited. The prison cells were designed for both ventilation and observation. Therefore prisoners could always be observed. Even the shower rooms were designed for a big group of prisoners taking a shower at the same time. Another possible explanation is that the majority of participating officers were from less crowded units; therefore, they were not able to observe the prisoners in the more crowded units when those prisoners were not in the common area. However, not many prisoners wanted to help stop the aggression, unless the prison officers had taken some action. There were two explanations given by the prisoners regarding this. First, it was a normal situation which would end by itself when the aggressors were satisfied. Secondly, nobody would want to intervene in the fight as the perpetrator might think they were also opponents, and it was not a good idea to create more rivals in prison. Finally, they considered the incident as none of their business.

Later, after the incidents, 11 of them (42.31%) were transferred to other units. Seventeen of them (65.38%) had their right of routine relatives' visits removed. Five of them (19.23%) were downgraded to lower-class prisoner status. From this data, it is apparent that some prisoners were punished with more than one type of penalty.

#### 4.2 Immediate reaction from prisoners' friends

From the prisoners' perspective, 18 of them (69.23%) similarly said that, right after the incident, there was no obvious reaction from other prisoners standing nearby, neither positive nor negative. However, their close friends and their inferiors were quite supportive and respectful. Especially, those prisoners who had been involved in their house's or other's conflict said that their fellow prisoners or inferiors felt grateful and praised them greatly.

Five of them (19.23%) said no one cared much about what happened. They did not pick up any response from people around them. Additionally, they said it looked like everyone just minded their own business and did not dare to interrupt. If the prison officers did not show up, nobody would do anything to stop the violence. The other three prisoners (11.54%) believed that some prisoners had sympathy for the victims and had negative feelings towards the aggressors. However, no one had harmed them.

#### 4.3 Participants' feelings and thoughts about the consequences

Twenty prisoners (76.92%) stated that they had been aware of or expected the punishment. However, they felt that it was worthwhile when considering the reputation and respect gained from their peers. Additionally, they felt their pressure had been relieved. Interestingly, a few prisoners even stated that some prisoners would claim responsibility for

their peers or superiors, as they would gain trust and be accepted by their gang. In the long run, this helped them reach the higher echelons of the gang more easily. However, even though they knew what they would have to face after the incident, these prisoners still did not appreciate the consequences. They said it would be better if they still had their rights, e.g., relatives' visit, staying in the same unit with their peers.

The other six prisoners (23.08%) were not satisfied with the consequences. They thought it was unfair since they were not "*that wrong*". They were just doing what others did.

#### 4.4 Decision-making towards similar incidents in the future

Although none of the prisoners liked their punishment, almost all of the similarly expressed their thoughts that it was the only way things could be done in the prison. Nineteen prisoners (73.08%) similarly said that they never wanted the incident to happen. They wished it would never happen again, but if it did they would respond in the same thing. The reasons were also about protecting the honour and reputation of themselves and their peers. They could not gain trust, respect and acceptance from other prisoners, especially those in the same house, if they did nothing. In contrast, seven prisoners (26.92) stated that they would hesitate to do the same thing again. Among these, four prisoners said that, even though what happened was just a prank that went "*a little*" too far, they meant no harm to others. However, the punishment and reaction from other prisoners made them feel that it was not fun anymore. Therefore, they might not do it again in the near future.

Interestingly, six prisoners who were house leaders said that they might give a different answer if they no longer held that position. They would not have taken another's

matter into their own hands and got into trouble like they did. However, as long as they were house leaders they would still do the same thing in the future. They had to be tough as it was important for their image. However, this would not be necessary at all if they were 'nobody'.



*Table 5.4. Consequences*

Topic	Number	Percentage
1. situation after the incident		
- stopped and separated by prison staff	22	84.62
- stopped and separated by other prisoners	4	15.38
2. punishment*		
- not allowed to have family visits	17	65.38
- transferred to other unit	11	42.31
- degraded to lower class of prisoner	5	19.23
3. immediate reaction from fellow prisoners		
- supportive, respectful and grateful	18	69.23
- neutral	5	19.23
- dislike	3	11.54
4. feelings and thoughts towards the consequence		
- pressure relieved, gain reputation and respect	20	76.92
- unsatisfied	6	23.08
5. decision towards similar incident in the future		
- do similar thing	19	73.08
- not sure, may try some other solutions	7	26.92

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\*some prisoners were punished with more than one type of punishment

## Discussion

### Research Question 1: What kind of stimuli could induce violence in prison?

According to the concept of SORC analysis, the Setting conditions or Stimuli, which were the antecedent causes, could be considered in three aspects, as follows:

#### 1. Trigger

It can be seen that a number of prisoners easily became involved in prison aggression just because they were called on for help by their fellow prisoners. To be more precise, they can be easily triggered by their peers. They were strongly willing to take on another's problem, which could be a peer-group effect. Therefore, their specific triggers were actions of perceiving their peers to be in trouble, which produced the predictable aggression that followed. Such scenarios easily switch on their defensive aggression. This might suggest a more thorough history-taking before admission and consideration of the prisoner distribution system in the prison. Avoiding confrontation between rivals could reduce the chance of prison violence. Additionally, it is worth trying a long-term solution for terminating long-running conflicts between houses, although this also requires cooperation from the community team, as most of the conflicts are rooted in the prisoners' community outside the prison.

Another interesting trigger was being cheated during gambling or in relation to loans, which were obviously both illegal and against the prison rules. According to the prisoners, they had already tried to reason with the victims before the incident. Therefore, this instrumental aggression was premeditated and driven by money or other form of currency, e.g., cigarettes, special food. It corresponded to Turner and Ireland's study in 2010 that

prisoners with instrumental aggressive beliefs were more likely to engage in physical aggression than those without. Additionally, this also indicated that there were some illegal activities going on in the prison unnoticed by the prison officers. Limited number of prison staff might be one of the important factors that maintained these problems. An effective prevention scheme that can reduce the chance of these misconducts would eventually result in decreasing violent incidents in prison.

## 2. Environmental or external factors

Surprisingly, not many prisoners gave much weight to the environmental factors as their triggers for aggression. Only a few of them recognised the effect of a stressful environment, e.g., overcrowded prison, limited resources, on themselves. However, these few people still suggested that prison environment-related conflicts were more likely to happen between old-time rivals than between strangers. It could be implied that a stressful environment may not be the main cause of these incidents but that it can act as an indirect trigger for violent incidents in prison. Or perhaps the men are generally violent and the place is irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is also indirectly relevant that, the higher the number of prisoners per unit and poor staff/prisoner ratio, the higher the chance of prisoners confronting their rivals and causing more inevitable conflicts. Therefore, a less stressful prison environment and a better prison management system can also assist in solving the aggression problem in Thai prisons.

Similarly, the Frustration-Aggression theory can be used to explain the scenario (Berkowitz, 1993). Since the prisoner's basic needs, e.g., personal space and resources, were limited, considering the Thai prison characteristics, these prisoners perceived themselves as

being held back from achieving their fundamental goals. The prisoners were repeatedly aroused and this therefore led to frustration and eventually aggressive action.

### 3. Internal factors

It is quite interesting that, although the majority of prisoners said that they were in a normal state of mind before the incident, they could easily be provoked by other prisoners, their peers. It can be seen that a long-running conflict between houses can simply provoke prison violence, which also indicates a strong problematic undercurrent among prisoners. The aggressive prisoners' behaviour can be described by the term "*catharsis*": that the prisoners view their actions as a way of releasing their stress, caused by long-felt suppressed anger, conflict or frustration. Therefore, tackling the long-running house conflict problem could be beneficial as it could remove both trigger and internal stimuli.

However, a smaller group of prisoners were feeling upset and angry with their victims due to the victims' carrying out of unlawful business. Usually, the violent incident was not the first time they had been challenged by their debtors. Hence, their aggression was also a way of problem-solving. However, some prisoners also infringed on other prisoners' rights, e.g., hitting someone on the head with a bare hand, and did not have awareness that what they were doing was wrong.

It was interesting that these aggressive prisoners similarly tended to overtly blame other prisoners and the environment as the root of the problem. From their perspective, they only recognised the stimuli that came from the opposite side rather than the stimuli from within their own side.

**Research Question 2:** What kind of developmental background and normative beliefs do aggressive prisoners have that led to prison violence?

The Organism Variables of the SORC approach provided an interesting result that the answers from the majority of the prisoners correspondingly showed a similar background of experience of childhood violence and abuse. Not only had all of them witnessed domestic violence, but they had also been victims of at least one type of violence. Most of them were brutalised by their own parents (mostly single parents) or caregivers (mostly step-parents and relatives). Additionally, violence also seemed to be normal in their neighbourhood, as it was widespread. The findings corresponded with the Social Learning theory, which describes that individuals acquire aggressive behaviour through either direct or indirect experience, e.g., victimisation, observation (Anderson & Bushman, 2002, Mischel, 1973). The aggressive prisoners, once victimised and having lived in a violent environment, had taken the violence that they had absorbed through their childhood into their problem-solving and perceived it as the norm. This was reflected in their current action and would presumably be so in their ongoing future behaviour unless they learned new problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, the aggressive prisoners also shared a similar normative belief about protecting their peers. To be more precise, in their perception, it seemed to be their duty, responsibility and a mark of honour to offer their peers protection, which they also expected to receive from their people in return. This belief seemed to be stronger among the house leaders, as they were expected by their inferiors to be powerful and able to end all troubles. In return, they were given respect and treated as royalty by their people. Therefore, it was

these prisoners' normative belief that it was important for them to protect and support each other and build a strong team for the house.

Such developmental backgrounds and normative beliefs also correspond with the characteristics of the Convict Subculture in the Importation model, which states that individuals import their attitudes and beliefs from outside the institution. In 1962, Irwin and Cressey described that, among three subcultures, the Convict Subculture was the most likely to be aggressive as the prisoners in this subculture were raised in the prison system and needed to gain power within it (Irwin & Cressey, 1962).

**Research Question 3:** What were the positive and negative reinforcements and how did the prisoners look at them?

According to the guidelines for SORC, the C part of the SORC analysis tends to give more attention to the consequences, which are both positive and negative reinforcement after the incident. It is suggested that these reinforcements can be a significant learning process that can shape an individual's behaviour.

#### 1. Positive reinforcement

There were two aspects of positive reinforcement to consider, physical and psychological. In terms of physical reinforcement, it could be seen from the deceived prisoners that they had to be aggressive in order to keep their business going and to set an example for their other clients. As a result, they got their money plus interest, which could either be money or other forms of currency.

For psychological reinforcement, from the prisoners' perspectives, the most important thing was gaining respect, reputation and acceptance from their peers. These perspectives seemed to be even stronger among the house leaders, as how their inferiors thought was important to the security of their own position. This means that simply having a power hierarchy can encourage violence. Especially in a gang (house) with a large number of members, it was important for climbing up to the top of the hierarchy. The rest of the prisoners were inadvertently aggressive as they thought they were playing. Although the victims were not seriously injured, the aggressor could become more aggressive in the future.

These two aspects conform to the Social Interaction Theory, which describes that individual's aggression is socially influenced behaviour which responds to either their physical or psychological desire. The aggressor could have a psychological gain (e.g., respect, strong identity) or physical gain (e.g., valuable materials) (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994). The aggressive prisoners could maintain their business, which is a physical desire, and also promote their reputation. Similarly, for another group of aggressive prisoners, they earned reputation, recognition and respect from their actions, which answered their psychological desire.

## 2. Negative reinforcement

The prisoners almost all similarly stated that those incidents were what they had to do. If they had not behaved in that way, they would have felt anxious and stressed. Therefore, being aggressive was one of the best ways they could relieve their anger or stress. Once they have chosen aggression as a solution and have felt relief, they have learned their

way of creating a condition to handle their stress, which is similar to Pavlov's classical conditioning. It can be seen that the removal of pressure, anger, frustration and stress was the negative reinforcement among these prisoners. This was also later explained correspondingly by Lorenz's Hydraulic Model: that a specific trigger or stimulus in an individual's environment tends to produce a specifically conditioned behaviour in response (Hayes, 1994). After the aggressive prisoners had learned to relieve their stress and anger and felt relaxed by their aggressive acts, it conditioned the same pattern of behaviour to be reproduced when this group of prisoners faced the same trigger again. The prisoners should be taught to air their prolonged anger or stress properly or to find closure between rivals, since their aggressive response can lead to future aggression. The catharsis theory was well known in Germany during the 1890s before Breuer and Freud were the first to implement it for a therapeutic purpose, known as Cathartic Therapy. It was then followed by a number of catharsis-based treatment approaches, such as Psychodrama (Moreno, 1946), Primal Therapy (Janov, 2007) and Emotion-Focused Therapy (Greenberg, 2002). A study in 1999 by Bushman, Baumeister and Stack can also be used to support this concept. It was found that individuals exposed to a pro-catharsis message (a persuasive message claiming that aggression is a good way to relax and relieve anger) were found to act aggressively towards a punch-bag and were also found to be more aggressive than individuals exposed to an anti-catharsis message. Since the participants exposed to a pro-catharsis message felt the relief of their pressure, they soon perceived aggressive acts without proper closure as rewards (Bushman, Baumeister & Stack, 1999).



In addition, it was found that prisoners, especially the house leaders, believed that they gained respect and power from their inferiors via their aggressive behaviour. This can be explained by the long-known concept of Leviathan, as quoted:

*"So that in the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel. First competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly glory. The first maketh men invade for gain; the second for safety; and the third for reputation. The first use violence to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third for trifles, as a word or smile, a different opinion, and any other sign of undervalue"* (Hobbes, 1651, cited in Bishopp, 2003).

To simplify the information obtained from the SORC analysis, it can be categorised into each layer of the Ecological Model and demonstrated in the following figure.

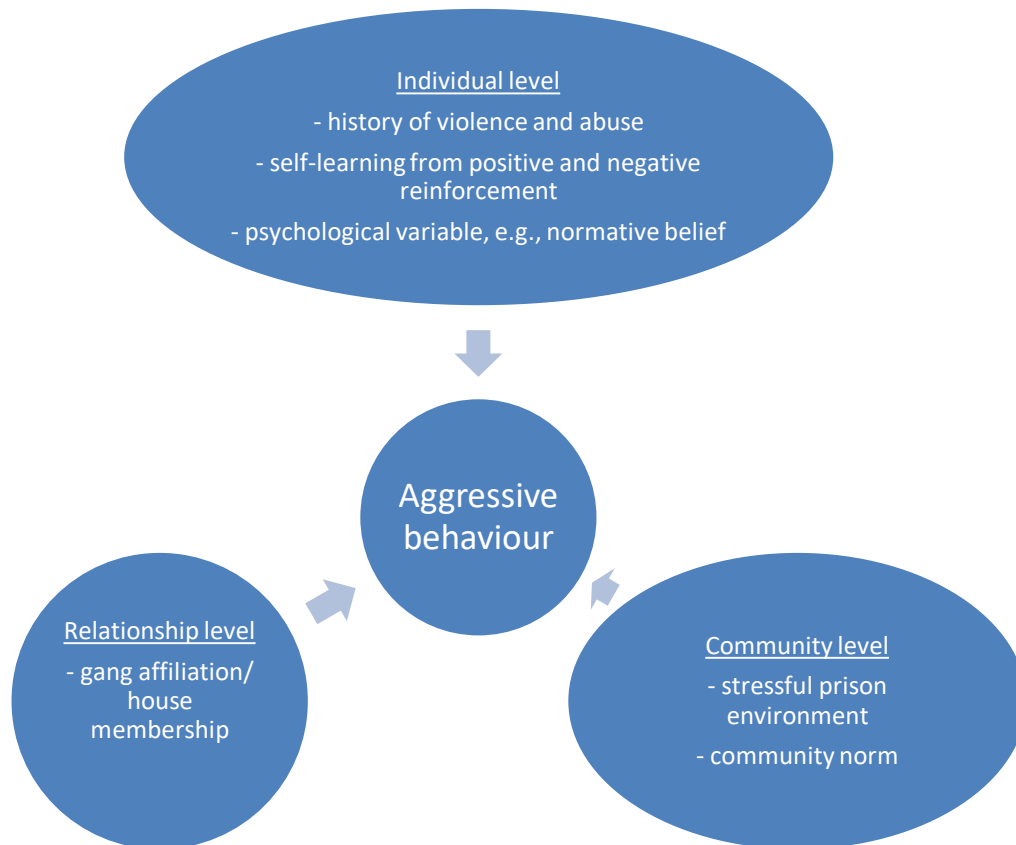


Figure 5.2. Ecological Model illustrating information from the SORC analysis

### Limitations

Since eight of the aggressive prisoners (30.77%) stated that they were called to join the incidents by their friends or inferiors, it showed that they were not the initial aggressors and the prison staff could not detect the aggressive incident from the start. This consequently affected the accuracy of the staff observation reliability. Also, there could be a selection bias, similarly as described in Chapter 4, since the majority of aggressive prisoners were from more crowded units and the majority of non-aggressive prisoners were from the less ones. Therefore, numbers of prisoners from both groups from less and more crowded units should be chosen equally.

There is no prior official database on aggression in Thai prisons and factors related to it. Furthermore, there are no previous studies regarding this issue. Therefore, the results from this study cannot be compared to previous information in the same context. Additionally, the number of aggressive participants was quite limited because of the time constraints. Consequently, the types of aggression and prisoners' motivations were not very varied.

The use of the DABC in real-life situations may require further consideration. The tool was designed to be used by the officers who acted as observers in a 24-hour observable closed space, which is different from reality.

Furthermore, since the majority of participating prison officers were from the less crowded units, it was possible that there were a lot more aggressive incidents going on in the crowded units that were unnoticed by the prison staff. Also, there could be a potential sampling bias, since the majority of aggressive prisoners were from the more crowded units and the majority of non-aggressive prisoners were from the less crowded ones.

### **Conclusion and future implication**

The findings from the study showed that there were both proactive aggression and reactive aggression. Although the majority of the incidents were reactive, the proactive aggression showed that there were some illegal activities going on in the prison, such as gambling and loans. The actions of prisoners engaged in these actions were not only aimed at hurting others but were also goal-oriented, which were different from other aggressive prisoners being aggressive as a response to a stressor. Therefore, for future study, it would be interesting to categorise and study both proactive and reactive aggression in the prison.

