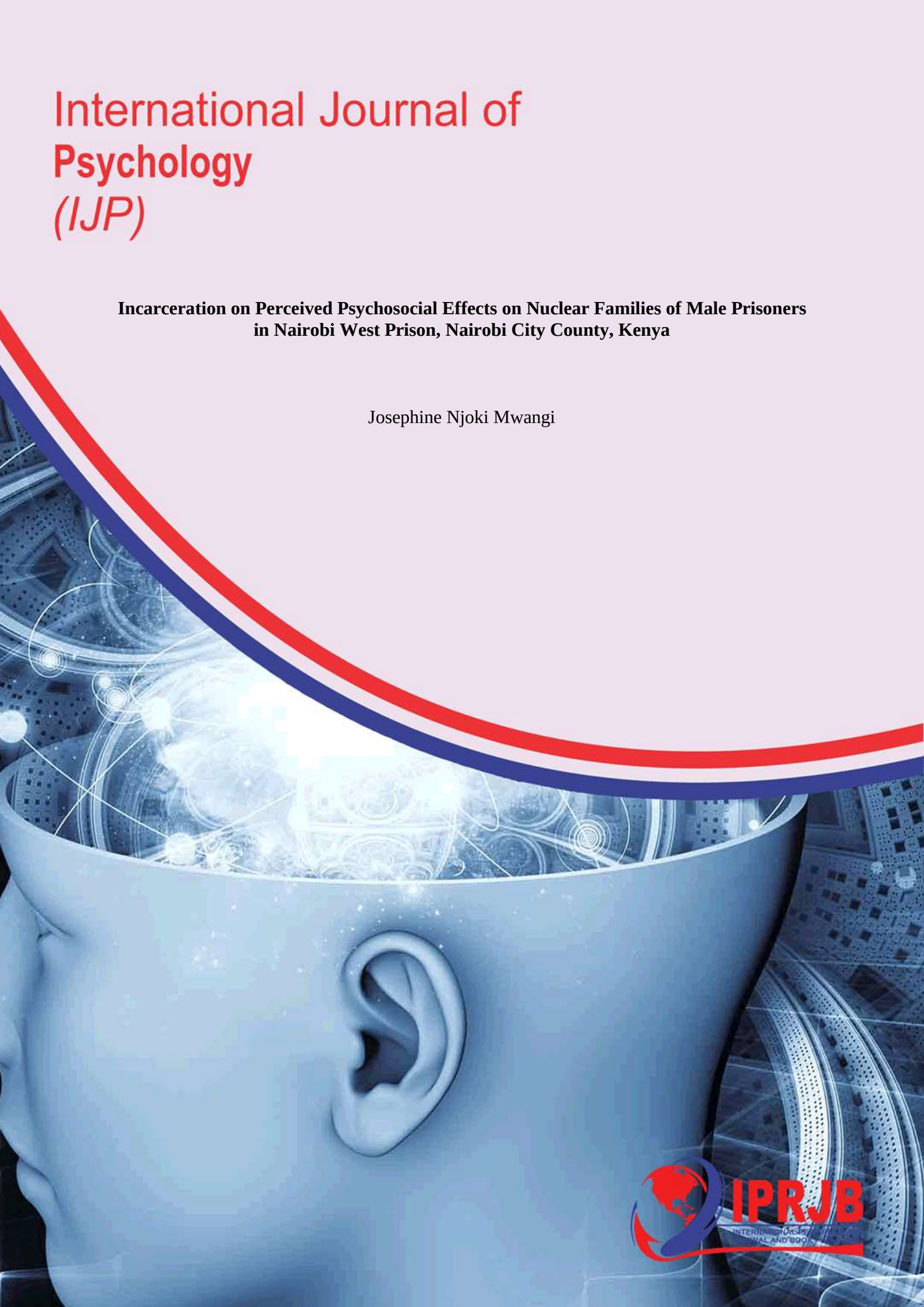
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Incarceration on Perceived Psychosocial Effects on Nuclear Families of Male Prisoners in Nairobi West Prison, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: The citizens of Kenya and members of the global community at large continues to experience increase in crimes that eventually leads to incarcerations and imprisonment of the perpetrators. However, these perpetrators and these criminals have on a larger scale been male or men. So much, have been done and put in place in order to reduce the crime rates and with it the rate of incarceration in the community. Some of the measures includes the campaigns on the respect and adherence to the law, the improvement of the constitutional provisions. Creation, gazettment and publication of additional laws. Despite, all these measures and strategies the number of crimes and rates of incarcerations continues to surge in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to investigation the psychosocial effects of incarceration of the male prisoners on the nuclear families in Kenya specifically Nairobi west prisons.

