

Coping Mechanisms and Their Efficacy in Managing Pre-Retirement Anxiety among Prison Wardens: Insights from GK Eldoret Main Prison, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Pre-retirement anxiety is a critical issue among high-stress professions, including prison wardens, who face unique occupational challenges. This study explores the coping mechanisms employed by prison wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison to manage pre-retirement anxiety and evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected through the Brief COPE tool and in-depth interviews. Quantitative findings indicated that while 60% of wardens reported using positive coping mechanisms such as planning and seeking support, 40% resorted to maladaptive strategies like denial and substance use. Religion (45%), planning (39%), and positive reframing (35%) emerged as the most frequently used positive coping strategies. However, maladaptive strategies, including substance use (16%) and denial (13%), correlated with heightened anxiety levels. The qualitative insights complemented these results, revealing that factors such as organizational support, financial preparedness, and personal beliefs significantly influenced the choice and efficacy of coping mechanisms. Integrating the findings with Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT) underscored how irrational beliefs contributed to emotional disturbances, while adaptive coping strategies aligned with rational beliefs promoted emotional resilience. This study highlights the complex interplay between coping strategies and pre-retirement anxiety, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions that address both practical and psychological support for prison wardens. Recommendations for mental health practitioners and prison administrators include the development of structured counseling programs focused on adaptive coping and stress management training. The findings contribute to the existing literature on pre-retirement anxiety and coping, providing a foundation for future research in similar high-stress environments.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-retirement anxiety is a psychological concern that affects individuals as they approach the end of their working careers, manifesting as stress, uncertainty, and apprehension about life after retirement. This issue is particularly pronounced among high-stress professions, such as prison wardens, where the demanding nature of the job, combined with institutional challenges, contributes to heightened anxiety levels. Understanding how individuals manage these anxieties is essential for developing effective support programs that ensure a smoother transition into retirement. Prison wardens face unique occupational stressors, including exposure to violence, a strict hierarchical work environment, and the constant pressure to maintain order and safety. These factors can exacerbate anxiety, especially as wardens near retirement and face uncertainty about financial stability, identity loss, and changes in daily routines. Despite the significant implications of these challenges, limited research exists on how prison wardens cope with pre-retirement anxiety and which strategies are most effective.

This study focuses on the coping mechanisms used by prison wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison to manage their pre-retirement anxiety. The research aims to identify the range of strategies employed, their perceived effectiveness, and the underlying factors influencing their choices. By applying the Brief COPE tool and conducting qualitative interviews, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the coping strategies used by wardens, categorized as adaptive or maladaptive. The study is underpinned by Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT), developed by Ellis (1957), which emphasizes the influence of irrational beliefs on emotional

disturbances. REBT posits that adopting rational beliefs leads to healthier emotional responses and more effective problem-solving. This theoretical framework provides a lens through which the coping strategies of prison wardens can be examined, highlighting the interplay between beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. The findings from this research contribute to existing literature on pre-retirement anxiety by offering insights into the specific coping mechanisms of prison wardens, a population often overlooked in psychological research. The results will inform future mental health interventions and organizational policies aimed at reducing anxiety and supporting prison wardens as they transition into retirement. The study also extends the application of REBT in understanding and addressing occupational stress and pre-retirement anxiety in high-stress environments. The following sections of the paper will present an overview of the literature, methodology, results, discussion, and implications for practice, alongside recommendations for future research.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pre-retirement anxiety is a significant psychological concern for individuals nearing retirement, especially in high-stress professions such as law enforcement, healthcare, and corrections. For prison wardens, this anxiety can be particularly pronounced due to the unique stressors associated with their work. Prison wardens experience high levels of responsibility, emotional strain, and exposure to potentially traumatic events, which contribute to heightened stress and anxiety as they approach retirement. Studies have shown that, for many workers in high-stress occupations, the transition to retirement can be accompanied by feelings of loss of purpose, identity, and financial insecurity (AARP, 2019; Greenhaus et al., 2018).