SORC functional analysis suggests that individuals develop their behaviours through their life-long self-learning process as well as having multiple triggers. This group of aggressive Thai male prisoners similarly share a history of physical and psychological abuse by their caregivers during their childhood. Additionally, the majority of them were gang members, and so are meant to be bound to gang dignity and integrity. A long-running conflict between houses made it easier to provoke aggression, which in this case may occur in either the prison or the community. When these factors are combined with a stressful environment, aggressive behaviours are predictable. Therefore, in order to prevent future misconduct, when high-risk prisoners are identified they are worth talking to, in order to gather an in-depth history, to gain further childhood details. Additionally, information regarding gang affiliation, peer groups and rivals is obviously important. The information from these prisoners will help design an effective prevention scheme which covers factors in different levels of the Ecological Model.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Understanding How Aggressive and Non-aggressive Thai Prisoners Make Sense of Their Behaviour in Prison**

#### **Introduction**

Apart from the well-known factors in the individual and relationship levels, research studies in the past few decades have paid attention to prison environment as one of the key factors that can affect prisoner behaviour. These environmental effects, categorised into the community level of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, can be considered in many aspects. The literature review showed a similar result: that overcrowding was identified as a strong predictor for prison violence (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Morris et al., 2012; Gaes & McGuire, 1985). Additionally, Morris et al.'s (2012) study further suggested that the lack of resources in prison can also negatively affect prisoners' behaviour. Poor prison physical environment and poor staff/inmate ration have also been suggested to have an effect (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995). It is interesting that all of the aforementioned factors can generally be found in Thai prisons. However, there has not been any previous research on this issue in Thai prisons. Furthermore, the government policy shows more attempts to rehabilitate and change prisoners' behaviour whereas fewer attempts are being made to improve the living conditions in the prisons.

In order to holistically understand prisoners' aggressive behaviour, the issue of poor prison environment cannot be overlooked. In addition, it is also interesting to look further

at the differences between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners' beliefs about prison aggression and how they experience the poor environment, since both groups of prisoners shared the same environment yet acted differently. The study result does not only provide deeper comprehension of the Thai prison environment's effect on prisoner behaviour, but the comparison between the two groups of prisoners can also help identify factors that make them choose to respond differently. Therefore, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used in this study to understand the experiences of aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners in terms of how they make sense of their aggressive or non-aggressive behaviour in the Thai prison environment. A particular focus was placed on the role of the prison environment on their behaviour, in keeping with exploring the community level of the Ecological Model. Hence, it leads to the following two research questions:

1. How did aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners make sense of the impact of the prison environment on their behaviour?
2. How did aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners make sense of prisoners' violent behaviour?

## **Method**

### **Sample**

A selection of the participants recruited for Chapters 3-5 were also recruited for this study. It was pre-determined that whoever were reported by the prison officers as the first five prisoners for the aggressive and non-aggressive groups would be asked to join this part of the study. By this means, the selection of prisoners was random and the researcher was unable to know in advance who the participants would be. All 10 men consented to

participation. Table 6.1 details the demographic characteristics of each participant interviewed. Interviews were conducted between August 2013 and February 2014.

The following demographic information and childhood history of the participants were obtained from the file reviews and the interviews, as thoroughly described in Chapter 4. The ages of the five non-aggressive prisoners ranged from 29 to 50 years. All of them reported experiencing psychological abuse and two of them also had experienced physical abuse by their caregivers during their childhood. All of them were house (gang) members, but only one of them admitted that he was a member of a house both inside and outside the prison. None of these prisoners reported being a house leader. Prisoner NA1 had a history of multiple convictions for non-violent offences. Two of them had committed offences against narcotics laws while others had committed fraud or murder. All of them were graded very good or excellent prisoners.

The ages of the five aggressive prisoners ranged from 23 to 27 years. All of them had experienced at least one type of physical abuse and psychological abuse during their childhood. All of them were house members, and four of them admitted that they were house (gang) members both inside and outside the prison (prisoners A1, A2, A3 and A4). Two of them were house leaders (prisoners A4 and A5). All five of them had a history of multiple convictions, which were all non-violent offences. All of them had committed offences against narcotics laws. Four of them were from the extremely poor grade and one of them was from the poor grade (prisoner A1).

## **Procedure**

Post identification of each participant's status as violent or non-violent by the prison officer, the researcher approached each prisoner personally and provided him with an information sheet detailing the purpose and process of the study. The information sheet (Appendices Q and R) was read to each participant. Prisoners were given the option to consider in private if they wanted to take part in the study. If they agreed to take part, arrangements were made for them to sign the consent form prior to interview (Appendix R). The participants were interviewed individually and privately by the researcher in the prison visiting room separated by a glass screen and without direct physical contact. During the interview the prison officers were in an adjacent room, close enough for safety yet far enough away not to hear the interview. The information from the interview was tape-recorded and transcribed into Thai before being translated into English. The transcripts were labelled with each participant's research number rather than their names or other identifiable details in order to maintain their anonymity. All transcribed information was printed and the outstanding words, phrases and sentences were underlined and then highlighted with different colours. Each colour was for one theme. Similar themes were then grouped together to create superordinate and subordinate themes.

## **Method**

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) guided the design of the interview schedule. As a result, the interview schedule (Appendix S) detailed a selection of open-ended questions and prompts designed to collect data about how participants make sense of their behaviour. During the interviews, the role of the interviewer was to ask open-ended



questions and provide space for the interviewee to freely talk around the area of interest. Both groups of prisoners had witnessed or experienced some types of aggression in the prison. The non-aggressive prisoners, although they had never been aggressive, were asked about their opinions towards their environment and what they had witnessed or experienced during imprisonment. Therefore, the questions asked to the aggressive prisoners and the non-aggressive ones were different as in Appendix S.

The results were transcribed, and then analysed using an IPA approach, drawn from the Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) IPA protocol. Phenomenological research views any common lived experience as a phenomenon and studies how the interviewee experienced that phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). IPA is a qualitative analysis, whose main purpose is to examine how people make sense of their life experiences and the meaning of these to them (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). IPA mostly focuses on major life events or life experiences (e.g., trauma, achievement and loss) that can be reflected in current action. Different participants can provide different meanings for the same event depending on their different interpretation and different prior life experience. The point of this study is to explore how participants experience living in the prison environment and the impact they believe this has on their behaviour (violent and non-violent) in prison.

## **Results**

During the interviews prisoners relayed information that centred on the prison environment and the role of aggressive behaviour in that environment. Superordinate and subordinate themes associated with the role of the environment on behaviour are depicted

in Table 6.2. Superordinate and subordinate themes associated with the role of violent behaviour in prison are depicted in Table 6.3. Themes that resulted are discussed in turn under each research question below.

**Research Question 1:** How do aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners make sense of the impact of the prison environment on their behaviour?

The superordinate themes that emerged from interviews with the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners were in stark contrast to each other. Non-aggressive prisoners found the environment to be bearable and were grateful for this experience, understanding the pitfalls of a lesser environment, the inevitable association with deviant peers, and the impact this could have on their behaviour and others around them. Aggressive prisoners experienced a much less positive environment and pent-up aggression and did not show the same level of acceptance of their experience or prison life.

*Table 6.1. Superordinate and subordinate themes identified for aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners: Making sense of the impact of prison on behaviour*

Prisoner groups	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme
Non-aggressive prisoners	A bearable prison environment	A good unit: Absence of troublemakers.
		Acceptance of prison life: Living with it and minding your own business.
Aggressive prisoners	Poor prison environment	Overcrowding
		Prison is full of pressure.

## Non-aggressive prisoners

### Superordinate theme: A bearable prison environment

A clear superordinate theme emerged from the non-aggressive prisoners' accounts of their experience of prison life and its effects on their behaviour. It was apparent that these prisoners perceived their immediate prison environment to be acceptable in contrast to the otherwise stressful experience they may have experienced elsewhere in the prison. Two subordinate themes emerged within this conceptualisation.

#### *1. Subordinate theme: A good unit (absence of troublemakers)*

It was clear that the men's experiences were shaped by the unit in which they resided. The prisoners with whom they shared their space within their unit were deemed important in shaping their behaviour. The absence of troublemakers was a strong theme and characterised what many of the men would claim to be a 'good unit', where they were grateful to be staying. Indeed, this is captured by quotes from prisoners NA1, NA2, NA3 and NA4:

NA1: *"I think most of the troublemakers are not in my unit. And most of the people in my unit are not too bad, not so many drug dealers. This is why none of us want to be transferred to any other units."*

NA2: *"Being in a good unit helps me stay away from troublemakers. I think this must be a reward for me being a good prisoner here. I can't lose this...I was in unit 5 once when I first got here. Never want to go back there again."*

NA3: *"It's actually not that bad in my unit. Maybe it's because I'm not a hot-blooded young man so everybody, even the prison staff, either talks to me nicely, or doesn't talk to me at all."*

NA4: *"I guess I'm lucky to have knowledge and knowhow to survive in here. Actually it's not that bad. Definitely not as horrible as you imagine, or maybe it's just my unit that is OK. I don't know."*

2. *Subordinate theme: Acceptance of prison life (living with it and minding your own business)*

The need to stay away from 'hot-blooded troublemakers' was stressed by interviewees in the *"acceptance of prison life: Living with it and minding your own business"* subtheme. For example, NA5 described strategies he employed to keep his distance from prisoners who would get him into trouble:

NA5: *"Work keeps me busy, keeps me away from those guys...Since I got in here, I try to make myself useful to the staff by using my knowledge [to] help them with the paperwork. And I think it really saves me. When I'm close to the staff, those guys [other prisoners] won't bother me."*

Indeed, the need to mind your own business was stressed by many as a strategy by which to stay out of trouble:

NA1: *"I come across those difficult prisoners in the common area from time to time, but I just do my things and don't bother them.... You have to play smart to survive. I open my eyes and shut my mouth. See who the big guys are in here. Try to stay away from them and stay low profile."*

There was recognition that other prisoners experienced this stress and that they could not be blamed for this and the impact it had on their aggression. This acceptance of living with prison life was clear in their descriptions and characterised their outlook, which helped shaped their behaviour. This is captured in the quotes below from NA1, NA3 and NA5, for example:

NA1: *“Living in a place full of stress and difficulties could be a problem for everyone, me too. I can’t blame those who are violent for the choice they made. I’m not in their shoes. I just mind my own business.”*

NA3: *“I think the prison is not a good place for an old man like me, nothing pleasant. But as you know I’m guilty, it’s karma. I have to live with it.”*

NA5: *“This ain’t paradise, it’s a prison. Just have to learn to live with it and survive unscratched.”*

### **Aggressive prisoners**

#### *Superordinate theme: Poor prison environment*

In contrast to the non-aggressive prisoners, aggressive prisoners perceived the prison and the unit in which they resided as a negative environment, which could directly or indirectly contribute to their stress. Two subordinate themes constituted this overarching theme.

##### *1. Subordinate theme: Overcrowding – “when one turns we all have to turn”*

Prisoners reported that the overcrowding in prison and lack of personal space led to fights, especially when they had to share their space with people they did not like. This could

also lead to frequent and somewhat inevitable confrontations, reported by participants A1, A2, A3 and A5 as follows:

A1: *"There are hundreds of prisoners in my unit and the cell I live in is too cramped. If there's a quarrel or fight over these things I wouldn't be surprised."*

A2: *"It's so annoying when we have to sleep on the same side [left or right]: when one turns we all have to turn too."*

A5: *"It's a small world in here. He's been my worst enemy for years since we were outside, and now we keep running into each other in here."*

In addition to the stressful conditions, prisoner A3 also considered the negative prison environment as depressing, citing the number of men (prisoners and staff) who are in very close proximity to each other all the time as creating a "crazy" environment:

A3: *"It is very, very, very crowded in here so problems are unavoidable. Not that I want to get into trouble but, you know, you might step on somebody's foot easily.... How depressing in here. Males are everywhere, prisoners and staff. You know what it's like when a lot of men are put together. It's crazy like hell."*

## *2. Subordinate theme: Prison is full of pressure.*

This second subordinate theme, "*prison is full of pressure*", was associated with the overcrowding described in the prison units in addition to living with troublemakers or enemies. The close quarters contributed to frustrations and exaggerated responses that may not happen outside of prison life. Prisoners A2, A4 and A5 describe this:

A2: *"Life's not easy in the prison, you know. There are so many issues going on, so I have to be tough to survive."*

A4: *“There are a bunch of hot-headed young men in my unit. There are too many of them in so little space. This is so frustrating.”*

A5: *“I wouldn’t be so harsh and do the same thing outside the prison. It’s like there is more pressure in here. If I was outside I would probably walk away or I wouldn’t run into his gang so often. But in here, it’s impossible.”*

**Research Question 2:** How did aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners make sense of prisoners’ violent behaviour?

The superordinate themes that emerged from interviews with the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners were again in stark contrast to each other. Non-aggressive prisoners presented attitudes that were not supportive of aggression and talked positively about their future and family support. Aggressive prisoners on the other hand talked about the inevitability of adopting aggressive behaviour in prison, having no hope for the future, and how others expect them to fulfil this role.

*Table 6.2. A comparison of superordinate and subordinate themes between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners: Making sense of violent behaviour*

Prisoner group	Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme
Non-aggressive prisoners	Aggression is not the answer.	<i>"Aggression is not for grownups."</i>
	Positive attitudes towards loved ones and their future.	For the sake of their loved ones.
		Hope for freedom and moving forward
Aggressive prisoners	Surviving prison life	Aggression is the norm.
		Status and respect
		Responsibility
	Desperation	Nobody cares
		Nothing to lose
		Guilty anyway

### **Non-aggressive prisoners**

#### *1. Superordinate theme: Aggression is not the answer.*

The prisoners in this group did not perceive violence as a viable option through which to solve problems. Even when in a tough environment like prison, they believed there were always more peaceful ways to solve issues. This idea was conceptualised as the non-aggressive prisoners tended to consider the consequences and perceived that aggression is not for grownups.

#### *1. Subordinate theme: aggression is not for grownups.*

Prisoners reported learning that using violence is an immature way to resolve conflict and that a maturation process took place for them to realise this. Prisoners NA2 and NA5 provided examples of this:

NA2: *"Seeing new kids getting into conflicts reminds me of myself years ago. But that was*



*the old me. Now I'm OK to say I'm sorry if I'm wrong or just walk away from the trouble."*

*NA5: "I can't totally say that it is bad. OK, it may be bad, but I used to do things like that too years ago. I guess I've grown up and learned enough that being harsh doesn't help at all... I used to be bad. I did what I wanted and cared about nobody. It was fun for me then. Maybe I was too young. Now that I'm stuck in here, realising I am taking away years of my life, I will never repeat my mistake again."*

Prisoner NA3 believed that aggression is not a choice for a man of his age (50 years). He chose to ignore the troublemakers and live quietly, stressing the maturation process further:

*NA3: "I wouldn't concern [myself] much about violence here. Maybe I'm too old for this. They ignore me as much as I ignore them... It will be very funny seeing a man of my age doing those harsh things. Knowing your position and living it one day at a time is the best way to live in the prison."*

Prisoners described how aggression was not the answer as the consequences that would impact on their future had to be considered:

*NA1: "I've been counting the days since I got in here and now [there are] only six months to go and I will be free...Why put myself into that kind of trouble when I am going to leave everything here behind? The less days here the easier for me to walk away from this nonsense stuff."*

*NA4: "Trust me, I've been in here long enough to prove that not all prisoners are violent. It may be a good solution for someone but not for me. I think they just want to look cool but it's not cool at all... I don't get it why people are aggressive just to get what they want. It's*

*dumb. They only make things worse.”*

NA3: *“I’m trying not to judge those kids about their behaviour. But sometimes I’m surprised that they act like they don’t know the consequences. It’s such a bad idea.”*

2. *Superordinate theme: Positive attitudes towards loved ones and their future.*

Prisoners in this group showed they had aspirations and hope for their future and positive attitudes towards their loved ones, which were mostly their families.

1. *Subordinate theme: For the sake of their loved ones.*

Concern about their loved ones made these prisoners determined not to be aggressive and also not to get involved in any wrongful actions in prison, either because they wanted to be released quickly or because they did not want their loved ones to be disappointed in them. Mostly, they thought they had let their loved ones down by their convictions, so they were trying not to repeat the same mistakes, as prisoners NA2 and NA5 describe:

NA2: *“My kid never knows where I’ve been all this time. His mom told him that I am working abroad. But now he’s turning six years old and I’m dying to see him, to hold him. It’s hard to tell my son about my past. Imagine what my kid would feel when he grows up and knows what I did? I have to be a good father to him.... You have no idea what it is like, being taken away from your kid. Never see him grow up. One mistake is difficult enough to tell the truth to my son. I don’t even have confidence to teach him to be a good boy. I will never make any mistake again.”*

NA5: *“I can’t let my mom down again. Now she’s poor, old, ill and has no one to take care of.*

*I am all she has. I was never concerned about her until she was the only one who kept visiting me while others left me. And I just realised that every time she comes here, she has to borrow very little money from everyone. Seeing her crying makes me think that I can't let her down again."*

## *2. Subordinate theme: Hope for freedom and moving forward*

Prisoners with promising future plans tended to be more thoughtful and concerned about getting involved in prison violence. They considered misbehaviour as a negative experience that would prevent them from making a fresh start. One felt grateful that his family had offered him a second chance on his release. As a result, they would try to stay away from all kinds of trouble; this was especially the case for those men who had almost completed their sentence. Prisoners NA1, NA3 and NA4 describe this:

NA1: *"I have to think about my near future. I'm going out soon, why waste my time on nonsense stuff in here? I'm trying to keep quiet and have trouble with no one. Make no enemy."*

NA3: *"I keep my record clean for my Royal Pardon this year, which means my sentence will be years shorter. Not every prisoner has this privilege. You really have to be a good prisoner. My only wish is to go home and stay with my family and grandchildren. I will be retired. I'm old now and I want to die outside not in here."*

NA4: *"My parents have a plan for me. They will give me some money for starting my own little shop. It is so good that they totally forgive me and never leave me. It's not easy to find someone to trust you again when you're labelled as an ex-con, but they do. So I have a fresh start waiting for me out there. I can't let them down again."*

## Aggressive prisoners

Two superordinate themes emerged, “*surviving prison life*” and “*desperation*”. These themes represent different aspects of prison life and how these prisoners justify their actions.

### 1. Superordinate theme: surviving prison life

All aggressive prisoners expressed attitudes that centred on beliefs about being tough and protection in numbers as a functional way to survive in prison.

