

Understanding the links between perceived prison conditions and prison staff

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Abstract

In the Dutch prison system, motivational treatment is seen as one of the key contributors to a dignified and humane prison climate, stimulating inmates to assume personal responsibility and to change their lives. Staff are seen as the crucial factor to attaining this goal. The assumption is that the staff's work situation has an impact on how inmates are treated. How inmates are treated in turn influences how they perceive prison conditions. In this study, we will examine the correlations between work situation, treatment styles and perceived prison conditions by means of a multilevel linear regression. The results show that a good work situation for prison staff is a precondition for practicing an active approach to inmates. In addition, inmates are more satisfied with the prison conditions if the various treatment styles are thoroughly applied. A balance between providing support and structure for inmates appears to be very important. Motivational treatment proves to be significantly correlated to the inmates' satisfaction regarding prison conditions.