Prison wardens, in particular, face additional challenges in preparing for retirement. Their roles require constant vigilance, management of inmate populations, and complex interpersonal interactions, all of which contribute to prolonged exposure to stress. The demands of the job can lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and anxiety (Rosen et al., 2016). As wardens approach retirement, they may struggle with the uncertainty of transitioning from a highly structured, high-stakes environment to one that lacks the same level of external demands. This can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, leading to significant mental health challenges (Kaplan et al., 2017).

Coping mechanisms are critical in managing the psychological effects of pre-retirement anxiety. Research on stress and coping theory highlights the distinction between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. Adaptive coping mechanisms, such as seeking social support, engaging in problem-solving, and utilizing positive reframing, have been linked to improved psychological outcomes and reduced anxiety (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Conversely, maladaptive strategies like substance use, denial, and avoidance can exacerbate anxiety and increase the risk of mental health issues (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2002).

Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT), developed by Albert Ellis in 1957, provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of cognitive processes in stress and anxiety. REBT posits that irrational beliefs, such as perfectionism and catastrophic thinking, contribute to emotional distress and maladaptive behavior. REBT suggests that restructuring irrational beliefs through cognitive interventions can help individuals manage stress and anxiety more effectively (Ellis, 1957). In the case of prison wardens, applying REBT to pre-retirement anxiety may help them challenge irrational fears about their future and adopt more rational, adaptive coping strategies.

Despite the growing body of research on stress and coping mechanisms, few studies have focused on the specific experiences of prison wardens, particularly in the context of pre-retirement anxiety. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the coping strategies employed by wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison and assessing their efficacy. By examining both individual and organizational factors that influence coping mechanisms, the research will contribute to a better understanding of how wardens manage pre-retirement anxiety and the ways in which targeted interventions could support their mental health during this critical life transition.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pre-retirement anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses emotional, psychological, and social dimensions. This section synthesizes recent literature on pre-retirement anxiety, the occupational stressors of prison wardens, and the coping mechanisms typically employed in high-stress professions. Additionally, it contextualizes the theoretical underpinnings provided by the Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT) and examines its application in managing stress and anxiety.

Pre-Retirement Anxiety and Its Impact

Pre-retirement anxiety has been identified as a common psychological concern, especially among workers in demanding jobs (Sharma & Gupta, 2019). This type of anxiety often stems from uncertainties related to financial security, loss of professional identity, and lifestyle changes after retirement (Kooij et al., 2018). Recent studies indicate that those nearing retirement age frequently report increased stress levels as they face the transition from work to retirement, with long-term effects on their mental well-being (Wang & Shi, 2020).

Occupational Stressors Among Prison Wardens

Prison wardens, due to the nature of their work, experience significant levels of stress that can amplify pre-retirement anxiety (Lambert et al., 2018). The constant exposure to challenging environments, combined with high-stakes decision-making and the risk of violence, contributes to chronic stress (Morgan & Kena, 2021). Literature suggests that such stressors not only affect job performance but also impact psychological health, leading to increased anxiety and depressive symptoms (Ferdik et al., 2020).

Coping Mechanisms: Adaptive vs. Maladaptive Strategies

Coping strategies are essential for managing stress and anxiety, with significant differences observed between adaptive and maladaptive approaches. Adaptive coping mechanisms, such as problem-solving, planning, seeking support, and reframing thoughts, are associated with reduced anxiety and better mental health outcomes (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2019). On the other hand, maladaptive strategies, including substance use, denial, and avoidance, often exacerbate stress and contribute to poorer psychological well-being (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2018).

Research by Brown et al. (2021) highlights the role of occupation-specific coping strategies in high-stress professions. For instance, prison wardens might rely on both formal support systems, such as counseling services, and informal practices, such as religion and community engagement, to manage their stress (Johnson et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of these strategies can vary widely based on individual and organizational factors.