#### 1. Subordinate theme: Aggression is the norm.

All prisoners from the aggressive group described how being aggressive was a prison norm and that problems cannot be solved easily in the prison context. Prisoners A1 and A4 provide examples of this:

A1: *“You know the conflicts in the prison can never be ended by walking away or separation. You’ll keep seeing the same faces and same things happen again. You just need to get it done. Win it or lose it but you have to get it done. Everybody knows that.”*

A4: *“Someone always gets on my nerve and they won’t back off until they get some lessons. What do you expect me to do? Let them go? Who does that in here? They ask for it. Anybody would do the same as I did.”*

Additionally, prisoners A2 and A5 were confident that whoever got into their situation would make the same decision as they did:

A2: *“It’s the way of prison life. Everybody is the same, or at least when anybody is put in my shoes they will do the same thing.”*

A5: *“He’s been my worst enemy for years, since we were outside, and now we keep running*

*into each other in here. How can I let him walk after the confrontation? No one would."*

Prisoner A3 also further described his action as a way to protect himself. He cited the need to find allies who can look after each other in prison. In return, these allies expected their protection, too:

*A3: "It is crowded in here so problems are unavoidable. First thing when getting into the prison is to find a house. It's like a group of friends. Just get along with them and you will have someone to cover your back. This is how we do it in here."*

## *2. Subordinate theme: Status and respect*

Despite protecting themselves from other prisoners, the prisoners also expressed that it was necessary to be tough to show other prisoners that they were not weak, and were therefore not easily victimised, as A2 and A4 describe:

*A2: "First impression is important. Make others realise that you are not weak. Then no one will bother you."*

*A4: "I don't like anyone calling me a coward. If I didn't do anything they would just keep mocking me and make fun of me. I've been here for longer than those kids."*

Prisoner A1 additionally emphasised that, as a leader, it was also important for him to be tough in the prison, to earn respect from his fellow prisoners:

*A1: "I'm a leader. I have no choice. If I don't do anything they will think I'm weak and I can't run my house. How can I gain respect from my people if I can't manage things?"*

## *3. Subordinate theme: Responsibility*

Two prisoners expressed that they did not want to be aggressive; however, they believed they had to take this stance to solve particular issues. They asserted that aggression

was an effective way to end problems, keep them in their position in the prison hierarchy and earn loyalty from their peers. Prisoners A1 and A4 encapsulate these views in the below quotes:

A1: *"New kids are coming in everyday and they are so eager to be recognised. They need to show the world how cool they are. These kids keep messing around with my kids, maybe with others' too. The quarrels barely end well. They always need me to deal with this.... It's my job to deal with this. Nobody could. I am sick of this but what can I do? I'm the leader. It's my responsibility."*

A4: *"I swear I never wanted to be aggressive or cause any trouble. I just saw my friend in trouble and he's one of my best friends here. I have to save him. What else can I do? If you were me, you would have done the same. Living in here is not easy. You need someone to watch your back and I'm sure that, when it's my turn, my friend will [do] the same to save me."*

## 2. Superordinate theme: Desperation

Three subordinate themes fell into the superordinate theme "*Desperation*". All of the prisoners perceived that others held negative attitudes towards them or displayed negative attitudes towards themselves. They showed a lack of inspiration or hope for better lives or a new start after release.

### 1. *Subordinate theme: Nobody cares.*

In contrast to the non-aggressive prisoners, the aggressive prisoners lacked motivation to stay away from trouble. They considered their actions unimportant and that

they would not affect anyone outside prison. Prisoners A2, A3 and A5 expressed their attitudes as follows:

A2: *"This is my fifth conviction. No one would be surprised or care about what happens in here anymore. My girl ran away with a new guy one month after I got in here. My mom and dad both have new families and I haven't talked to my siblings for years. Nobody, even me, expects me to be a nice guy anyway."*

A3: *"Why be concerned about the outside, when you are stuck in here? No one cares. Only your people matter."*

A5: *"It is a dark world here. The outsiders never know what's going on. No one would care about the mess in here."*

## 2. Subordinate theme: Nothing to lose

Aggressive prisoners had little hope of being released from prison soon. As a result, they stated they had no motivation to behave in a non-aggressive fashion or with good conduct; they lacked hope and perceived they were labelled as amongst the 'worst prisoners'. Prisoners A1, A2 and A3 described it thus:

A1: *"Seriously, I'm not thinking about getting out. I still have a long time in here. Plus I'm not going to get the Royal Pardon or anything. Look at me. I'm in the worst group in the worst unit. Besides, in here, I got my people and reputation. Everybody knows me."*

A2: *"I'm in the worst class of the prisoner here. Nobody's going to visit me anyway. Nothing could get any worse. Besides I've been in and out in this prison long enough to know everything. Even after my release, I bet I will come back again very soon."*

A3: *"I don't have much interest in prisoner grading or moving to any unit. I've been here long*

*enough to know that things can't get worse. You just do what you have to do."*

### *3. Subordinate theme: Guilty anyway*

Leading on from the above theme, it was clear that some of the prisoners perceived they were stigmatised as troublemakers or the worst prisoners. As a result, they lived up to this label. Since it was not a surprise to others if they were aggressive, they chose to be as aggressive as others expected them to be:

*A2: "I guess it's my bad image now. Whatever I did or didn't do, they always think it was me doing it. The police, too, just like last time I was put in here. So sometimes I think why not do what I'm expected to do."*

*A4: "Even if I didn't do it, everybody still thinks I did... I hate to explain things that I didn't do. So I find doing what they expect might be easier for me."*

*A5: "If something happens to him, or even to his friends, sure thing everybody will pin it on me. Besides, I don't have a very good reputation anyway. What can I say?"*

## **Discussion**

This study provided information about Thai prisoners' experiences of their prison environment and how they made sense of their aggressive and non-aggressive behaviour in this environment. It was clear that the resulting themes for the two groups of prisoners, aggressive and non-aggressive, were in stark contrast to each other and provided some indication of how these men's experiences and beliefs differed, which may contribute to their conduct in prison. The two research questions of interest are discussed below in terms



of how the two groups differed and the implications this has for understanding aggression in prison and management of this behaviour.

**Research Question 1:** How did aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners make sense of the impact of the prison environment on their behaviour?

There was a clear contrast between the two groups' superordinate themes. The non-aggressive group perceived their prison environment as bearable, which was reflected by two subordinate themes, "*a good unit*" and "*acceptance of prison life*". They found the unit they were living in to be a good unit, describing it as having 'no troublemakers', unlike other units in the prison. As they believed that, whilst living in prison, it was easy for them to get into trouble, this group of people tended to keep a low profile. However, the aggressive group perceived their environment as poor, reflected by two subordinate themes, "*overcrowding*" and "*prison is full of pressure*". The difficult living conditions described (such as during their sleep, when one prisoner turned over, all had to turn as there was no space between them) resulted in people easily feeling irritated and under pressure.

#### *Different environments for the two groups*

Although both groups were living in the same prison, it is of note that the non-aggressive prisoners were from units 1 – 3, whereas all of the aggressive prisoners were from units 4 – 6. These units differed in some key aspects. These included: the number of prisoners per each cell, with units 1 – 3 housing smaller numbers of prisoners than units 4-6 (approximately 500-600 and 1000 respectively; ██████████ Remand Prison, 2013). Therefore, prisoners from units 4 – 6 had less personal space and inevitably higher stress

through increased chances of confronting personal difficulties than the prisoners living in units 1 – 3. Additionally, prisoners categorised into good grades were mostly assigned to live in units 1 – 3, increasing the likelihood that non-aggressive prisoners would reside in these units, and thus increasing the chances of the environment being experienced as non-confrontational.

Although placement of aggressive prisoners into units 4 – 6 and the poorer physical conditions will increase the likelihood of aggression taking place (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; McCorkle, Miethe & Drass, 1995; Morris et al., 2012; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009), individual factors also played a role. For example, the non-aggressive prisoners understood and accepted their imprisonment and living conditions. They also chose not to be in a close proximity to ‘troublemakers’.

#### *Prison environment drives aggression*

The issue of environment-related aggression in prison can be categorised into the community level of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model. A number of studies found in the literature review had similarly emphasised the important effects of the prison environment on prisoners’ behaviour, which is also consistent with the findings from this study. In terms of prison overcrowding, it was found that overcrowding was positively related to prison misconduct and prison assaults (both prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff) (Allison & Ireland, 2010; Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008; Gaes & McGuire, 1985; Lahm, 2008; Morris et al., 2012). This explained the higher rate of aggression among the men in the crowded units (units 4 – 6) in ██████████ Remand Prison.

The environment-related aggression in prison can be explained by the Frustration-Aggression theory, in which frustration is described as an undesirable external factor that prevents individuals from achieving their physical or emotional goal (Berkowitz, 1993). Berkowitz further explained that not all frustrations lead to aggression but all emotional aggressions have their roots in frustration. In this case, prisoners' goals could be viewed as having personal space, quality of sleep, comfort and proper physical condition. These goals are thwarted by overcrowding, high temperatures, troublemakers and poor physical condition in prison. In contrast, the non-aggressive prisoners stated that they did not have high expectations for the physical condition so they found it was bearable. Additionally, they reside in the less crowded areas with better living conditions therefore it could be said that they were actually living in a true "bearable environment". Therefore, prisoners living in a poorer area could be provoked more easily than those living in the better areas. However, as mentioned earlier about the sampling technique problem, it can be seen that, although the prisoners were living in the same prison, the environments could be different. This was the case for the majority of participants from both groups: the aggressive prisoners were from units that were more crowded and had a worse environment than those in which the non-aggressive prisoners resided. However, in order to study different decision-making in the same situation, the participants should be from similar environments.

**Research Question 2:** What are the differences between the two groups of prisoners in how they make sense of violent behaviour in prison?

As the non-aggressive group showed no aggression during the study, they were asked to think about aggression in general or from what they had witnessed in the prison.

*Different attitude towards themselves and their future.*

It is obviously seen that the two groups of prisoners expressed entirely different attitudes towards themselves and their futures. The non-aggressive group either had a solid plan after their release with a strong will to pursue it, or had their loved ones, mostly their family members, waiting for them. They also accepted their past mistakes and had the ability to move on and make amends. In contrast, no sign of such factors was found among the aggressive group. Most of the aggressive prisoners felt hopeless and did not have any expectations about their release. From their perspectives, even when they were released, they were likely to be imprisoned again shortly. They had no one to look up to and no one to expect anything from them. Additionally, they also perceived themselves as having nothing to lose, for instance, they were categorised as the worst class of prisoner or they had bad reputations based on their past history. This could relate to them being less inhibited and not concerned about the consequences. Additionally, it is interesting that they did not mention trying to change their circumstances. Therefore, positive future plans and loved ones could be considered as protective factors for prison aggression. Prisoners with such factors should have a lower chance of becoming involved in prison violence.

These negative thoughts can be considered as individual level factors, the psychological variables, in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. In the literature review,

various types of psychological variables were discussed (e.g., major mental illnesses (Walters & Crawford, 2013; Lee & Edens, 2005), history of psychological trauma and witnessing serious violence during the childhood (Denney, Pietz & Thomlinson, 2006), yet none of them mentioned the negative attitudes towards self and future as a strong predictor for prison violence. However, this could be explained by the Labelling theory, which is generally described as individuals have a tendency to be deviant according to how they are negatively labelled by their society. The theory was introduced by Frank Tannenbaum in 1938 and originally applied to psychiatric approaches before later being integrated into criminological approaches. In terms of criminological approaches, it was theorised that an individual tagged with a negative label, e.g., criminal, ex-convict, had a high tendency to become involved in delinquent activities (Wellford, 1975; Wellford & Triplett, 1993; Hagan, 2013). In 1971, Schrag made an assumption for criminology based on the theory, which draw the bottom line that labelling produces deviant identification that eventually gets rejected by the rejecters (Wellford, 1975; Hagan, 2013). In this study setting, prisoners with a previous history of aggression or multiple convictions were automatically labelled as habitual criminals and monitored by their family members, the prison staff and fellow prisoners. One quote from the prisoners perfectly described this stigmatisation, *“Even if I didn’t do it, everybody still thinks I did”*. The prisoners were rejected by their society, which means both their family and the prison. Therefore, they felt that fighting against this stigma was useless and decided to go along with it instead.

*Different attitudes towards aggression and making sense of aggression*

At the surface, it is interesting that both groups of prisoners stated that aggression was not a decent choice and no one wanted to be aggressive. However, practically, they acted differently. The non-aggressive prisoners had strong thoughts about aggression not being suitable behaviour for adults and not a smart choice, and they tended to choose other options when they faced a problem. In contrast, although it was not a decent choice, most of the aggressive prisoners perceived violence as the only solution. They perceived aggression as a social norm that had to be adhered to, a necessary way in which to survive and a positive asset. Aggression also represented their strength and power, which built up their image in the prison. This was more important among the house leaders, as they had to show their inferiors that they were tough and capable of dealing with all problems. The ability to manage the house issues *“like no one else can”*, mainly by using aggression, helped them gain respect and trust from their superiors. As a result, they were able to secure their position in the prison hierarchy.

Another big difference is that the non-aggressive prisoners tended to be concerned about the consequences, e.g., punishment, disappointment to their family, but the aggressive group never mentioned this issue. This made the non-aggressive inmates try to walk away from a problem or use other solutions to solve it, while the aggressive inmates emphasised that there was no other option and walking away did not help. One plausible explanation for this difference in behaviour is that the non-aggressive prisoners were more mature, in terms of age, than the aggressive ones. Some of the non-aggressive ones used to

be aggressive when they were younger and they had gained experience and grown out of this behaviour with the passage of time.

These findings are consistent with the result from the reviewed literature. In terms of psychological variables, prisoners with instrumental aggressive beliefs were found to be significantly involved in prison aggression (Turner & Ireland, 2010). Additionally, this could reflect a factor in the societal level, social norm, which was not mentioned in the literature review. It could be explained by the Social Learning theory: that individuals can acquire aggressive behaviour through their life-long experience, e.g., observation, direct and indirect victimisation (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). This is also consistent with Bandura's suggestion in 1983 that *"Most aggressive activities – whether they be duelling with switchblade knives, or vengeful ridicule -entail intricate skills that require extensive learning"* (p4). This theory is also supported by a 2003 study by Huesmann, Titus, Podolski and Eron that exposure to TV violence during childhood can predict aggression in young adulthood.

All of the aggressive prisoners experienced victimisation and witnessed physical violence during their childhood, whereas only one non-aggressive prisoner had such experience. Additionally, the aggressive group also experienced violence in the prison through their gang membership. Therefore, although they did not perceive violence as a decent means through which to solve a problem, the Social Learning theory proved their life-long experience that violence can be a way out. Therefore, the results from this study proved the importance of both extrinsic (prison staff and physical environment) and intrinsic factors (prisoners' psychological factors). The harsh environment undoubtedly has a stronger effect on their behaviour than the normal environment. However, when two

different prisoner groups are put into a similar setting, the intrinsic factors will play the main role to control the behaviour.

The researcher is not an employee of the Thai prison system and is a young female. She self-selected the topic of her PhD because she wanted to better understand why Thai people are aggressive to each other, especially when they are in prison. Her preconceptions before the interviews were that there were a lot of serious incidents of aggression in prison and that prisoners would have to be aggressive to each other to protect themselves and to survive. This is not only the researcher's preconception but, in her experience, it is a common belief among outsiders. In terms of her impact on her interviewees and her findings, although some prison officers working on the 'front-line' are women, for safety reasons, all prison officers working inside the prison where the research took place are male. Therefore, the researcher would have been somewhat of a novelty for the prisoners. While the prisoners in ██████ Remand Prison do receive visitors outside of their immediate family (e.g., occupational trainers, preachers), being specifically asked for their personal view on a matter would not be a common occurrence. This would quite likely make the participants feel important and valued and therefore one would expect they would have been more willing to talk with her and give details about their stories. This may have been even more likely given her clear enthusiasm for the topic. The fact that she is not an employee might also make the prisoners feel more relaxed, being more open in their responses to her. It was not thought that the researcher's gender would have had an effect on the interviews beyond what is considered above since there is not a large gender divide between males and females in Thai culture (Kanchanachitra & Rajanapithayakorn, 2017)

### **Limitations**

Since the Thai prison physical conditions, e.g., type of prisoner cell and prisoner placement system, are different from those of western countries, no previous study on a



similar prison environment can be found. It would offer a better perspective and enable comparisons to be made between prisons if information from similar types of prison could be gathered. Additionally, the sample size was rather small; however, considering the tool used in the study, the selected sample size matched the tool's purpose and nature.

## **Conclusion**

The results shed light on prisoners' experience of the prison environment and how this can influence their behaviour, along with other factors that may contribute, such as thinking styles. It is clear that aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners experienced a different prison environment, with aggressive prisoners labelled as a poor grade, which resulted in worse living conditions that further increased the likelihood of their aggressive behaviour. Therefore, this research suggests that prevention of prison violence is not achieved through the punishment of aggressive prisoners by making their living conditions worse. The question inevitably arises whether physical space should be viewed as a treatment or treat in prison – the current data suggests a poor environment will only serve to continue if not escalate aggressive actions. It is proposed that Thai prison policy should consider improving the physical conditions of prisoners, especially those graded as poor if prison violence is to be reduced. Policy should also consider shifting the prison social norm about using violence as a viable solution, as it was clearly a salient factor in prisoners' beliefs and experiences. Further, the labelling of prisoners has been shown to have an effect on behaviour (Wellford, 1975; Hagan, 2013); therefore, grading prisoners is questionable in terms of prevention of prison violence. The change in prison policy (by the Department of Corrections) may impact positively on prisoners' behaviour. It is therefore proposed that

much work in reducing prison violence in Thai prisons can be achieved via shifts in environment and social norms, which will impact on prisoner cognition and behaviour.

It is obviously seen that the conditions in Thai prisons are not as good as those in western countries. There are two main factors which contribute to this. Firstly, prisoner overcrowding results in prison management problems and an increase of resource demand. Secondly, the cultural norms and attitudes towards prisoners in Thailand are quite different from those of western countries. Although the correctional facilities are theoretically aimed at rehabilitating the prisoners, practically, Thai people tend to perceive prison as a place for punishment where prisoners deserve to face hardship as a result of their crimes. This contradicts the rehabilitative culture of western countries, where the correctional facilities are expected to rehabilitate the prisoners.

Turning to consider the Ecological Model, there were some levels of the model that were not explored, e.g., macrosystem, which represent factors in a much larger context, e.g. government policies and cultural values. Therefore, for future research, it is worth expanding the study scale to see how altering these factors affects prison aggression, for instance, changing the government policy in respect of the prison layout and environment, creating a rehabilitative culture in Thai prisons, de-stigmatising for prisoners to increase their employment rate after release. In terms of the research implications, this will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

## **Chapter 7**

### **General Discussion**

#### **Aims of the thesis**

The thesis, conducted in a Thai male prison, was intended to explore the risk factors for aggression with a particular focus on the Thai prison setting. With this main purpose, the thesis set out to explore two aims. Firstly, it intended to examine the characteristics of a selection of identified aggressive male prisoners, in comparison to non-aggressive ones, and the nature and aetiology of their aggressive and violent behaviour. Secondly, it wished to gain an understanding of the personal and social experiences of the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners identified.

These aims led to the investigation of specific research questions in discrete studies, which provided findings for the risk factors in relation to the different levels of the Ecological Model. These questions are presented again below alongside a summary of findings from each study.

#### **Summary of findings**

##### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter aimed to review the previous literature on factors related to prison aggression among adult male prisoners globally. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model was introduced in the study as the whole research was designed based on that model's framework. Twenty-one journal articles were included in this review. A number of factors

were identified and categorised based on the Ecological Model. The majority of the factors related to prison aggression were confined to the individual level, which were age, ethnicity, psychological variables, substance abuse, education level, current offence, history of violence during previous incarceration and criminal history. In terms of relationship level, prisoner-prisoner relationship, e.g., gang affiliation and staff-prisoner relationship, e.g., staff's attitude towards prisoners, were listed. In the community level, most of the factors referred to the poor physical conditions of the prison, which were called situational stress. These factors were overcrowding, lack of resources and poor staff/inmate ratio. However, none of these studies mentioned any factors in the societal level.