Methodology: The descriptive research design was utilized in this article. Primary data through the primary research tools the questionnaires was adopted for the collection of the dataset. The questionnaires were administered among families with fathers or male parents who were under incarceration or recently released from imprisonment in Kenya. This were composed of a total of fifty (50) respondents who had experienced incarceration or those who are currently incarcerate and are serving their time in the Nairobi West prison. The Statistical packages for social sciences was adopted for the analysis and management of the primary data that was collected. The tables and figures were used for the presentations of the result and findings. The main inferential statistics that was estimated was the regression model that is the ordinary least squared regression to present the association between the phenomenon under study.

Findings: The study established that there was a positive statistical significant association between the psychosocial welfare of the nuclear family members and the incarceration of the male parents in Kenya, specifically in Nairobi County. That the imprisonments and incarceration of the male parents leads to untold emotional suffering for the family members which causes an emotional gap that would have been addressed only by the male parent.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: In summary, it is the responsibility of the entire society to stand and raise a child that is either male or female and ensure that their character and ethical standards are acceptable to the society. This means physically, emotionally, spiritually and in terms of discipline in order to cater for and avoid crime. If this was the case then the rates of incarceration would drop significantly and families and parents would stop suffering that is in most cases untold since most people suffer in silence. The government of Kenya through the prions department should put in place laws and policy that allows parents to be able to interact with their families and maybe uptake roles that are designated for them. This means that the children and the nuclear family at large would not experience psychosocial suffering and effects as a result of the gaps that are left by the incarcerated parent whether male or female.

Keywords: *Incarceration, Psychosocial, Nuclear Family, Parents*

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INTRODUCTION

The adverse effects of incarceration of a person can be felt by the imprisoned individual, family, community, and government as it has collateral expenses (Council on Crime and Justice, 2006). A study, done at the University of Maryland showed that incarceration of a female has a more devastating impact as women are the primary caregivers of their children and in their absence. The children are left in the care of grandparents, relatives, caregivers, or fostering home whereas in the case of incarcerated fathers children are left in the care of their mothers (Flanagan, 2002). A different study in North Minneapolis showed that when a male is incarcerated there are collateral effects of incarceration on the individual as well as the family. The prison culture makes it difficult for the individual to transition to a natural functioning environment, and the man finds it extremely difficult to have a parent-child relationship, the spousal relationship is strained emotionally, physically and financially leading to infidelity and many times to divorce as the man feels disenfranchised and powerless (Council on Crime and Justice, 2006).

The collateral effects of incarceration on the community showed that the ex-offenders have difficulty gaining employment that had a direct impact on the community's economic standing and high rates of recidivism due to unemployment that politically disempowers the community (Council on Crime and Justice, 2006). Male incarceration affects the nuclear family in numerous ways; the children experience insecure attachment, depression, aggression and drop from school or academic performances, the spouses face serious financial strains, isolation and stigma, loneliness and negative emotions as the marriage relationship deteriorates due to lack of communication and relationship satisfaction (Herman-Stahl et al., 2008). The same study showed that the male in incarceration host a number of problems which made it difficult for them to be successful upon reentry due to mental illness, poor job history, poor academic attainment and substance abuse. A research done in China showed that despite the increase of prison population studies have concentrated on the singular effects on the family rather than the dynamic family interactions within them however insight of the impact on the family can contribute to helping develop more effective policies and strategies to help families of incarcerated fathers (Chui, 2016).

A study done in India showed that there was a relationship between incarceration and socioeconomic factors like economic impact, impact on children and attitude of family, friends and neighbors (Halemani & Venumadhava, 2017). It is in the interest of correctional facilities, community and government to facilitate prisoners to maintain healthy relationships with their families and intimate relationship with their spouses throughout the prison sentence as it has positive mental wellbeing and reduces recidivism (De Claire et al., 2020). The scope of this current study will be male prisoners with nuclear families as it will seek to understand the dynamic that affect a family after the breadwinner, decision maker and head of a family is put in prison. This chapter presents background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study and delimitations of the study.

Background of the Study

"The effects of imprisonment on families and children of the prisoners are almost entirely neglected in academic research, prison statistics, public coverage and media coverage" (Murray, 2005). The confinement of a person in jail or prison, the act of imprisoning someone

or the state of being-imprisoned. In this study, the terms incarcerated and imprisoned will be used interchangeably to reflect the same meaning. Psychosocial means that which involves both psychosocial and social aspects also relating social conditions to mental health.

Article14 of the Constitution of Kenya clearly sets out the rights of the arrested persons from arrest, custody, trial, imprisonment and beyond (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The criminal process can be a long and tedious one depending on the life span of the case. Every criminal case starts with the arrest and then booking is done at the police station, bail or bond may be given when the person is in police custody or during. The bail hearing where the defendant is arraigned in court and chooses guilty or not guilty or no contest plea then plea-bargain is entered as the case may be. The trial process starts and ends in sentencing and appeal but the conclusion of the case can be affected by many circumstances hence the duration of the trial cannot be easily determined. The prisoner may be in custody or going through trial alone yet their families feel like they have been in prison along with their loved one (Halemani & Venumadhava, 2017). It is important to note; that the arrested person does not go through the process alone but the family gets to experience it together. This is because many prisons are miles away making it pretty expensive and inconveniencing to have prison visits, which have severe time limitation, poor visitation facilities and limited activities to do with children (Council on Crime and Justice, 2006).