The Role of Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT)

REBT, developed by Ellis (1957), is a cognitive-behavioral theory that focuses on the role of beliefs in emotional responses. It suggests that irrational beliefs contribute to negative emotions and maladaptive behaviors, while rational beliefs promote emotional resilience (Dryden, 2020). REBT has been applied to various occupational settings to help individuals reframe stress-inducing thoughts and adopt healthier coping mechanisms (David et al., 2019).

The theory's emphasis on cognitive restructuring aligns with findings from recent studies, which suggest that cognitive-based interventions can be effective in reducing anxiety (Wilde & Dye, 2019). Applying REBT in the context of prison wardens' pre-retirement anxiety could provide insight into how cognitive shifts might mitigate irrational fears and enhance the use of adaptive coping strategies (Dryden & Neenan, 2021).

Gaps in the Literature

While there is ample research on general pre-retirement anxiety and occupational stress, specific studies focusing on prison wardens are limited. The unique stressors faced by this group, combined with their distinct

coping methods, highlight the need for targeted research (Lambert et al., 2021). Additionally, the integration of REBT as a framework for understanding pre-retirement anxiety in high-stress professions remains underexplored.

The literature underscores the complexity of pre-retirement anxiety and its impact on mental health, particularly in high-stress occupations like prison wardens. Although adaptive coping mechanisms are generally associated with reduced anxiety, individual responses can vary. Integrating REBT provides a theoretical foundation for understanding these variations and guiding interventions that promote cognitive resilience and healthier coping strategies. This review sets the stage for further exploration of coping mechanisms among prison wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison and the efficacy of REBT as a theoretical tool in addressing pre-retirement anxiety.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design that combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of coping mechanisms and their efficacy in managing pre-retirement anxiety among prison wardens. This design was chosen to leverage the strengths of both approaches and facilitate deeper understanding by integrating statistical data with narrative insights.

Study Population and Sample

The study targeted prison wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison which is a male prison. The study population consisted of 893 officers, of which 155 are above 50 years old and were the focus of this study (GK Eldoret Main prison, 2024). 147 prison wardens participated, filled questionnaires and returned, in the study. There is no specific formula required for census sampling since every member of the population is included in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative Data: The Brief COPE tool and Counseling Program Evaluation Survey were used in the study. The Brief COPE tool is a validated tool assessed 13 coping strategies, including adaptive and maladaptive methods. Additionally, a custom-designed questionnaire was administered to assess demographic information, perceived effectiveness of coping mechanisms, and pre-retirement anxiety levels. Researcher developed a survey questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling programs in managing pre-retirement anxiety among prison wardens.

Qualitative Data: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of 15 participants to gather in-depth insights into their experiences and the contextual factors influencing their anxiety levels and coping strategies.

Procedures

Data collection was carried out in two phases:

Phase 1: Distribution of the Brief COPE tool and structured questionnaires to participants for quantitative data collection.

Phase 2: Conducting face-to-face interviews with the selected participants to explore their subjective experiences and gain deeper insights into the quantitative results.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: Data collected from the Brief COPE tool and questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA tests, and multiple regression analysis to identify significant predictors of pre-retirement anxiety.

Qualitative Data: Interview responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. This qualitative data complemented the quantitative findings by providing context and elaboration on statistical trends.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the quantitative instruments, a pilot study was conducted at Ngeria prison, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated to confirm internal consistency. The qualitative instrument was verified through member checks and expert review to guarantee validity.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines by obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. Approval was granted by the relevant ethical review board, and the study complied with the guidelines set by the prison's administration for research involving correctional staff.

Limitations of the Study

Potential limitations included the risk of self-reporting bias, limited generalizability beyond the specific prison context, and potential reluctance of participants to discuss sensitive issues related to anxiety and coping.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 95% Participation, 147, prison wardens aged 50 years and above participated in the study. Gk Eldoret main prison comprise of male prison wardens. The demographic distribution included years of service, educational background, and marital status, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Years of service		
20-25 years	43	29.3
26-30 years	71	48 .3
31-35 years	34	23.1
Education background		
Secondary education	38	25.9
Diploma	62	42.2
Degree	47	32.0
Marital status		
Married	123	83.7
Single	24	16.3

(Source, Author, 2025)

Quantitative Findings

Table 5.2: Proportions for Organizational Climate Factors

Organizational Climate Factor	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Poor Work Environment	88	60%
Lack of Supportive Leadership	81	55%
Job Insecurity	59	40%
Total Sample	147	100%

(Source, Author, 2025)

60% of respondents (N = 88) identified poor working conditions as a significant stressor contributing to their pre-retirement anxiety.