As the selected literature was restricted by the inclusion criteria, a number of studies which were conducted among both genders or among juvenile offenders were excluded. Thus, some other plausible factors could have been missed out of this review. Therefore, future research could consider the role of gender and compare age groups.

### **Chapter 3: Identifying aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners**

This chapter involved the development of a reliable methodology that prison officers could use to identify aggressive and non-aggressive male prisoners in a set time period. Twelve prison officers participated in this part of the study. The tools were the Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (DABC), designed by the researcher, and the Prisoner Behaviour Rating Scale (PBRs) (Cooke, 1996). The DABC was piloted and tested for inter-rater reliability among the prison officers by using eight case scenarios. The result showed that the DABC proved its reliability. The DABC and PBRs were used further in this study by

the prison officers to screen the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners for participation in the study.

**Chapter 4:** Examining the characteristics of aggressive male prisoners and aetiology of their aggressive behaviour

This chapter examined the different characteristics of aggressive and non-aggressive Thai male prisoners and factors related to the aggression. Personal files of prisoners identified in Chapter 3 were reviewed to extract their demographic data. The aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners were then further interviewed to gather information about their childhood history of abuse and neglect. Then the Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory (NAS-PI) and Revised Pro-victim Scale (RPVS) were utilised in the interviews to assess prisoners' anger provocation and attitude towards victimisation.

In terms of demographic information, the result showed that the aggressive prisoners were in the younger age group and had more history of severe physical abuse and neglect during childhood than the non-aggressive group. Additionally, the aggressive prisoners reported higher involvement in gangs and substance abuse before imprisonment than the non-aggressive ones. More aggressive prisoners were found to have tattoos, to be in some hierarchical ranking in the prison, and to have a lower education level and worse employment history than those in the non-aggressive group. Prisoners in the aggressive group were also found to have more history of multiple convictions and be in the worse class of prisoners than the non-aggressive ones. In terms of psychometric test, there were significant differences in NAS-PI and RPVS scores between the two groups. The aggressive

group had significantly higher scores in all domains of NAS-PI but a lower score on RPVS than the non-aggressive group.

These factors were assessed based on the Ecological Model. For the model's individual level, it was found that young age, low literacy level, criminal history, poor prior employment, history of substance abuse, and history of childhood abuse and neglect were significantly related to prison aggression, which was consistent with findings from the previous literature (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007). For the relationship level, findings suggested that prisoners with tattoos and who were involved in gang activity had a higher chance of involvement in prison aggression (Worrall & Morris, 2012). For the community level, it was found that poor prisoner grading had a significantly higher risk of prison aggression, which was also consistent with previous studies (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007).

The limitations found in this chapter were related to the application of the DABC. The number of participating officers was limited. Hence, it is possible that not all aggressive incidents were thoroughly observed and recorded. Additionally, as the staff might not have been able to witness the incident from the start, like the case vignettes, they could only record what they had directly witnessed, which might not have been how the incident started. The initial aggressor could be missed and the victim could be misidentified. Furthermore, there was no incentive provided for the participating staff. The monitoring could be stressful and lead to a lack of motivation to conduct the observation. The identification of psychological aggression and sexual aggression relied solely on the prison staff hearing or witnessing the incident clearly; this could result in labelling the wrong person

as the aggressor or some incidents ‘falling off the radar’. In addition, since the majority of participating prison officers were from the less crowded units, it is possible that there were a lot more aggressive incidents going on in the crowded units that were unnoticed by the prison staff. Furthermore, there could be a potential sampling bias, since the majority of aggressive prisoners were from the more crowded units and the majority of non-aggressive prisoners were from the less crowded ones.

**Chapter 5: Aggressive prisoners’ functional assessment of their perspectives towards the aggressive incidents in the prison**

This chapter assessed the nature of violence and aggression among Thai male prisoners. Therefore, only the aggressive group of prisoners, 26 people, were interviewed, using a semi-structured format, based on SORC analysis to identify the stimuli for the aggression, prisoners’ developmental background and normative beliefs, and positive and negative reinforcement. The findings from the interviews revealed that triggers mostly came for prisoners’ peer group, being cheated and poor prison environment, e.g., overcrowding. In terms of developmental background, all of the aggressive prisoners were abused and had witnessed violence during their childhood and also shared the similar normative belief about protecting their peers. With regard to the reinforcement, the aggressive prisoners gained respect, reputation and acceptance from their fellow prisoners and they could also maintain their business. Additionally, they also perceived their action as a release of pressure and stress, and ignored the consequences. These key elements provided answers to the individual, relationship and community levels of the Ecological Model.

**Chapter 6:** Understanding the differences between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners in how they make sense of their behaviour

This chapter assessed the differences between the aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners in how they make sense of their actions and how the prison environment affects their behaviour. Five participants from each group from different environments joined the in-depth interviews based on the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The result revealed many contradictions in all aspects. The non-aggressive group found the prison environment not comfortable but bearable, whereas the aggressive prisoners perceived the prison as a place full of pressure. Additionally, the non-aggressive prisoners believed that aggression was not a solution to any problem and that it was smarter to walk away from the troublemaker. They have robust plans for future employment and commitment to their families, which will help prevent their recidivism. However, the aggressive prisoners showed no hope or anticipation for their future or life outside the prison. All of them felt they had nothing to lose. Additionally, they also viewed aggression as an effective means of surviving the prison and building their reputation, especially the house leaders, who needed respect and acceptance from their superiors. All of them were certain that everyone put in their position would make the same decision.

This can be explained by the Frustration-Aggression theory (Berkowitz, 1993): that the prisoners had some expectations about their quality of lives in the prison; however, the poor physical condition became roadblocks to their goals. This led to prisoners' aggression. Moreover, as these prisoners were designated to different units with different living conditions, their stress levels and frustration were different. Additionally, the Labelling



theory (Wellford, 1975; Wellford & Triplett, 1993; Hagan, 2013) was also used to explain aggressive prisoners' behaviour: that these prisoners, based on their previous history, were labelled by their friends, families and the prison staff as troublemakers. As a result, they became troublemakers, as they were tagged.

### **Theoretical implications**

Since multiple factors contribute to prison aggression, this thesis has drawn on multiple theories to help explain the phenomenon. The design of the research framework was based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, which stratified factors related to human behaviour formation into different levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In Each level, theories were applied to discuss findings from the study. In the individual level, Berkowitz's Frustration-Aggression theory was used to explain the phenomenon. The Frustration-Aggression theory explains that frustration, which refers to external factors that prevent individual from obtaining their goals or expectations, can lead to aggressive behaviour (Dollard et al., 1939; Berkowitz, 1993). The theory was utilised in Chapter 6 to describe the different effects of the stress on aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners' behaviours. These two groups of prisoners had different levels of expectation regarding the prison environment and also they were allocated to different conditions (more crowded areas for prisoners from the aggressive group and less crowded areas for those from the non-aggressive group). Therefore, there was a higher level of frustration among the aggressive group. Additionally, Berkowitz (1989) also elaborated that aversive stimuli such

as loss, pain and stress can lead to negative effects, which ultimately induce anger or reactive or expressive aggression.

Additionally, the Importation Model was used in Chapter 5 to describe the dispositional factors that became the aggressive prisoners' organism variables. Irwin and Cessy (1962) believed that individuals import their own attitudes, values and beliefs from the developmental backgrounds into the institution/prison, which leads to institutional aggression. This explained the aggressive prisoner's attitude towards aggression that, though it was "not good", aggression could be a solution for many problems as they had perceived aggression as a norm.

Turning to consider the relationship level, the Social Learning theory was used in Chapter 5 to describe aggressive prisoners' victimisation. The theory states that individuals acquire aggressive behaviour through either direct or indirect experience, e.g., victimisation, observation (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bandura, 1983). From the study, there was a significant difference between aggressive and non-aggressive prisoners in terms of experience of childhood victimisation and violence, both domestically and in the neighbourhood. The aggressive group experienced psychological and physical victimisation and perceived violence as a normal solution in their family during their childhood. As a result, they tended to develop using violence as their problem-solving tool.

In the community level, The Labelling theory, which was used in Chapter 6, generally described that individuals had a tendency to be deviant according to what they were negatively labelled by their society (Tannenbaum, 1938). When further developed by Schrag in 1971, the theory was also used for criminological approaches. It was utilised in this study

to explain the aggressive prisoners feeling in the IPA study that, as they were labelled by the prison staff and their fellow prisoners as troublemakers, they had nothing to lose and decided to act exactly as they were labelled.

## **Conclusion**

The findings from each chapter were grouped into levels of the Ecological Model and discussed in relation to the similarities and contrasts to previous research in prison aggression as follows:

### *1. Individual level*

In the individual level, a number of findings from this study show consistency with the results from the literature review: prisoner's age, psychological variables, substance abuse, education level, history of violence during previous incarceration and criminal history. In terms of age, the youngest age group in this study was 20 – 29 years old and it was found to have the highest risk of prison aggression compared to other age groups of Thai adult male prisoners. This is consistent with the results from the literature review which suggested that prisoners with the highest risk of committing prison aggression were those in their twenties (McCorkle, 1992; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009; Sorensen et al., 2011). Some researchers have specified that it would be 21 – 25 years of age (McCorkle, 1992; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007a; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007b; Lahm, 2008; Lahm, 2009).

Considering the psychological variables, none of the prisoners in either group were found to have been diagnosed as having any mental disorder. However, the aggressive

group has an exceptional history of childhood victimisation, neglect and abuse, desperation, supportive attitude towards aggression, anger provocation and instrumental aggressive beliefs. This is also consistent with the findings from the review: that prisoners witnessing violence and trauma during their childhood were more likely to have a risk of prison aggression (Neller et al., 2006). In addition, Thai aggressive prisoners were also found to have higher instrumental aggressive beliefs and anger provocation than the non-aggressive group, which is consistent with Turner and Ireland's study in 2010, and Ohlsson and Ireland's study in 2011.

The finding about prisoners' education level in this study was also consistent with the reviewed studies, as prisoners with low literacy levels were found to have a higher risk of prison violence than educated prisoners (Cunningham & Sorensen, 2006). The education level for the majority of the aggressive prisoners was elementary school, whereas for the majority of the non-aggressive prisoners it was secondary school or higher.

A history of violence during previous incarceration and criminal history were also key findings which were indicative of prison aggression. This study suggested that the number of convictions positively related to prison aggression. Prisoners with three or more convictions were more likely to be aggressive in the prison than those with only one or two convictions. This finding is consistent with Lee and Edens' study in 2005 and Turner and Ireland's study in 2010.

However, since the study was conducted in the Thai prison setting, all the participants in this study were Thai male prisoners. Therefore, the issue of race and ethnicity and the effect on prisoner behaviour cannot be compared to the reviewed literature's

results, which were mostly from western countries. Nonetheless, some distinguishing factors were more commonly found in the Thai prison and less seen in the review. For example, substance abuse is only slightly mentioned in the literature (Walters & Crawford, 2013), yet it was found to be exceptional in this study. The majority of the aggressive prisoners were found to have a history of abusing more than one type of substance, which was in contrast to the non-aggressive group. Likewise, the majority of aggressive prisoners' current offences were drug offences. This contradicts the finding from the study of Cunningham and Sorensen in 2007(a): that prisoners who had committed drug offences were found to be less violent than prisoners who had committed other types of offence, e.g., property, public order. Other reviewed studies suggested that prisoners with violent offences were found to be more aggressive in prison than those charged with non-violent offences (Ohlsson & Ireland, 2011; Sorensen et al., 2011)

## *2. Relationship level*

Living in a Thai prison, the prisoners have formed their own group of alliances, or, as they called it, the "*house*". This formation was usually based on each prisoner's neighbourhood or prior gang membership before imprisonment. This type of alliance ranges from a few people per group to hundreds of people. As a result, the big groups need a hierarchical system to govern their house members. The majority of aggressive prisoners were members of houses, which in most cases was the same gang as when they were outside the prison. This finding is consistent with those from five studies: that prisoners with gang membership have a higher risk of prison aggression than non-gang-related prisoners (Griffin & Hepburn, 2006; Cunningham & Sorensen, 2007(b); Sorensen et al., 2011; Wood,

Moir & James, 2008; Worrall & Morris, 2012). Additionally, one significant outstanding factor was also found in the Thai prison. The majority of aggressive prisoners were promoted by their peers to be house leaders and they were also found to be more likely to become involved in prison aggression than prisoners in lower hierarchical rankings. The example of a strong hierarchy in the prison is best seen among the house leaders, who wanted to stabilise their social status and power. They earned their respect, recognition, privilege and access to limited resources in the prison by offering protection and dealing with inter-gang conflicts for their inferiors. Thus, there are reciprocal benefits between the superiors and inferiors. With such purposes of gaining privilege, respect and special access to resources, it can also be said that the house leaders' behaviours were instrumental to aggression.

The deindividuation model (Festinger, Pepitone & Newcomb, 1952) also explains the long-running between-house conflicts. The new group member spontaneously takes the house's rivals as his own once he joins the group, although he has never met or had any personal conflicts with these people before. Each member replaced the sense of their own identity with the group identity. Consequently, their aggressive actions towards others were in the name of the group.

Additionally, one significant finding in this study showed that the majority of prisoners from the aggressive group were found to have tattoos, which was different from the non-aggressive group. These tattoos could be either a gang symbol or meaningless. This factor was not found to be mentioned in the reviewed papers; however, it corresponds with a study conducted among male and female young offenders in southern Australia. The result showed that the incidence of tattoos in a secure care centre were significantly higher than

in high schools or the general population. Tattooed male and female young offenders were more likely to be involved in aggression and substance abuse (Putnins, 2002).

### *3. Community level*

The design and structure of Thai prisons are different from those in western countries, as described in Chapter 1. The study found that the prison's physical conditions can directly and indirectly affect the prisoners' behaviour. However, although all of the participants were from the same prison, there were slight differences in terms of prison environment between the two groups. The majority of aggressive prisoners were placed in more crowded units, whereas the majority of the non-aggressive prisoners were from the less crowded ones. Since there were a lot of prisoners sharing a small space in one cell, no one had their own personal space. In a more crowded unit, lying down to sleep can be a problem due to the limited space and overcrowding. Consequently, problems regarding personal hygiene and ventilation are inevitable. As a result, these two groups had different perspectives on the prison environment. The aggressive group perceived the prison as a place full of pressure whereas the non-aggressive group found that it was bearable. These effects of prison condition were consistently suggested in the studies of Allison and Ireland (2010) and Cooke, Johnstone and Gadon (2008): that poor prison environment is significantly related to prisoners' aggressive behaviour.

Additionally, some prisoner placement was also a result of prisoner grading, which was evaluated by the prison staff. It was found from this study that the majority of the aggressive prisoners were from the extremely poor grade, whereas none of the non-aggressive prisoners were listed in this grade. As a result, prisoners in the worst class have

to live in a unit with a poorer prison environment. This is not only the prison policy, but also the prison officers' attitude towards prisoners, which is also a factor in the community level, and can likewise play an important role in prisoners' behaviour. The PRISM study has weighted this factor as one of the important factors that can affect prisoners' aggressive behaviour (Cooke, Johnstone & Gadon, 2008). These situational factors correspond with the Deprivation Model, which was used to explain the institutional aggression. It describes aggression as a result of taking away someone's rights and freedom, e.g., liberty, autonomy, heterosexual relationships (Sykes, 1958).

#### *4. Societal level*

Social and cultural-specific factors can be seen from the study, which also directly and indirectly contributed to the prison aggression. Some prisoners were reported as being aggressive because they hit their peers' heads with their hands, whereas these prisoners stated that they were only playing with their friends. The hit in fact was neither forceful nor caused any minor physical injury. However, it is a Thai traditional belief that people's heads are a noble thing, which should be treated with respect. Touching or hitting someone's head is rude, showing disrespect and the easiest way to provoke the victim. With this deep meaning, a hit at the head can be interpreted as both a physical and a psychological assault, whereas the same scenario may have a different meaning elsewhere.

Additionally, since the problems of prison overcrowding, poor prison environment and poor staff/prisoner ratio are common among all Thai prisons, this shows the ineffectiveness and impracticality of the government policy in tackling these problems and their consequences. Correspondingly, it can be seen from the statistics and the IPA that the



majority of the aggressive prisoners had a history of multiple convictions and did not have a solid plan after their release, as, in the Thai social context, there is a common negative attitude towards ex-prisoners – that they are dangerous and cannot be trusted – it is barely possible for them to plan for their employment after their release. As a result, most of the prisoners turn to what they used to do before imprisonment, resulting in recidivism and reoffending. Therefore, it was reflected from the Ecological Model that the factors in the individual, relationship and community levels can also be the results of factors in the societal level and vice versa.

In conclusion, there are several factors in different levels of the Ecological Model that relate to prison aggression in Thailand. Factors in the individual level are young age, psychological variables, history of substance abuse, education level, history of employment, childhood abuse, history of violence during previous incarceration and criminal history. In the relationship level, there are gang affiliation inside the prison, conflict between gangs, being the house leader and prison tattoo. In the community level, the factors are prison environment, prison norm and value, and prisoner grading. Although, in the factors in Societal level had not been yet studied in this research, it is worth exploring in the future for expanding the knowledge of aggression in Thai prison.

### **Practical implications**

The findings from this thesis provide practical information for the framework of the Thai prison setting and forensic psychology. First of all, the review provides a summary of factors related to prison aggression that may be applied to this setting. A review regarding

this issue has never been conducted in this setting before; therefore, this study can be considered as innovative. This way of consideration is essential in the Thai prison setting, and this thesis can start to change policy in this domain.

Secondly, the study has presented useful tools for recording prisoners' aggressive behaviour. The tool was designed to pick up important information on the prisoners' aggressive behaviour, e.g., types and manner of the aggression, the casualty and frequency. Requiring only a short amount of time to use, the tools suit the context of Thai prisons and the work of their prison staff, as there have already been problems relating to too high a workload for prison staff and prisoner/staff imbalance. It can be seen from Chapter 3 that the number of prison officers willing to participate in the study was a lot fewer compared to the total number of prison officers working in ██████████ Remand Prison, as most of the officers stated that they already had too much paperwork and workload. However, the participating officers found that they could manage to use the tool and collect data on each incident in a short amount of time, which helped to encourage other staff to use the tool. Objectively if it took a short time to administer then this would support it being quick, but more work would be needed to operationalise it into practise.

Additionally, considering the aforementioned problem of officers' workload, it is important that the tool is compact and able to gather information relevant to the different levels of the Ecological Model while being convenient and efficient in terms of time required. Therefore, a formal evaluation of ease of use and usefulness would be worth doing in future research.

Furthermore, the results from the research could become a solid database for the sample of Thai male prisoners in the Thai prison setting. The problem of aggression in Thai prisons is widely acknowledged, yet there is no systematic database regarding this concern, which could be a result of multiple issues, e.g., lack of prison staff, too high a workload for prison staff, as aforementioned. Therefore, it is essential to obtain a systematic database so that further policy development can take place. This study provides a good start for a data collection process in the Thai prison framework. After the group of participating officers had tried using the tools, they found they were easier, more compact and less complicated than their usual paperwork. Therefore, a change of this group of prison officers' perspective could encourage the non-participating officers to consider using the tools.

In terms of change in future prison policy, this study also offers promising tools and outcomes that can be applied to the policy planning. Since the Thai Department of Corrections has a concern about prison aggression, along with other common prison problems, there has been a protocol for screening for prisoners' risk factors from the admission point to the release. However, as aforementioned in Chapter 1, practically, the prison officers cannot follow all the protocol and complete the paperwork without real prisoner evaluation. Additionally, although each unit in the prison has its own purpose for housing the prisoner (e.g., for close observation, for short-term prisoners), practically, prisoner placement has never been according to this protocol. Furthermore there is a large amount of paperwork and records, no systematic data is recorded, and the problem is difficult to solve. These facts, including the ongoing problem of prison aggression, suggest that the current policy is ineffective and not practical. One example of the ineffectiveness

of the policy is that all types of prisoners share the same limited choices of prison activity, e.g., shoe factory, paper factory, which ultimately may not help change their behaviour or enhance their potential. This study highlights the importance of getting to know the prisoners and how they could be properly treated.

The study has also pointed out some factors that are exceptional in the Thai prison context yet less mentioned in western studies, e.g., the hierarchical ranking in the prison. This thesis provides a more culturally specific database for the Thai prison framework. This can be beneficial for the design of future prison intervention or an effective prevention scheme which is more customised to the male prison context. This effective prevention scheme should not only be suitable for the Thai prisoners' characteristics and background but also should fit with the Thai prison officers' working style. As a result, the prisoners will be more holistically analysed for risk factors, provided with better placement and become less labelled. This, in the long run, would reduce the prison officers' workload and occupational-related risks. Furthermore, as the study showed that prisoners with more convictions demonstrated a higher risk of aggression in prison, the prison policy should also be systemically broadened to include the prevention of reoffending and recidivisms, especially for first-time convicted prisoners. A proper rehabilitation programme and occupational training could also be helpful.

Considering the thesis' framework, the Ecological Model has been effectively applied as a guide by which to conduct the study. Since human behaviour results from multiple factors, the Ecological Model is practical for the design of the study as it groups the factors into different levels. The findings from the literature review were grouped and helped to

understand the dynamic interactions between the different levels. The research design aimed to answer the research questions within different levels. Furthermore, the model also helps group the findings and show how they relate. This makes the study design more compact, less complicated and clearly visualised. More importantly, it can pick up multiple prison environmental factors that affect prisoners' behaviour. These factors may seem to be normal in Thai prisons, and so they have been left unrecognised and unchanged for years. The model shows the importance of factors in all levels and, therefore, in order to tackle the problem of prison aggression, none of these factors should be overlooked. Therefore, the Ecological Model is not only useful for the study of the Thai prison population but it can also be applied to further study in the general population.

### **Strengths and limitations of the thesis**

Since the literature review aimed to focus only on the studies among adult male prisoners, to match the study theme, a number of studies among both genders and juvenile offenders were excluded from the review. As a result, factors from studies that included both genders or among juvenile groups were not explored. This could lead to some important factors being missed.

In terms of getting permission to access and start working with the prison, numerous processes and systems of approval were required, involving senior management and requiring a great deal of necessary paperwork. Then, in the initial data collection process, recruiting prison officers was complicated as most of them were overwhelmed by their routine work. Since the study was conducted by one researcher under the condition of a

limited time frame, a six-month period allowed the researcher to examine only 26 aggressive and 26 non-aggressive prisoners in one male prison. This figure is limited, and so it could be difficult to generalise the results and findings to male prisoners at the national level.

However, this is the first study that specifically and systemically looks at the multiple factors related to prison aggression in Thailand, where aggression is high and conditions arguably need to change for the better. Additionally, gaining access to the difficult population in this prison is considered as a leap in terms of the progress of Thai prison research. Therefore, this study could pave the way for future research in this field.

### **Future research**

As the study has paved the way for the study of aggression in Thai male prisons, future research could be expanded to a larger facility or include more prisons and be conducted over a longer time period in order to collect more data and build up a more solid database. Additionally, it would also be interesting to conduct studies that include both male and female prisoners, to identify similar and different factors between genders. This could help design customised prevention schemes that better suit each type of facility. Similarly, the research could also be developed into the area of aggression among juvenile offenders. A proper rehabilitation programme and occupational training that fits each prisoner's needs should be considered in order to prevent reoffending.

The result also suggested that there was a strong link between gang affiliation in the prisoners' community and house formation in the prison. This suggests the need for wider

multi-profession cooperation in terms of both prison services and community care to prevent future aggression and reoffending.

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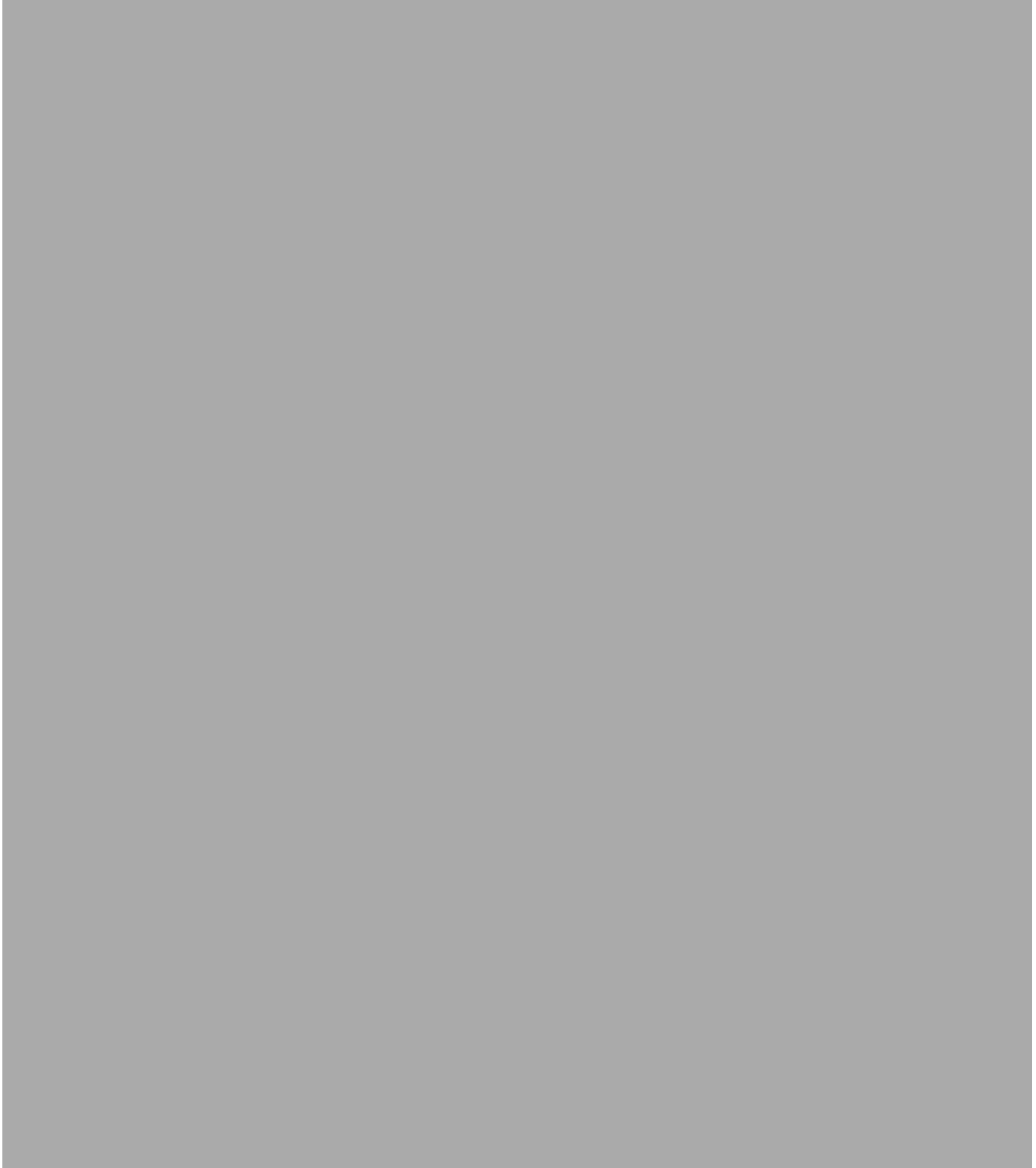
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Appendix A Permission to conduct this research study in [REDACTED] Remand Prison



## Appendix B Syntax

- 4.1. Prison\* or Jail or Correction\* or Penal or Detention or Detainee or Remand or Incarcerat\* or Inmate or Secure unit or Institution\* or Penitentiary .mp.
- 4.2. Aggress\* or Violen\* or Bully\* or Victim\* or Misconduct or Perpetrat\* or Abus\* or Assault or Harm or Infraction or Harassment or Misbehavio\* .mp.
5. Environment
6. 2 or 3
7. Factor or Cause or Causal or Risk factor or Attitude or Predictor .mp.
8. 1 and 4 and 5
9. Limit 6 to human and English language and adult

## Appendix C Quality Assessment Form

Quality criteria	yes	partly	no	unknown	comments
<p>1. Screening question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did the study have a clear focus question?</li> <li>- Was there a clear methodology to answer the question?</li> </ul>					
<p>2. Selection bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Did the study provide a clear inclusion and exclusion criteria?</li> <li>- Did the participants truly represent target population?</li> <li>- Was the sample size proper?</li> <li>- Was the characteristics and background of participants were clearly and comprehensively described?</li> <li>- Have the authors picked up all confounding factors</li> </ul>					
<p>3. Performance and detection bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the definition (violence, bullying, aggression, etc.) clearly defined?</li> <li>- Was an appropriate assessment measure used?</li> </ul>					



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was (were) the assessment instrument(s) standardized?</li> <li>- Was (were) the measurement(s) validated and reliable?</li> <li>- Did the outcome answer the study objective?</li> </ul>					
<p>4. Attrition bias</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were drop-out rates and reasons for drop-out similar across the groups?</li> <li>- Were the missing values dealt with appropriately?</li> <li>- Was the statistic analysis appropriate?</li> <li>- Were the participants that complete the study the same as those who did not?</li> </ul>					
<p>5. Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are the statistical tools used appropriate?</li> <li>- Are the results significant?</li> <li>- The methodological limitations have been discussed?</li> </ul>					
6. Total score					
7. Percentage					

## Appendix D Data extraction form

**Date of extraction:****Author(s):****Article title:****Journal:****Note:**

Re-verification of study eligibility (inclusion criteria)	Yes	No
Study eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population</li> <li>- Risk factors</li> <li>- Comparator</li> <li>- Outcome</li> </ul>		
Study design		

## Appendix E Information sheet

### Information about the study

**Why is this study being done?** We are researchers, supported by the Thai Government, who are trying to understand the characteristics of violence and aggression in Thai prison, since there is limited information regarding this topic and violence in prison can lead to suffering for prisoners and staff. Understanding the nature and causes of violence among male prisoners can help prevent such loss and also guide an effective violence prevention scheme in the Thai prison system.

**Why am I being asked to take part?** Because you are prison officers, the only group of people who work closely to the prisoners and your observation is integral to this study.

**What will I be asked to do?** You will be asked to attend a training session on how to use the tools, which will last for approximately 2 hours, then observe violent incidents in your own wing. If you notice such incidents you will be asked to fill out the Violent Behaviour Checklist, so that the researcher will be able to know who to interview and what about. Your name will not be needed in this part of the study.

**What are the benefits of taking part?** When we understand the nature and the causes of violence and aggression in prison settings, it will be easier to prevent such violence. This work will contribute to this understanding. As a result you, and others, may face less occupational risk and stress in the future improving quality of work and life.

**Do I have to take part?** You do not have to take part. If you choose not to, this will not affect your work nor be any consequences for you not taking part. If you chose to take part and then for any reason you are unhappy about participating you can withdraw from the study at any time before and during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and at no consequence to you or others. You can do this by letting me know either before, during the study, or up until 31 December 2013.

**What do I do if I want to take part?** After you have read this and had time to consider it, I will approach you again in 24 hours. You can then let the researcher know if you are willing to help observe the violent behaviour of the inmates in your own wing by signing the consent form. Then you will attend training on how to use the Violent Behavioural Checklist before start to use it. During this training I will ask you to complete some example checklists, this is so you can get used to using the tool correctly and so that I can check people are using the tool in a consistent way.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?** Yes it will. The researcher will know who you are as they have to in order to invite you to the session described above, but your name will not be stored anywhere. Instead we will assign you a research number to identify the data you have provided us with. We will keep a note of what is your research number in a separate file in case we need to clarify anything with you during the study. This list will be deleted once the data has been analysed so that you cannot ever be identified. Your identity will not be revealed in the research write up and the identified prisoners will not know that you have identified them for this study. The interview will take place at least a week after the incident and your name will not be mentioned in the interview.

**What do I do if I want to withdraw from the study?** Just let the researcher know at anytime before 31 December 2013 by contacting her via the details given below.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?** You can continue your work as usual but when you notice aggressive incidence you will be asked to fill out the checklist, this could slightly consume your time.

**What happens when the research stops?** When the study is finished, a report will be provided to [REDACTED] Remand Prison where the study takes place. You can freely view the report. Your name and personal details will never appear in the report.

**Who is organising the research?** The study is organized by University of Birmingham, UK and the Royal Thai Government.

**Thank you for your time.**

Researcher Contact Details:

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address: [REDACTED]

Or

School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
There is a confidential organization that offers individuals free advice and support over the phone or via the Internet. If you should wish to contact them for further information or support in the future please do so.

Samaritans Thailand (02)713-6793 <http://samaritansthailand.blogspot.com>

Or Mental Health Hotline - 1667 (free call)

## Appendix F Informed consent

### Consent form (Part 1 for Prison officers)

#### Consent Form

Please feel free to ask any questions about taking part in the study. By signing the below form, you are consenting to participate in this study and that you understand and agree to the following:

- I understand that I am being asked to participate in a research project being carried out by researchers at the University of Birmingham, supported by the Thai Government.
- I have been informed in writing about the nature and purpose of the study, and I have had the opportunity to discuss this in person with the researcher.
- I understand that I do not have to take part in this study and, if for any reason I am unhappy about participating, I can withdraw from the study before, during it or until 31 December 2013 by contacting the researcher at the details below and ask for my data to be destroyed without explaining my decision and at no consequence to me or others.
- I understand that taking part in this study (or withdrawing from the study) will not affect my career in any way.
- I understand you know my name so you can contact me and invite me to the training and contact me should any questions arise during the study, but that it will not be stored after data collection has finished used in the research. Instead I will be assigned a unique research number to identify the data I provide you with.
- I understand that this project will necessitate that I attend a 2-hour workshop to train me in the use of the Violence checklist tool.

By signing below, I understand that I am consenting to participate in this study conducted in association with the University of Birmingham.

Print name

Sign.....date.....

Researcher Contact Details:

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address:

Or  
School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT



## Appendix G Eight example case scenarios

- 1. Prisoner A punches prisoner B in a face and also kicks him at the trunk, after prisoner B insults prisoner A in front of other prisoners. The incident lasts for 5 minutes. As a result, prisoner B has nosebleed and large bruise at his trunk.
- 2. Prisoner C yells at prisoner D and threats to kill him. In response, prisoner D hits prisoner C at the back with a wooden chair. The incident lasts for 3 minutes. As a result, prisoner D has two fracture ribs.
- 3. Prisoner E provokes his cellmates that there are injustice and inequality in this prison, they should take some action to bring the justice to the prison. Prisoner F and friends take one of prison officers as a hostage in order to get attention and take control. The incident lasts for 4 hours. As a result, no one gets hurt but properties are destroyed.
- 4. Prisoner G offers prisoner H protection if prisoner H accepts to have sexual intercourse with prisoner G. Prisoner H denies so prisoner G takes prisoner H's meal and sends prisoner I and prisoner J to bully prisoner H. The incident lasts for 5 minutes. As a result, prisoner H has lacerated wound at forehead.
- 5. Prisoner K and prisoner L have a fight over the territory in their cell. The incident lasts for 15 minutes. As a result, two other cellmates are injured from trying to stop them, large bruise and sprained wrist.
- 6. Prisoner M beats prisoner N up while he is restrained by prisoner O and prisoner O is forced to have sexual intercourse. Prisoner O has large bruise at his face, trunk and lacerated wound at anus.
- 7. Prisoner P and prisoner Q argue and prisoner P threats to kill prisoner Q, but never actually does it.
- 8. Prisoner R tears prisoner S's cloth and insults prisoner S's family after prisoner S humiliated prisoner R in front of his fellow prisoners.

## Appendix H Direct Aggressive Behaviours Checklist (DABC)

## MONITORING PRISONER'S AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TOOL

**Every time you witness a prisoner involved in *perpetrating* an aggressive incident,**

**please use the checklist below to describe what took place in this incident for that prisoner. There can be more than one answer**

Prisoner Name/Number.....Date..... time ..... length of the incident.....

**Who was the target of the aggression?**

- ☐ Other prisoners
- ☐ Prison staff
- ☐ Both

1. Type of aggression Please tick the acts that <b><u>the perpetrator</u></b> used		Tick	2. Type of aggression Please tick the acts that the <b><u>other person(s)</u></b> used	Tic k
1. Psycho logical aggressio n	a. Used language to insult, tease, humiliate or show disrespect to another person.		b. Used language to insult, tease, humiliate or show disrespect to another person.	
	c. Shouted at or yelled at someone		d. Shouted at or yelled at someone	
	e. Used language to vilify, control or command another person to do something against their will.		f. Used language to vilify, control or command another person to do something against their will.	
	g. Destroyed something belonging to another person		h. Destroyed something belonging to another person	
	i. Used language to threaten to hit, throw something at, kill or physically hurt another person in some way.		j. Used language to threaten to hit, throw something at, kill or physically hurt another person in some way.	
	a. Inappropriate non-consensual non-penetrative sexual touching of another person (fondling,		b. Inappropriate non-penetrative sexual touching of another person (fondling, masturbation of other person).	