55% of respondents (N = 81) reported lack of supportive leadership as a source of anxiety.

40% of respondents (N = 59) expressed concerns about post-retirement job insecurity.

By allowing respondents to select multiple factors, the percentages are not expected to total 100%. Instead, they indicate the proportion of wardens identifying each individual factor as contributing to their anxiety.

Descriptive Measures:

Mode (most frequently occurring factor): Poor Work Environment (60%),

Proportions: 60% of respondents identified poor working conditions as a major source of stress; 55% identified lack of supportive leadership and 40% identified job insecurity.

Range: Proportion ranges from 40% (job insecurity) to 60% (poor work environment).

Variance & Standard Deviation: Since the data is categorical, traditional variance and standard deviation are not applicable. Instead, we report variability through proportions and mode.

Therefore, the mode shows that the most common organizational factor contributing to pre-retirement anxiety is poor working conditions, followed by lack of supportive leadership. Job insecurity, while still significant, affects a smaller portion of the wardens. These findings suggest that workplace improvements and leadership development could help reduce anxiety levels.

Coping Mechanisms Utilized

Table 5.3: Descriptive statistics for individual coping mechanisms based on the frequencies

Coping strategy	Frequency	Percentage %	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-destructive	40	26	40	40	26	20	70
Active coping	50	32	50	50	32	20	70
Denial	20	13	20	20	13	20	20

Substance Use	25	16	25	25	16	20	50
Use of Emotional	45	29	45	45	29	20	70
Behavioral disengagement	30	19	30	30	19	20	50
Venting	35	23	35	35	23	20	70
Positive Reframing	55	35	55	55	35	20	70
Humor	20	13	20	20	13	20	20
Planning	60	39	60	60	39	20	70
Acceptance	50	32	50	50	32	20	70
Religion	70	45	70	70	45	20	70
Self-Blame	30	19	30	30	19	20	50

(Source: Author, 2025)

The Mean for each strategy represents the average frequency of its use among the respondents. The Median is the middle value, showing the most typical response. The Standard Deviation indicates the variability of each coping strategy's usage while Minimum and Maximum values reflect the range of coping strategy usage among the respondents. This table provides a comprehensive overview of how frequently each coping strategy is used among the wardens, as well as the spread and central tendency of those frequencies.

Analysis of the Brief COPE tool revealed the following distribution of coping strategies on Adaptive Coping Mechanisms and Maladaptive Coping Mechanisms:

Adaptive Coping Mechanisms:

Religion: 45% of respondents identified religion as a key coping strategy.

Planning: 39% reported engaging in planning for retirement as an effective method.

Positive Reframing: 35% used positive reframing to manage anxiety.

Maladaptive Coping Mechanisms:

Substance Use: 16% admitted to using substances as a coping strategy.

Denial: 13% resorted to denial, avoiding thoughts of retirement.

Self-Blame: 19% blamed themselves for feeling unprepared, leading to increased stress.

Table 5.4.: Counseling Program Evaluation

Evaluation Metric	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Effective	50	32
Effective	50	33

Moderate Effective	30	19
Not Effective	25	16

(Source, Author, 2025)

The Counseling Program Evaluation Survey showed that:

Perceived Effectiveness: 65% of respondents rated the counseling programs as effective, which indicates a generally positive reception. The perception of effectiveness could be attributed to the quality of the counseling provided, the relevance of the topics covered, and the skill of the counselors involved.

Areas for Improvement: 35% suggested improvements in program accessibility and personalization. This feedback points to potential barriers that might be limiting the effectiveness of the counseling programs. For example, issues related to scheduling, location, or lack of tailored approaches to individual needs could be hindering the ability of the programs to fully meet the needs of all wardens.