2. Sexual aggression	masturbation of other person).			
	c. Used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex.		d. Used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex.	
	e. Used threats to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex.		f. Used threats to make their partner or another person have oral or anal sex.	
3. Physical aggression	a. Threw something at/ twisted arm or hair of/ pushed/ grabbed/ slapped someone.		b. Threw something at/ twisted arm or hair of/ pushed/ grabbed/ slapped someone.	
	c. Hit with objects or fist / threw them down on the floor or against the wall / kicked/ physical restrained.		d. Hit with objects or fist / threw them down on the floor or against the wall / kicked/ physical restrained.	
	e. Beat up/ punched/ grabbed the neck and choked/ burned or scalded.		f. Beat up/ punched/ grabbed the neck and choked/ burned or scalded.	
	g. Other (please specify).....		h. Other (please specify).....	
4. Weapon used	a. Used any tool, equipment or instrument to attack another		b. Used any tool, equipment or instrument to attack another	
	c. Used any tool, equipment or instrument to defend self.		d. Used any tool, equipment or instrument to defend self.	
5. Arson	Wilfully and maliciously set fire to the buildings and/or properties for an improper purpose.		Wilfully and maliciously set fire to the buildings and/or properties for an improper purpose.	



6.Riot	Led or joined disorder against the prison administrators, prison officers or other groups of prisoners in attempt to force change or express grievance.		Led or joined disorder against the prison administrators, prison officers or other groups of prisoners in attempt to force change or express grievance.	
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### 3. Type of injury

Please tick the boxes to indicate the type of injury and who received the injury.

Injury	Please tick the column to show if any injury occurred and to whom.		
	Aggressor	Victim	Others Please state who .....
Physical Injury a. Mild: injuries confined in small superficial area, e.g., bruise, scratch marks, small cut.			
Physical Injury a. Moderate: more extensive surface injuries, e.g., laceration, large bruise, minor burns, large welts.			
Physical Injury a. Severe: deep tissue injuries, broken bones, serious burns, damage to internal organs.			
Physical Injury a. Life threatening: persistent injuries which have the potential of victim death or near death.			
Death (please give details) .....			
Destroyed property (please give details) .....			

#### 4. Prisoner Behaviour Rating Scale

For each prisoner you identify as violent can you please fill in the following questions for them after the violent incident:  
We are interested in the prisoner's behaviour over the last four weeks. Please ring the number which applies and circle that number.  
Over the last four weeks the prisoner has:

	Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
1. Caused trouble during his free time	0	1	2	3	4
2. Cursed and sworn (in an abusive manner)	0	1	2	3	4
3. Been held out of normal circulation as a punishment	0	1	2	3	4
4. Victimised weaker inmates	0	1	2	3	4
5. Tried to con staff	0	1	2	3	4
6. Complained about staff	0	1	2	3	4
7. Been aggressive to staff	0	1	2	3	4
8. Had a quick temper	0	1	2	3	4
9. Been on report	0	1	2	3	4
10. Tried to play staff off against each other	0	1	2	3	4
11. Openly defied rules and regulations	0	1	2	3	4
12. Stirred up trouble among other inmates	0	1	2	3	4
13. Aided or abetted other to break the rules	0	1	2	3	4

## Appendix I Information sheet for aggressive prisoners

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

#### Understanding aggression in Thai male prisons

**Why is this study being done?** We are researchers who are trying to understand the characteristics of aggression in Thai prison, since there is limited information regarding this topic and aggression and violence in prison can lead to great personal and financial loss. Understanding the nature and causes of violence and aggression among male prisoners can help prevent such loss and also guide effective violence prevention schemes relevant to Thai prison settings.

**Why am I being asked to take part?** We have asked prison officers to work with us over the past few weeks and let us know which prisoners have been involved in aggressive altercations so that we can recruit the correct people to talk to in our research study. Officers have informed us that you have recently been involved in an aggressive altercation and we would like to talk to you in some more detail about this so that we can understand your reasons of actions.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you want to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

By signing the consent form you will be providing your consent to take part in the study. As part of the study you will be asked to speak to a researcher for a short interview and complete questionnaires about some information personal to you, such as what your life was like before you came to prison, what your childhood was like, history of sexual abuse, substance use, or any violence you may have taken part in recently. If you agree to take part the interview will take approximately 1 and a half hours. The researcher will also have access to your prisoner files. There will be no judging on any of your action. We just would like to understand your thoughts.

**Will you know who I am?** We will know what your name and prison number is. Your name or number will not be stored next to any information you give to us however. We will assign a unique research code to you, and in a separate file keep a note that this research number corresponds to your prison number. This is so that we can work out which information is yours and match it across the different parts of this research study. Once data analysis is complete we will delete this information so that your responses are completely anonymous.

The Thai Government/prisons will not have access to any of this data and will not use any information in this study against prisoners. Only the researchers own and have access to this data. Prison officers, prisons and other officials do not get copies any of the obtained data. Only final research reports which contain aggregate data will be given to the prisons.

**What are the benefits of taking part?** Understanding the nature and causes of violence in prison helps professionals design a more effective violence prevention scheme that might save you, and others, from future risk by preventing aggression and violence from happening.

**Do I have to take part?** You do not have to take part. If you choose not to, this will not affect your rights or benefits available to you in prison, nor there any consequences for you not taking part. If you chose to take part and then for any reason you are unhappy about participating you can

withdraw from the study at any time before and during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and at no consequence to you or others. You can do this by letting me know either before, during the study, or up until 31 December 2013.

**What do I do if I want to take part?** After you have read this and had time to consider it, the researcher will approach you again in 24 hours and let you know the date, time and venue where consenting prisoners will be filling out the first wave of questionnaires and interview. At this session you will provide your consent to participate by signing the consent form.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?** Yes it will. The researcher will only know your name and prisoner number in order to identify your responses should you wish to withdraw from the study. This personal information will not be stored next to any information you give us during the interviews. Each participant will be assigned a random research number so that information you give us can be stored anonymously – that is no one will know who you are. If you do disclose any identifiable information by accident (like names of family members or friends, locations of various incidents) in the interview it will be removed from the study records.

The only time when someone will need to know who you are is if you disclose specific details about any criminal offences that you have been involved in, both inside and outside the prison, (that you have not been previously convicted of), or intend to carry out in the future. Examples of specific details would be names of offenders and dates on which offences have taken place. If you do this, the researcher will report this information to the prison officers who are in charge of the wing that the prisoner resides. However, no other information that you provide in the the interview, will be disclosed. There is no need for you to disclose any information like this to the researcher. All questionnaire and transcripts of the interview will be kept in a locked cabinet in the psychology department at University of Birmingham until they are destroyed.

The researcher will translate all your responses to questionnaires and tape recorded interviews into English and make sure responses are anonymous before handing to a second translator for confirmation that the researcher's translation is accurate. The translator is a professional translator who will uphold rules of confidentiality, and will sign a disclaimer to this fact prior to her involvement in the study – she will never know who you are.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?** Sometimes talking or thinking about anger and aggression brings up sensitive issues and the researcher will make every effort to put you at ease during the session. You do not have to disclose personally distressing information in each session. However, if the session does bring up to much stress for you, you can leave at any time. **If you are upset afterward, you can either talk to the researcher or seek for psychological support from the health care wing.**

**What do I do if I want to withdraw from the study?** For any reason, if you are unhappy to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time before or during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and no consequences to you and others. You can do this by either telling the researcher directly during the interview or informing one of the prison officers who will relay this message to the researcher before 31 December 2013.

**What happens when the research stops?** When the study is finished a report will be provided to [REDACTED] Remand Prison where this study took place and you will be told about this by the prison officers. Your name or personal details will never appear in the report.

**Who is organising the research?** This study is organised by The University of Birmingham, UK and the Royal Thai Government.

**Thank you for your time**

Researcher Contact Details:

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address:

[REDACTED]  
School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Information sheet for non-aggressive prisoners

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

#### Understanding the difference between violent and non-violent Thai male prisoners

**Why is this study being done?** We are researchers who are trying to understand the characteristics of violence in Thai prison and its causes, since there is limited information regarding this topic and violence in prison can lead tremendous lost. We need to understand preventive factors for non-violent prisoners are, so that we can design effective violence prevention scheme that suits the Thai prison settings.

**Why am I being asked to take part?** We have asked prison officers to work with us over the past few weeks and let us know which prisoners have been involved in aggressive altercations so that we can recruit the correct people to talk to in our research study. Officers have informed us that YOU HAVE NOT recently been involved in an aggressive altercation. We would like to talk to you in some more detail about this so that we can understand why you have not been aggressive. We would like to understand what you think and how you react to different circumstances. This could be useful for preventing future violence in prison and also for your own safety.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you want to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

By signing the consent form you will be providing your consent to take part in the study. As part of the study you will be asked to speak to a researcher for a short interview and complete questionnaires about some information personal to you, such as what your life was like before you came to prison, what your childhood was like, history of sexual abuse, substance use, or any violence you may have taken part in recently. If you agree to take part the interview will take approximately 1 and a half hours. The researcher will also have access to your prisoner files. There will be no judging on any of your action. We just would like to understand your thoughts.

**Will you know who I am?** We will know what your prison number is. This number will not be stored next to any data you give us however. We will assign a unique research code to you, and in a separate file keep a note that this research number corresponds to your prison number. This is so that we can work out which data is yours and match it across the different parts of this research study. Once data analysis is complete we will delete this information so that your responses are anonymous. The Thai Government/prisons will not have access to any of this data and will not use any information in this study against prisoners. Only the researchers own and have access to this data. Prison officers, prisons and other officials do not get copies any of the obtained data. Only final research reports which contain aggregate data will be given to the prisons.

The Thai Government/prisons will not have access to any of this data and will not use any information in this study against prisoners. Only the researchers own and have access to this data. Prison officers, prisons and other officials do not get copies any of the obtained data. Only final research reports which contain aggregate data will be given to the prisons.

**What are the benefits of taking part?** Understanding the nature and causes of violence in prison helps professionals design a more effective violence prevention scheme that might save you, and others, from future risk by preventing aggression and violence from happening

**Do I have to take part?** You do not have to take part. If you choose not to, this will not affect your rights or benefits available to you in prison, nor there any consequences for you not taking part. If you chose to take part and then for any reason you are unhappy about participating you can withdraw from the study at any time before and during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and at no consequence to you or others. You can do this by letting me know either before, during the study, or up until 31 December 2013.

**What do I do if I want to take part?** After you have read this and had time to consider it, the researcher will approach you again in 24 hours and let you know the date, time and venue where consenting prisoners will be filling out the first wave of questionnaires and interview. At this session you will provide your consent to participate by signing the consent form.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Yes it will. The researcher will only know your name and prisoner number in order to identify your responses should you wish to withdraw from the study. This personal information will not be stored next to any information you give us during the interviews. Each participant will be assigned a random research number so that information you give us can be stored anonymously – that is no one will know who you are. If you do disclose any identifiable information by accident (like names of family members or friends, locations of various incidents) in the interview it will be removed from the study records.

The only time when someone will need to know who you are is if you disclose specific details about any criminal offences that you have been involved in, both inside and outside the prison, (that you have not been previously convicted of), or intend to carry out in the future. Examples of specific details would be names of offenders and dates on which offences have taken place. If you do this, the researcher will report this information to the prison officers who are in charge of the wing that the prisoner resides. However, no other information that you provide in the the interview, will be disclosed. There is no need for you to disclose any information like this to the researcher. All questionnaire and transcripts of the interview will be kept in a locked cabinet in the psychology department at University of Birmingham until they are destroyed.

The researcher will translate all your responses to questionnaires and tape recorded interviews into English and make sure responses are anonymous before handing to a second translator for confirmation that the researcher's translation is accurate. The translator is a professional translator who will uphold rules of confidentiality, and will sign a disclaimer to this fact prior to her involvement in the study – she will never know who you are.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?** Some sample situations might bring up sensitive issues or remind you of some undesirable experience. The researcher will make every effort to put you at ease during the time you are filling out the questionnaire. However, if it brings up to much stress for you, you can leave the questionnaire at any time. **If you are upset, you can either talk to the researcher or seek for psychological support from the health care wing.**

**What do I do if I want to withdraw from the study?** For any reason, if you are unhappy to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time before or during it and ask for your data

to be destroyed without explaining your decision and no consequences to you and others. You can do this by either telling the researcher directly during the interview or informing one of the prison officers who will relay this message to the researcher before 31 December 2013.

**What happens when the research stops?** When the study is finished a report will be provided to [REDACTED] Remand Prison where this study took place and you will be told about this by the prison officers. Your name or personal details will never appear in the report.

**Who is organising the research?** This study is organised by The University of Birmingham, UK and the Royal Thai Government.

**Thank you for your time**

Researcher Contact Details:

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address:

[REDACTED]  
School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



## Appendix J Consent form

### Consent Form

**Prisoner number (researcher's use only) .....**

Please feel free to ask any questions about taking part in the study. By completing the below questionnaires you are consenting to participate in this study and that you understand and agree to the following:

- I understand that I am being asked to participate in a research project being carried out by researchers at the University of Birmingham, supported by the Thai Government.
- I have been informed both verbally and in writing about the nature and purpose of the study, and I have had the opportunity to discuss this in person with the researcher.
- I understand that I do not have to take part in this study and, if for any reason I am unhappy about participating, I can withdraw from the study at any time before, during the interview or until 31 December 2013 and ask for my information to be destroyed without explaining my decision and at no consequence to me or others.
- I understand that taking part in this study (or withdrawing from the study) will not affect my rights or any benefits that I get from the prison.
- My prison number or name will not appear next to any information that I provide to the researcher. That is, my information will be anonymous. I will be assigned a random research number to identify my responses by in case I chose to withdraw my information at a later stage. As such the information I provide will be stored anonymously and my name will never appear in any reports or be passed to Thai officials.
- If I disclose specific details about any criminal offences that I have been involved in but not convicted of (both inside and outside the prison) or intend to carry out in the future the researcher will report this information to the prison officers in charge of your wing. There is no need for me to disclose any information like this to the researcher.

By signing below, I understand that I am consenting to participate in this study conducted in association with the University of Birmingham.

Sign.....date.....

Researcher.....(Witness)

Researcher Contact Details:

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address:

Or

School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

## Appendix K Interview schedule for demographic data

### Demographic data

1. Age.....
2. Ethnicity.....
3. Underlying disease
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
4. History of mental health problem
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
5. History of gang affiliation outside the prison
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
6. Education.....
7. Employment
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
8. History of substance abuse
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
9. Criminal history (prior arrest, history of violent behaviour)
  - Yes, identify.....
  - No
10. Current conviction (type of offence and length of incarceration)
  - .....

1. During your childhood (<15 years), did you experience any of these by your parents/caregiver?

1.1 Psychological aggression

- a. They threatened to spank or hit you but did not actually do it.
- b. They shouted, yelled, or screamed at you.
- c. They swore or cursed at you.
- d. They called you dumb or lazy or some other name like that.
- e. They said you would be sent away or kicked out of the house.

1.2 Minor physical assault

- a. They spanked you on the bottom with their bare hands.
- b. They hit you on the bottom with something like a belt, hairbrush, a stick or some other hard object.
- c. They slapped you on the hand, arm, or leg.
- d. They pinched you.
- e. They shook you (this is scored for Very Severe If the child is <2 years).

1.3 Severe physical assault

- a. They slapped you on the face or head or ears.
- b. They hit you on some other part of the body besides the bottom with something like a belt, hairbrush, a stick or some other hard object.
- c. They threw or knocked you down.
- d. They hit you with a fist or kicked you hard.

1.4 Very severe physical assault

- a. They beat you up, that is they hit you over and over as hard as they could.
- b. They grabbed you around the neck and choked you.
- c. They burned or scalded you on purpose.
- d. They threatened you with a knife or gun

1.5 Sex abuse

Now I would like to ask you something about your own experiences as a child that may be very sensitive. As you know, sometimes, in spite of efforts to protect them, children get sexually maltreated, molested, or touched in sexual ways that are wrong. To find out more about how often they occur, we would like to ask you about your own experiences when you were a child.

Before the age of 15, were you personally ever touched in a sexual way by an adult or older child, when you did not want to be touched that way, or were you ever forced to touch an adult or older child in a sexual way -- including anyone who was a member of your family, or anyone outside your family?

(If "Yes", ask: ) did it happen more than once?

0 = No, it did not happen

1 = Yes, it happened just once

2 = Yes, it happened more than once

Before the age of 15, were you ever forced to have sex by an adult or older child – including anyone who was a member of your family, or anyone outside your family?

(If "Yes", ask:) Did it happen more than once?

0 = No, it did not happen

1 = Yes, it happened just once

2 = Yes, it happened more than once.

### 1.6 Neglect

Please tell me if any of the following ever happened to you as a child (<15 years).

- You were left home alone, even when you thought some adult should be with you.
- Your caregiver(s) were so caught up with their own problems they were not able to show or tell you that they loved you.
- Caregivers were not able to make sure you got the food you needed.
- Caregivers were not able to make sure you got to a doctor or hospital when you needed it.
- Caregivers were so drunk or high that they had a problem taking care of you.

## 2. Do you feel that you have had problems with alcohol use in the past (or present)?

.....  
Please describe (ex. How many types, how long, how often, how much that you used)  
.....

Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking in the past (or present)?  
.....

Please describe who, when, how long for.  
.....

## 3. Do you feel that you have had problems with drug use, other than those prescribed by a physician, in the past (or present)?

.....  
Please describe (ex. How many types, how long, how often, how much that you used)?  
.....

Have you ever gone to anyone for help about taking drugs, other than those prescribed by a physician?

.....  
Please describe who, when, how long for.  
.....

4. Do you have tattoo? If yes, how many do you have and where did you get it/them (inside or outside the prison)?  
.....