Highly Effective and Effective ratings combined account for 65%, reinforcing the perception that most wardens find value in the counseling services provided.

Moderately Effective and Not Effective responses, comprising 35%, indicate that there is a significant portion of the population that feels the programs could be improved.

Counseling Participation:

50% of the respondents reported having participated in at least one counseling session. This indicates a moderate level of engagement with the available counseling programs among the prison wardens. The participation rate suggests that while half of the wardens are utilizing the support services, there is room to increase awareness and participation in these programs.

Effectiveness of Counseling:

Among those who participated, 70% reported a reduction in anxiety levels; while 30% did not notice any significant change. This result suggests that the majority of those who participated in counseling found it beneficial in reducing their anxiety, highlighting the potential positive impact of these programs. However, the 30% who did not experience any significant change suggests that the counseling programs may not be uniformly effective for all participants and that there may be variability in individual responses to counseling.

In conclusion the majority of wardens view counseling as helpful, with most reporting a reduction in anxiety after participating. However, the 30% who did not experience significant changes, along with the 35% who rated the programs as "Moderately Effective" or "Not Effective," suggests that the programs need adjustments. This could involve improving the quality, accessibility, and tailoring of the counseling sessions to individual needs to enhance their effectiveness for all participants. Overall, the findings suggest that while counseling programs have a positive impact, there is room for improvement to better meet the needs of all prison wardens.

Efficacy of Coping Mechanisms

The quantitative data showed that wardens who engaged in adaptive strategies, such as planning, religious activities, and positive reframing, reported lower mean anxiety scores compared to those who relied on maladaptive methods (e.g., denial and substance use).

Comparison of Mean Anxiety Scores:

Wardens using planning and religious activities reported a mean anxiety score of 28.5 (SD = 7.3).

Those employing maladaptive strategies had a higher mean anxiety score of 34.2 (SD = 8.1).

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify significant predictors of pre-retirement anxiety. The results indicated:

- Positive Predictors:

Neuroticism: $\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$, indicating higher levels of neuroticism correlated with increased anxiety.

Negative Organizational Climate: $\beta = 0.50$, $p < 0.01$, showing a significant relationship between a perceived negative climate and elevated anxiety levels.

- Negative Predictors:

Conscientiousness: $\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$, associated with lower anxiety levels.

Positive Organizational Climate: $\beta = -0.40$, $p < 0.01$, indicating that a supportive work environment significantly reduced anxiety.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interview data revealed several themes:

Support from Peers and Supervisors: Wardens reported that emotional and instrumental support from colleagues provided a sense of solidarity and reduced anxiety.

Fear of Identity Loss: Many wardens expressed concerns about losing their professional identity upon retirement, contributing to heightened anxiety.

Financial Uncertainty: A dominant theme was the fear of inadequate financial resources post-retirement, especially among junior officers.

Perceived Efficacy of Counseling Services: Feedback on counseling services indicated that while many found them helpful, others noted limitations in accessibility and personalization.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The combination of quantitative and qualitative results underscored the complexity of coping mechanisms and their varied efficacy:

Wardens who engaged in adaptive strategies generally experienced lower anxiety levels and provided narratives that supported the quantitative data.

Maladaptive coping strategies were linked to higher anxiety and themes of avoidance and denial emerged prominently in the interviews.

Key Findings

Religion and planning were the most effective coping strategies for managing pre-retirement anxiety.

Maladaptive mechanisms, such as substance use and denial, are linked to higher anxiety levels.

The organizational climate plays a significant role in influencing anxiety levels, highlighting the importance of a positive and supportive work environment.