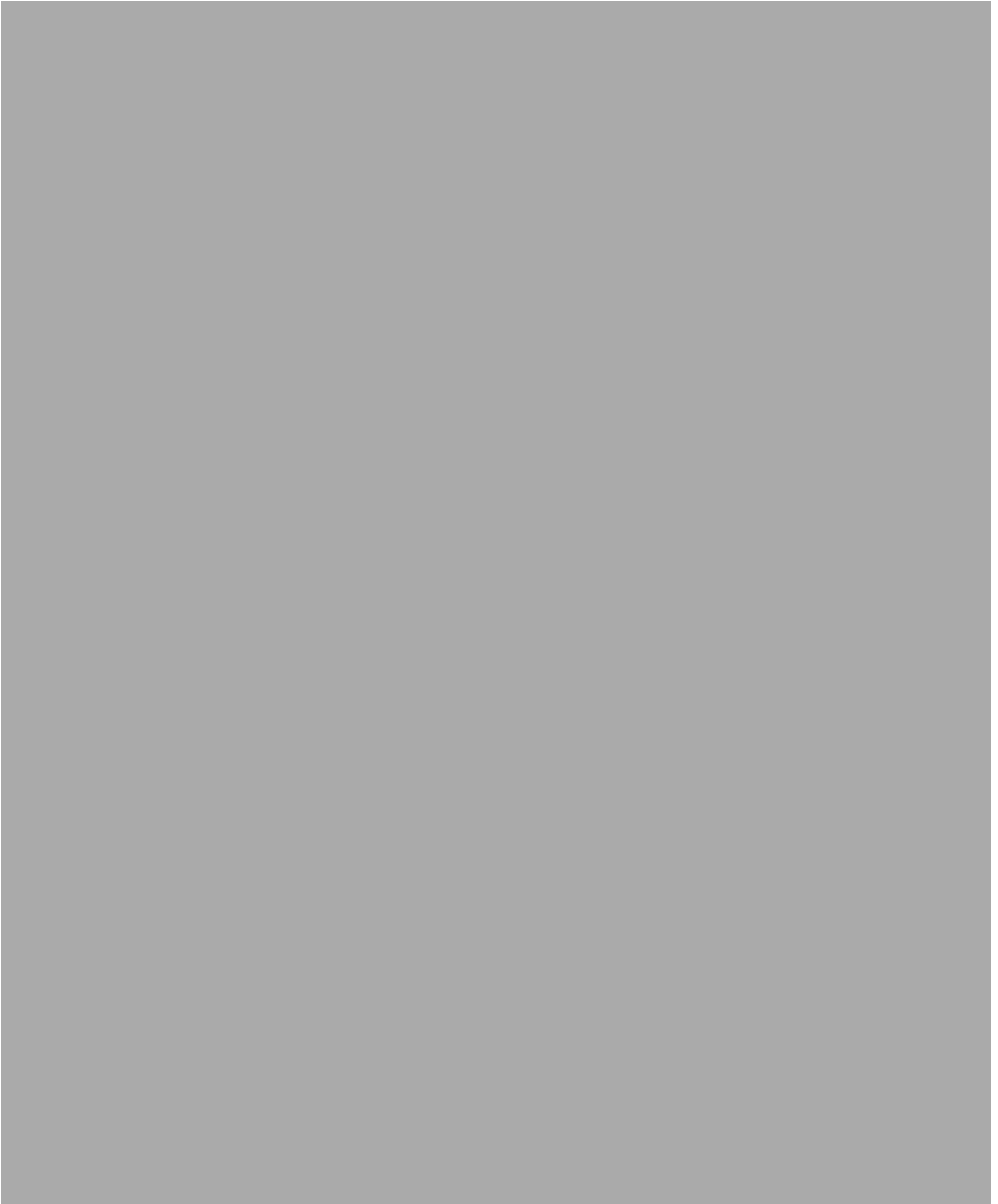
5. Are you a house member or a house leader?  
.....

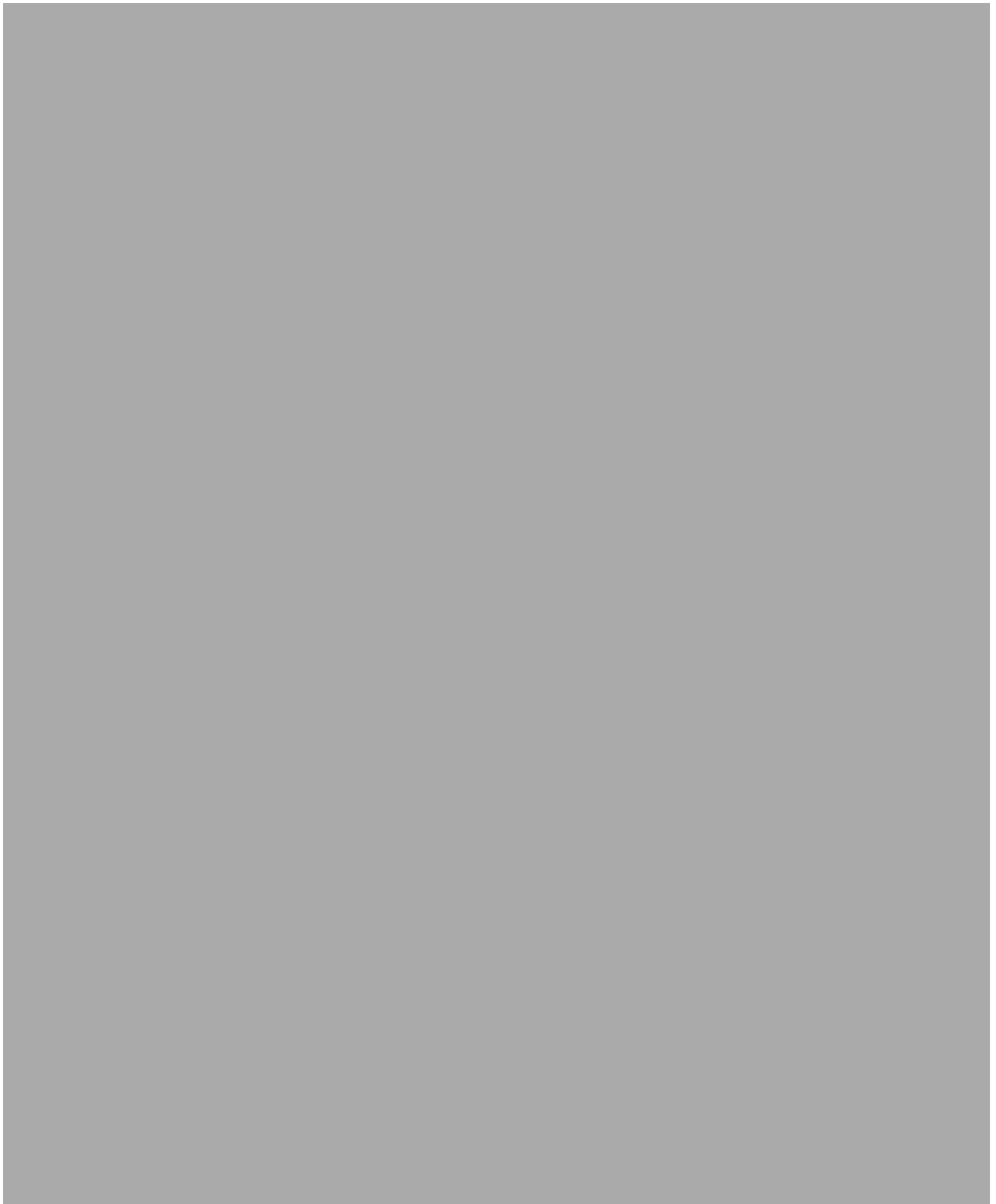
## Appendix L Demographic data record form

age	education	Criminal history (prior arrest, history of violent behaviour	offence	Prison term
20-25	Elementary	First conviction	Offence against narcotics law	2 – less than 4 yrs
26-30	Secondary	Second conviction	Offence against life	4 – less than 6 yrs
31-35	Vocational certificate and high vocational certificate	Third conviction	Offence against social security	6 – less than 8 yrs
36-40	Bachelor degree	Fourth conviction	Offence against property	8 yrs and more
41-45	Higher than bachelor degree	Fifth conviction and more	Sex offence	
46-50			Multiple offences	
Above 50			Others.....	

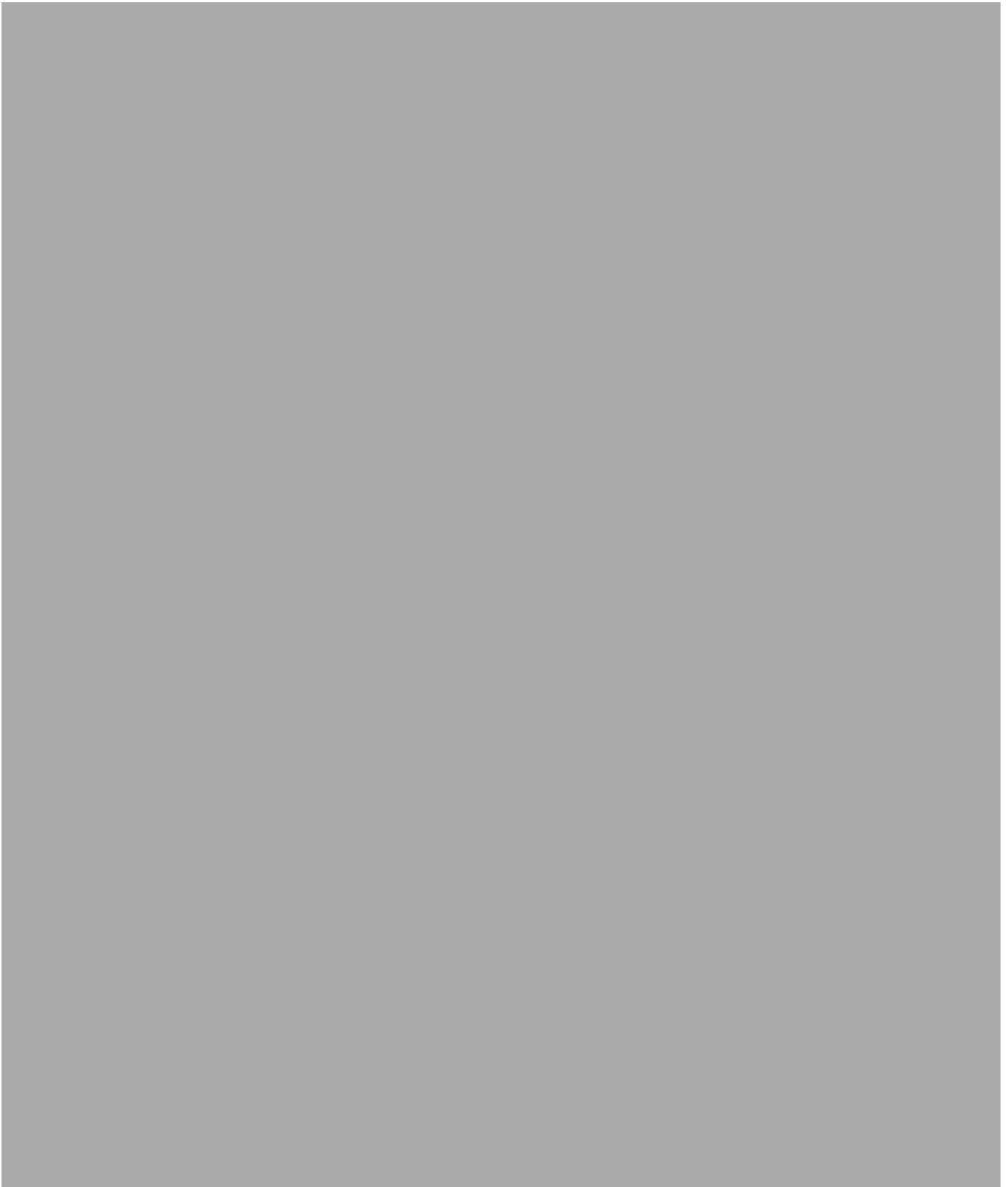
	Yes	No
Thai ethnicity		
Underlying disease .....		
History of mental health problem .....		
History of gang affiliation outside the prison		
Employment		
History of substance abuse		

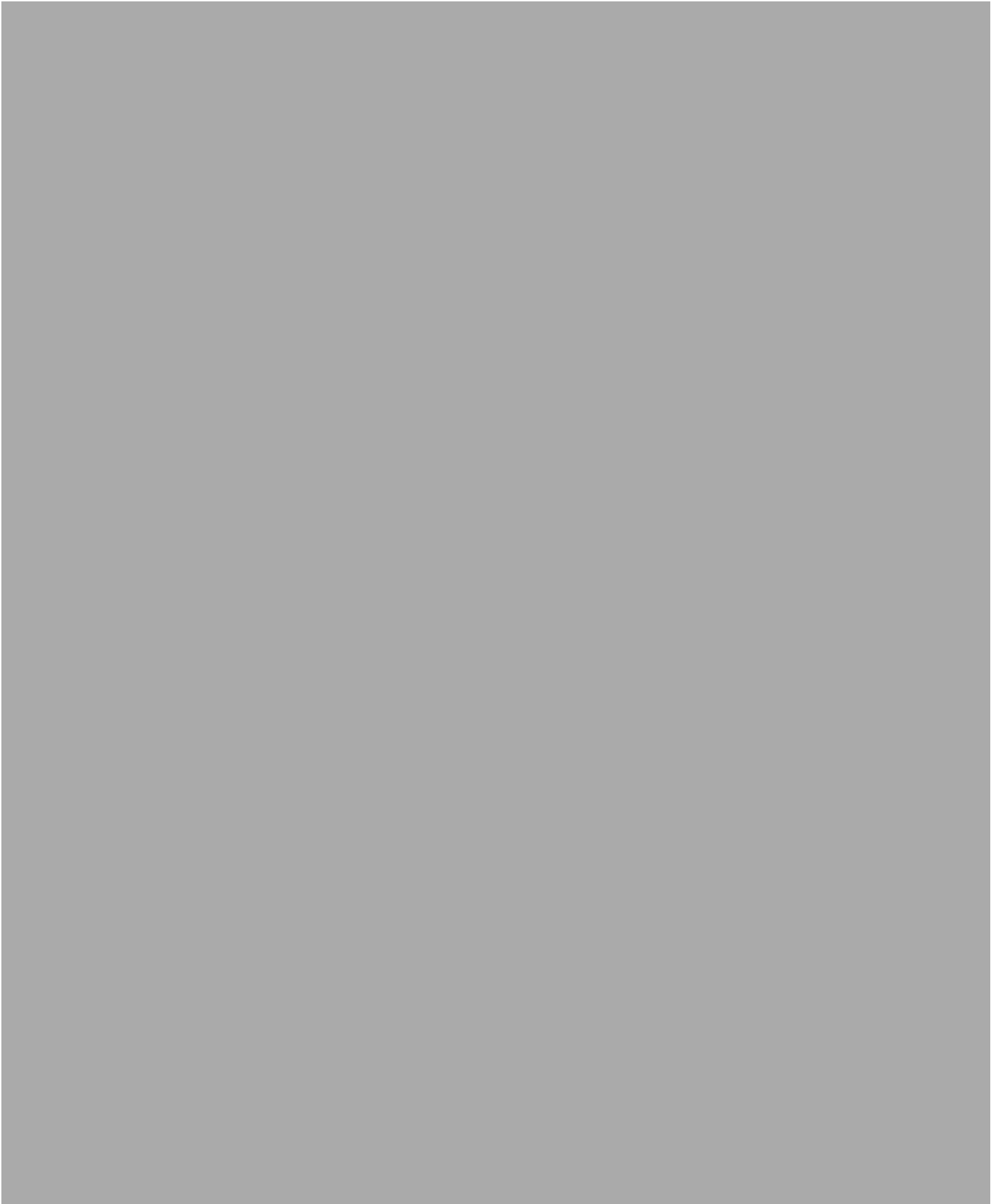
## Appendix M Novaco Anger Scale and Provocation Inventory

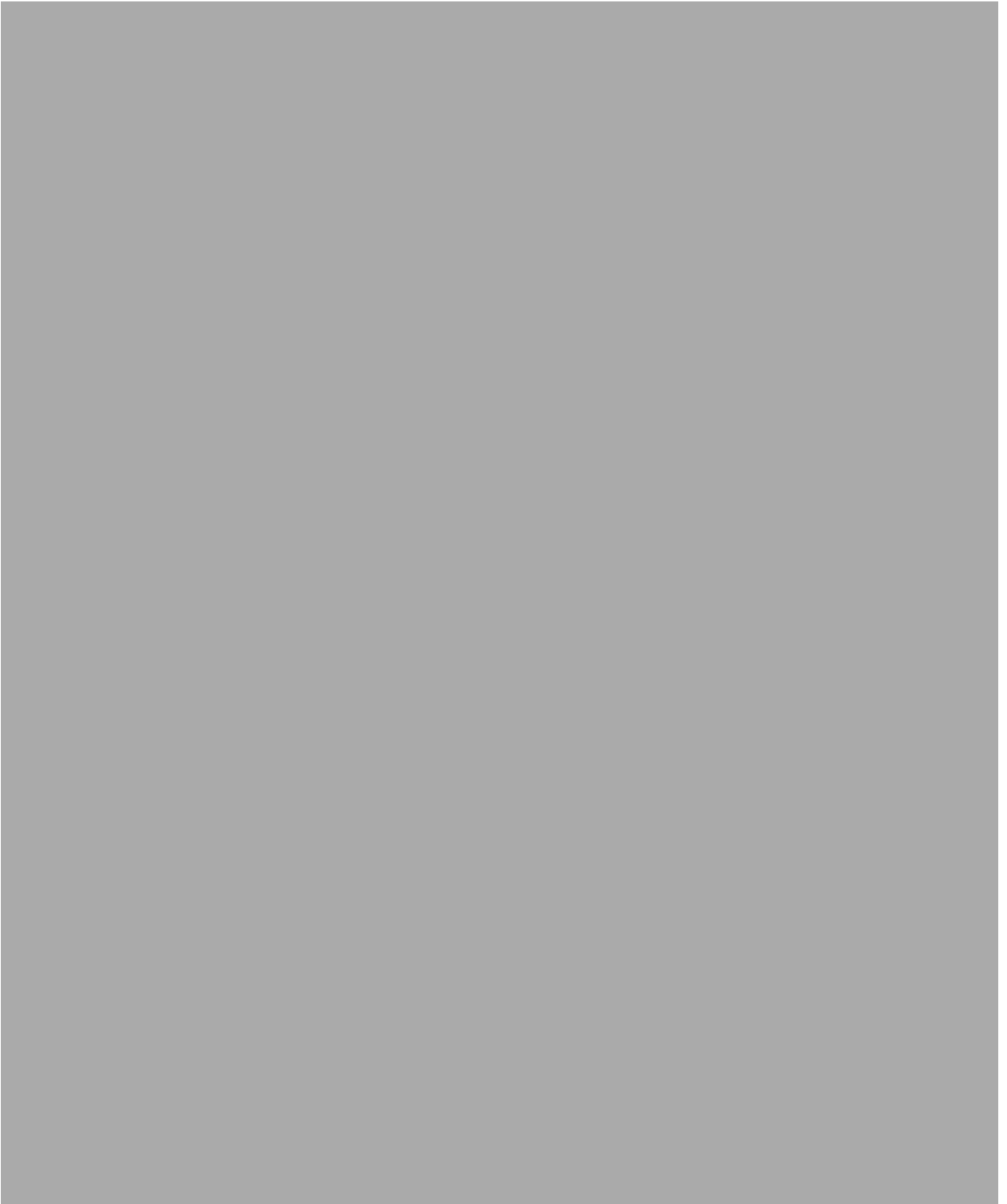


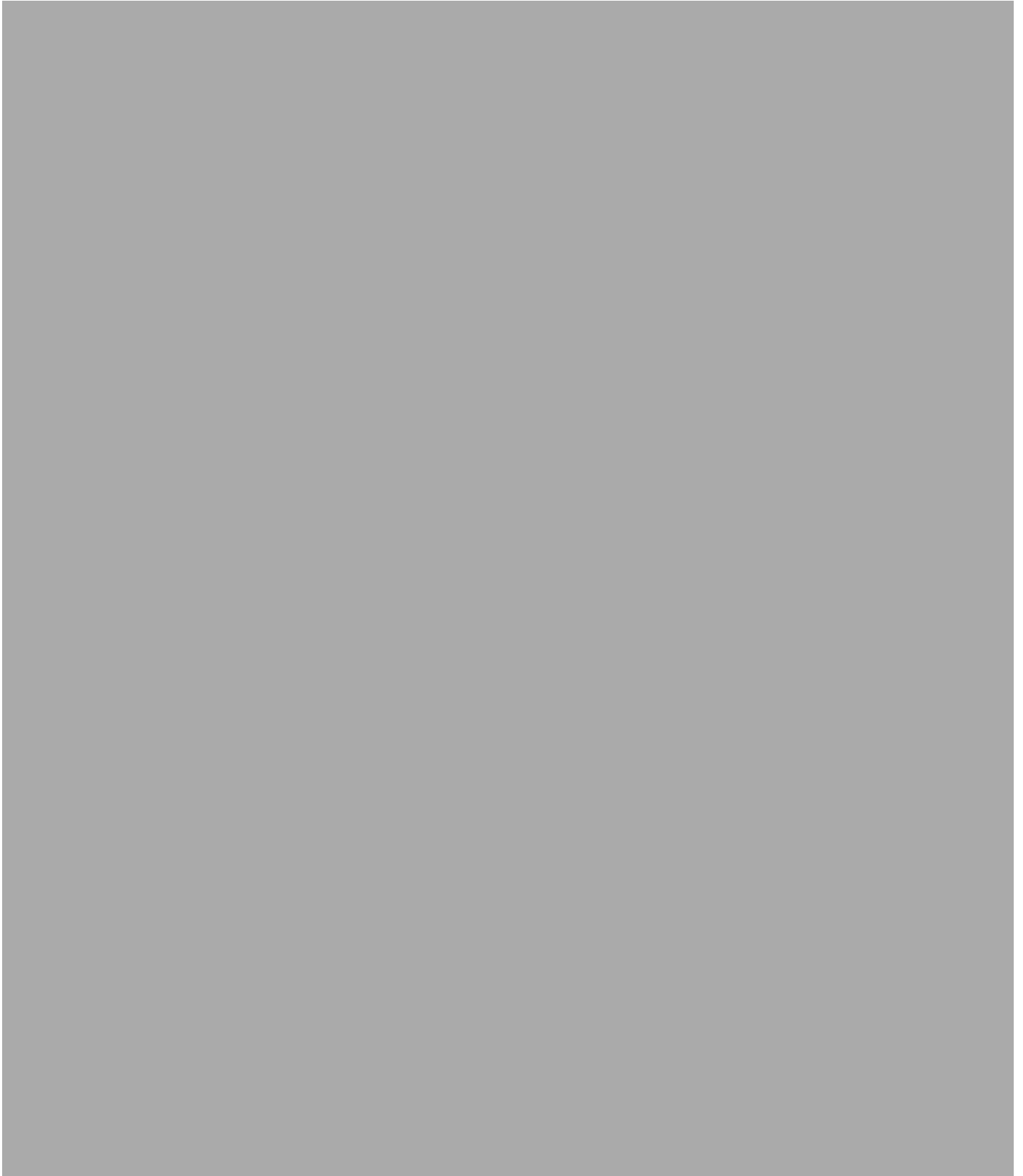














## Appendix N Revised Pro-victim Scale



## Appendix O Interview schedule for SORC analysis

### SORC analysis

1. Response (behaviour)
  - Please tell me about the incident and what you did.
  - How was your feeling during the incident?
2. Stimuli (historical, contextual, immediate)
  - What happened right before the incident?
  - Do you have any conflicts towards victim/others lately or prior to the incident? If yes, please describe.
  - From your opinion, what was/were the trigger(s) of the violent incident? Why?
  - Do you think the environment or prison's condition (such as crowding, heat) provoke/has anything to do with the violence? If yes, please describe how.
  - From your experience, have you ever been involved with/witnessed any similar incident? If yes, please tell me about it. Did that incident affect you then? If yes, how?
3. Organism (normative belief, previous behaviour, background)
  - Please describe your opinion towards "violence". For some situations, do you think we can use violence to solve problems? If yes, please give me some examples.
  - Have you ever witness violence when you were young? If yes, by whom? Please describe.
  - Have you witnessed violence or similar incident in prison, lately? From your experience, whose method would you use when you encounter conflict/problems? Please describe.
  - How was your feeling before the incident? Did you have anything that bothered you? Did you have any physical discomfort prior to the incident?
4. Consequences (short and long term)
  - What happen right after the violent incident? Please describe.
  - How was the reaction from others after the incident?
  - Did you leave the scene right after the incident?
  - Any impact happens to you or what did you get? How does it affect you, in good or bad way? (positive and negative reinforcement)
  - Please describe your feeling about these consequences. What do the consequences of this violent incident tell you?
  - Will these consequences affect your decision in the future?
  - If you have to get involved with similar incident in the future, would you do the same? If yes, why? If no, what changes it?

## Appendix P Information sheet for aggressive prisoners

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

#### Understanding the violence in Thai male prisons

**Why is this study being done?** We are researchers who are trying to understand the characteristics of violence in Thai prison, since there is limited information regarding this topic and violence in prison can lead tremendous lost. Understanding the nature and causes of violence among male prisoners can help prevent such lost and also guide the effective violence prevention scheme that suits the Thai prison settings. This part of the study is linked to the previous part that you have already participated. This is to gain deeper understanding of prison violence.

**Why am I being asked to take part?** We have asked prison officers to work with us over the past few weeks and let us know which prisoners have been involved in aggressive altercations so that we can recruit the correct people to talk to in our research study. Officers have informed us that you have recently been involved in an aggressive altercation and we would like to talk to you in some more detail about this so that we can understand your reasons of actions.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you want to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

By signing the consent form you will be providing your consent to take part in the study. You will be personally interviewed by the researcher. It will take approximately about an hour. This in-depth interview aims to understand your perspectives towards your experience and how you make sense of it, which relate to your current action and decision making. There will be no judging on any of your action. We just would to understand your thoughts. The interviewed will be audio taped, this is only so that the researchers can remember what was said. Recordings will be transcribed by a professional, who is trusted and used before in research projects like this. Once we have analysed the interview, the tape will be destroyed. No one will have access to the audio tape except for the researchers. You will not be asked to tell us any identifiable personal details, like your name and address. The study is anonymous. You can use a made up name during the interview so we can match what you say to a name in case you decide you want us to remove your responses at a later date.

**Will you know who I am?** We will know what your prison number is. This number will not be stored next to any data you give us however. We will assign a unique research code to you, and in a separate file keep a note that this research number corresponds to your prison number. This is so that we can work out which data is yours if you decide you do not want us to use your data up to 2 weeks after interview. Once data analysis is complete we will delete this information so that your responses are anonymous. The Thai Government/prisons will not have access to any of this data and will not use any information in this study against prisoners. Only the researcher own and has access to this data. Prison officers, prisons and other officials do not get copies any of the obtained data. Only final research reports which contain aggregate data will be given to the prisons.



**What are the benefits of taking part?** Understanding the nature and causes of violence in prison helps professionals design a more effective violence prevention scheme that might save you, and others, from future risk by preventing aggression and violence from happening

**Do I have to take part?** You do not have to take part. If you choose not to, this will not affect your rights or benefits available to you in prison, nor there any consequences for you not taking part. If you chose to take part and then for any reason you are unhappy about participating you can withdraw from the study at any time before and during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and at no consequence to you or others. You can do this by letting me know either before, during the study, or up until 31 December 2013. Once you agree to take part or start the interview, if you then decide to stop part way through, you can, and, if you want us to, we will ensure that any information you have provided will not be used in the study.

**What do I do if I want to take part?** If you want to take part you need to let the researcher and the prison officers know. Then, next 24 hours before the interview starts, you will provide your consent to participate by simply attending the interview and providing your written consent before the interview starts.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Yes it will. The researcher will only know your name and prisoner number in order to identify your responses should you wish to withdraw from the study. This personal information will not be stored next to any information you give us during the interviews. Each participant will be assigned a random research number so that information you give us can be stored anonymously – that is no one will know who you are. If you do disclose any identifiable information by accident (like names of family members or friends, locations of various incidents) in the interview it will be removed from the study records.

The only time when someone will need to know who you are is if you disclose specific details about any criminal offences that you have been involved in, both inside and outside the prison, (that you have not been previously convicted of), or intend to carry out in the future. Examples of specific details would be names of offenders and dates on which offences have taken place. If you do this, the researcher will report this information to the prison officers who are in charge of the wing that the prisoner resides. However, no other information that you provide in the the interview, will be disclosed. There is no need for you to disclose any information like this to the researcher. All questionnaire and transcripts of the interview will be kept in a locked cabinet in the psychology department at University of Birmingham until they are destroyed.

The researcher will translate all your responses to questionnaires and tape recorded interviews into English and make sure responses are anonymous before handing to a second translator for confirmation that the researcher's translation is accurate. The translator is a professional translator who will uphold rules of confidentiality, and will sign a disclaimer to this fact prior to her involvement in the study – she will never know who you are.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?** Sometimes talking about violence brings up sensitive issues and the researcher will make every effort to put you at ease during the interview. You do not have to disclose personally distressing information in the interview. However, if the interview does bring up to much stress for you, you can leave the interview at any

time. **If you are upset after the interview, you can either talk to the researcher or seek for psychological support from the health care wing.**

**What do I do if I want to withdraw from the study?** For any reason, if you are unhappy to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time before or during the interview and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and no consequences to you and others. You can do this by either tell the researcher directly during the interview or informing one of the prison officers who will relay this message to the researcher before 31 December 2013.

**What happens when the research stops?** When the study is finished a report will be provided to [REDACTED] Remand Prison where this study took place and you will be told about this by the prison officers. Your name or personal details will never appear in the report.

**Who is organising the research?** This study is organised by The University of Birmingham, UK and the Royal Thai Government

**Thank you for your time**

Researcher Contact Details

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address: [REDACTED]

Or

School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Appendix Q Information sheet for non-aggressive prisoners

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDY

#### Understanding the violence in Thai male prisons

**Why is this study being done?** We are researchers who are trying to understand the characteristics of violence in Thai prison, since there is limited information regarding this topic and violence in prison can lead tremendous lost. Understanding the nature and causes of violence among male prisoners can help prevent such lost and also guide the effective violence prevention scheme that suits the Thai prison settings. This part of the study is linked to the previous part that you have already participated. This is to gain deeper understanding of prison violence.

**Why am I being asked to take part?** We have asked prison officers to work with us over the past few weeks and let us know which prisoners have been involved in aggressive altercations so that we can recruit the correct people to talk to in our research study. Officers have informed us that YOU HAVE NOT recently been involved in an aggressive altercation. We would like to talk to you in some more detail about this so that we can understand why you have not been aggressive. We would like to understand what you think and how you react to different circumstances. This could be useful for preventing future violence in prison and also for your own safety. However, in this part of the study, you are picked up at random from the larger group of participants. We are not specifically targeting you in particular.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you want to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

By signing the consent form you will be providing your consent to take part in the study. You will be asked to be personally interviewed by the researcher. It will take approximately about an hour. This in-depth interview aims to understand your perspectives towards your experience and how you make sense of it, which relate to your current action and decision making. We need to see what makes the difference between violent and non-violent prisoners. There will be no judging on any of your action. We just would to understand your thoughts. The interviewed will be audio taped, this is only so that the researchers can remember what was said. Recordings will be transcribed by a professional, who is trusted and used before in research projects like this. Once we have analysed the interview, the tape will be destroyed. No one will have access to the audio tape except for the researchers. You will not be asked to tell us any identifiable personal details, like your name and address. The study is anonymous. You can use a made up name during the interview so we can match what you say to a name in case you decide you want us to remove your responses at a later date.

**Will you know who I am?** We will know what your prison number is. This number will not be stored next to any data you give us however. We will assign a unique research code to you, and in a separate file keep a note that this research number corresponds to your prison number. This is so that we can work out which data is yours and match it across the different parts of this research study. Once data analysis is complete we will delete this information so that your responses are anonymous. The Thai Government/prisons will not have access to any of this data

and will not use any information in this study against prisoners. Only the researchers own and have access to this data. Prison officers, prisons and other officials do not get copies any of the obtained data. Only final research reports which contain aggregate data will be given to the prisons.

**What are the benefits of taking part?** Understanding the nature and causes of violence in prison helps professionals design a more effective violence prevention scheme that might save you, and others, from future risk by preventing aggression and violence from happening.

**Do I have to take part?** You do not have to take part. If you choose not to, this will not affect your rights or benefits available to you in prison, nor there any consequences for you not taking part. If you chose to take part and then for any reason you are unhappy about participating you can withdraw from the study at any time before and during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and at no consequence to you or others. You can do this by letting me know either before, during the study, or up until 31 December 2013. Once you agree to take part or start the interview, if you then decide to stop part way through, you can, and, if you want us to, we will ensure that any information you have provided will not be used in the study.

**What do I do if I want to take part?** If you want to take part you need to let the researcher and the prison officers know. Then, next 24 hours before the interview starts, you will provide your consent to participate by simply attending the interview.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Yes it will. The researcher will only know your name and prisoner number in order to identify your responses should you wish to withdraw from the study. This personal information will not be stored next to any information you give us during the interviews. Each participant will be assigned a random research number so that information you give us can be stored anonymously – that is no one will know who you are. If you do disclose any identifiable information by accident (like names of family members or friends, locations of various incidents) in the interview it will be removed from the study records.

The only time when someone will need to know who you are is if you disclose specific details about any criminal offences that you have been involved in, both inside and outside the prison, (that you have not been previously convicted of), or intend to carry out in the future. Examples of specific details would be names of offenders and dates on which offences have taken place. If you do this, the researcher will report this information to the prison officers who are in charge of the wing that the prisoner resides. However, no other information that you provide in the the interview, will be disclosed. There is no need for you to disclose any information like this to the researcher. All questionnaire and transcripts of the interview will be kept in a locked cabinet in the psychology department at University of Birmingham until they are destroyed.

The researcher will translate all your responses to questionnaires and tape recorded interviews into English and make sure responses are anonymous before handing to a second translator for confirmation that the researcher's translation is accurate. The translator is a professional

translator who will uphold rules of confidentiality, and will sign a disclaimer to this fact prior to her involvement in the study – she will never know who you are.

**What are the possible disadvantages or risks of taking part?** Sometimes talking about violence brings up sensitive issues and the researcher will make every effort to put you at ease during the interview. You do not have to disclose personally distressing information in the interview. However, if the interview does bring up too much stress for you, you can leave the interview at any time. **If you are upset after the interview, you can either talk to the researcher or seek for psychological support from the health care wing.**

**What if I would like to leave the study?** For any reason, if you are unhappy to participate, you can withdraw from the study at anytime before or during it and ask for your data to be destroyed without explaining your decision and no consequences to you and others. You can do this by either telling the researcher directly during the interview or informing one of the prison officers who will relay this message to the researcher before 31 December 2013.

**What happens when the research stops?** When the study is finished a report will be provided to [REDACTED] Remand Prison where this study took place and you will be told about this by the prison officers. Your name or personal details will never appear in the report.

**Who is organising the research?** This study is organised by The University of Birmingham, UK and the Royal Thai Government.

### **Thank you for your time**

#### **Researcher Contact Details**

Kamonchanok Montasevee

Address:

[REDACTED]

Or

School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,  
Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Appendix R Consent form

**Consent Form****Prisoner Number (researcher use only)** .....

Please feel free to ask any questions about taking part in the study. By attending the interview you are consenting to participate in this study and that you understand and agree to the following:

- I understand that I am being asked to participate in a research project being carried out by researchers at the University of Birmingham.
- I have been informed both verbally and in writing about the nature and purpose of the study, that the interview will be audio recorded and I have had the opportunity to discuss this in person with the researcher.
- I understand that I do not have to take part in this study and, if for any reason I am unhappy about participating, I can withdraw from the study at any time before, during the interview or until 31 December 2013 and ask for my data to be destroyed without explaining my decision and at no consequence to me or others.
- I understand that taking part in this study (or withdrawing from the study) will not affect my rights or any benefits that I get from the prison.
- My prison number or name will not appear next to any information that I provide to the researcher. That is, my information will be anonymous. I will be assigned a random research number to identify my responses by in case I chose to withdraw my information at a later stage. As such the information I provide will be stored anonymously and my name will never appear in any reports or be passed to Thai officials.
- If I disclose specific details about any criminal offences that I have been involved in but not convicted of (both inside and outside the prison) or intend to carry out in the future the researcher will report this information to the prison officers in charge of your wing. There is no need for me to disclose any information like this to the researcher.

By signing below, I understand that I am consenting to participate in this study conducted in association with the University of Birmingham.

Sign.....date.....

Researcher.....(Witness)

**Researcher Contact Details**

KamonchanokMontasevee

Address:

Or

School of Psychology,  
University of Birmingham,

Birmingham, UK  
B15 2TT



## Appendix S Interview schedule for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

### 1. Exploring the context (for violent and non-violent prisoners)

Tell me a bit about this prison

- What is it like to live here?
- What goes on in here?
- If I'm a new prisoner here, what sorts of things would I notice?
- Is there any influential person in here? If so, who is he/she?
- What do people do around here?

### 2. Exploring violent incidence and its aetiology

- For non-violent prisoner;
  1. Have you ever witnessed or taken part in any type of violence in prison? If yes, how often?
  2. What type of violence was it? (Bullying, sexual bullying, damage the properties, riot, escape/attempt to escape or other). How many people were involved? Any lost or injuries? Please describe.
  3. Please give me reasons why you did not join such violence.
  4. What makes the different between you and some violent prisoners?
  4. If you are in the same situation with those violent prisoners (the researcher gives sample situation but does not mention the name of violent prisoners) what would you decide?
- For violent prisoner;
  1. How often do you witness or take part in any type of violence in prison?
  2. What type of violence was it? (Bullying, sexual bullying, damage the properties, riot, escape/attempt to escape or other).
  3. Considering your latest incidence, how many people were involved? Any lost or injuries? Please describe.
  4. What is it that you think triggers violence? Does it come from you or does it come from someone/something, or both?
    - If you think it came from you, what is it? (poor anger management, bad temper, etc) If other people were in the same situation, do you think they would react similarly to you? If not, please state how.
    - If you think it came from someone/something else, what is it? Does the prison environment (such as surroundings, crowding, heat) relate to the violence? If yes, how did it relate? If the conflict happens somewhere else would there still be violence?
  5. Do you think there are other factors that uphold the violence such as

### 3. Exploring personal meaning

- Form your opinion, who is/are responsible for this incident? (victim, circumstances,



self, co-accused, family background, prison officers, etc)

- What do your families and friends know about the violence in prison? What do they think about it?
- What would you think if your love ones (kids, family member) involved in such violence?
- How would your life be different if you are involved with any violence anymore?
- Look back to the incidence, if you could have a wish to change, would you change what happened or would you choose to do anything else?