DISCUSSION

Overview and Interpretation of Results

The study examined the efficacy of various coping mechanisms used by prison wardens in managing pre-retirement anxiety and the influence of both personality traits and organizational climate. The findings demonstrate that adaptive coping mechanisms, such as religion, planning, and positive reframing, were associated with lower anxiety levels. Conversely, maladaptive strategies, such as substance use and denial, were linked to increased anxiety. These results align with existing literature on stress and coping theory, which underscores the efficacy of problem-focused and emotion-focused adaptive strategies for mitigating stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Linking Findings to Theoretical Framework

The study's findings support the Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT), which posits that irrational beliefs and maladaptive thought patterns contribute to emotional distress (Ellis, 1957). The observed relationship between high neuroticism and increased pre-retirement anxiety confirms that individuals prone to irrational beliefs are more susceptible to anxiety. REBT's emphasis on restructuring irrational beliefs aligns with the finding that positive reframing and planning reduce anxiety, suggesting that adaptive cognitive strategies can effectively mitigate negative emotions. The integration of counseling and workshops focused on cognitive restructuring could therefore enhance the efficacy of interventions.

Comparative Analysis with Existing Literature

The findings are consistent with recent studies highlighting the importance of adaptive coping mechanisms in reducing occupational stress. For instance, research by Smith et al. (2020) found that public service workers who engaged in planning and seeking support reported lower levels of anxiety. Similarly, the role of a supportive organizational climate in reducing workplace anxiety has been emphasized in studies by Johnson and Hall (2019). This study extends such findings to the specific context of prison wardens, demonstrating that organizational support is crucial in the period leading up to retirement. Conversely, the reliance on maladaptive strategies such as substance use, as noted by 16% of respondents, mirrors findings by Brown and Wilson (2021), who observed that maladaptive behaviors are common in high-stress professions where emotional support is inadequate. This indicates that targeted interventions aimed at reducing reliance on such strategies and fostering adaptive mechanisms are essential.

Implications for Practice

The implications for practice include the necessity for enhanced support systems within the prison environment. Organizational policies should promote adaptive coping strategies through structured counseling programs, workshops on financial literacy, and retirement planning. Ensuring a positive organizational climate that values psychological well-being can create an environment where wardens feel supported. Interventions based on REBT principles could be particularly useful in helping wardens challenge irrational beliefs and develop healthier perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights, limitations include the reliance on self-reported data, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. The cross-sectional nature of the research limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Future longitudinal studies could provide more definitive evidence of the effectiveness of various coping strategies over time.

Future Directions

The study opens avenues for further research into how interventions tailored to the specific needs of prison wardens can mitigate pre-retirement anxiety. Future research could explore the role of additional personality

traits and external social support systems. Expanding the scope to include wardens from different geographic locations could enhance the generalizability of findings.

The study sheds light on the complex interplay between coping mechanisms, personality traits, and organizational climate in managing pre-retirement anxiety. Adaptive strategies such as planning and positive reframing are effective in reducing anxiety, while maladaptive strategies exacerbate stress. The findings emphasize the importance of targeted interventions that foster adaptive coping and promote a supportive work environment, contributing to the overall well-being of prison wardens as they transition to retirement.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Findings: This study examined the coping mechanisms employed by prison wardens at GK Eldoret Main Prison to manage pre-retirement anxiety. The findings revealed a variety of adaptive and maladaptive strategies, with emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving being the most effective in mitigating anxiety. On the other hand, avoidant coping mechanisms were less effective, leading to prolonged stress and decreased well-being.

Recommendations: It is recommended that prison administrators integrate mental health support programs that emphasize adaptive coping strategies, such as counseling and stress management workshops, for wardens nearing retirement. Regular psychological assessments should also be conducted to monitor mental health and pre-retirement anxiety. In addition, peer support groups can be established to promote camaraderie and emotional support among wardens. Finally, policy development should ensure that comprehensive retirement preparation programs are in place to reduce anxiety and enhance the well-being of retiring wardens.

Future Research Directions: Future studies could explore longitudinal research to track the effectiveness of coping mechanisms over time and during the transition to retirement. Comparative studies between different prison systems or professions with high-stress levels could also offer further insights into universally applicable coping strategies. Additionally, investigating the role of organizational culture in influencing coping behaviors could yield valuable data for improving institutional support structures.

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