There are many forms of punishment and atonement that are meted against wrong doers in the society that range from mild to severe depending on the form of crime and mistakes or sins hat one has committed. In the case of sentences, imprisonments there are minor and capital offences that may either lead to sentences that are not severe and others that are capital sentences. Some of the strategies and measures put in place by the government and non-governmental organization to reduce the psychosocial impact of incarceration includes providing visiting hours and giving a chance for spousal visitations among others. However, despite all these efforts and measures the psychosocial effects of incarceration on nuclear families continues to be felt across the community and families at large. This is the motivation for this study that investigates the effects of incarceration on perceived psychosocial effects on nuclear families of male prisoners in Kenya specifically Nairobi City County.

Global Psychosocial Effects of Incarceration

The children of incarcerated parents (COIP) face multiple risks in addition to separation of parents because they may have witnessed parent's arrests which can be anxiety provoking and very traumatic experience causing a myriad of psychosocial effects (Poehlmann-Tynan, 2017). In its January 2015 session: the UN committee on the Rights of the child (CRC) held in Sweden and Switzerland. The concluding observations suggested that, the best interest of the children should be upheld when the courts are sentencing by considering the dependent children by conducting a balancing exercise weighing the potentially affected children against the seriousness of the parent's offence (Ayre & Stalford, 2015).

In the USA, 5 million or 7% of all children had a parent in jail or prison and the vast majority of those affected children has fathers in incarceration (Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2017). Statistics taken from different countries in the year 2022 reveal the male population in the prisons worldwide is at an alarming rate. The global data showing in USA 93.3% male vs 6.7% female, India 95.73% male vs 4.27% female, South Africa 97.5 % male vs 2.5% female. Meanwhile in Kenya; 93% male vs 7% females the difference in numbers brings concerns of the negative effects of incarceration on the spouses, children and community as a whole (BOP, 2022; Staff

writer, 2015 and Insider, 2022). The data above suggests that the number males incarcerated in the USA, India and Kenya is alarmingly high, the researcher would therefore like to find out if there are any psychosocial effects of incarceration of males on the nuclear families, on children, the incarcerated individual and spouse. A study done in India revealed that there is an association between relationship of incarcerated and the social economic factors with effects experienced in three different spheres; economic impact, impact on child and impact on family, friends and neighbors (Halemani & Venumadhava, 2017).

In more closer, environments, in East Africa and specifically Kenya, the correctional facilities are considered not as correctional facilities where the inmates or prisoners are allowed a chance to change their ways but a place to suffer for what they did. Even though there have been reforms over the past few years the members of the public and the authority have in the past been viewing these facilities as places of torture and suffering. This means that the inmates and those who are jailed are placed under watch so that they experience hardship and suffering which disregards not only their human rights but also their rights to association with the outside world including friends and families.

In Kenya, most of the research has concentrated of the well-being of the incarcerated person and very limited study has been done on the impact on the family. Some studies done in Kenya found a significant relationship between socio economic factors (Oruta, 2016) while other looked at the effects on the inmates themselves (Edwin, 2011) the effects of impended parenthood of the offender (Wansonga et al., 2019) whereas the focus of this study will be the effects on the nuclear family.

In all the different studies that have been done and are in the available literature on the issue of incarceration; most of the variables under investigation are mostly on the well-being of the prisoners and inmates, the working condition of the prison workers and the wardens or offices, the prisons facility conditions among others. However, it is important to note that in all these investigation most of the study results and conclusions have been divergent to each other. This means that most of the studies have not come to a similar or supporting conclusion in relation to what they were investigating. However, the current study will enrich and improve the current literature and existing information in relation to the incarceration of the male prisoner's specifically male parents and its psychosocial effects on the nuclear families specifically in Kenya. This is mostly new information since most of the researchers who have investigated prisoners and the areas around incarceration have not specifically dealt with the variables under investigation in this study that makes the study unique and valuable to the existing literature and future scholars.

Theoretical Review

The family process theory argues that the functioning of the family is not only based on the conceiving of the members but also upon the outcome of the efforts by the individuals therein. This means that it is both the actor and the product of the family process. This means that the outcomes of the family are influenced by not only what is contributed by the members of the family but also by the interactions and the dynamics within the members of the family. Even though it might not be a very good thing or positive thing always to have one of the family members. There are situation when some families become much better or do well in the event of a family member being incarcerate while other families do not do very well. In this case, the study adopted the Family Process Theory also referred to as the family systems theory. The theory states that the family is a complex, interacting, homeostatic system that endeavors to

bring and maintain an equilibrium (Broderick, 1993). There are different arguments that have been put forward including there is an interconnection between all the elements of the systems. Secondly, understanding is only possible when the system is viewed as a whole. Thirdly, the system is interacting with the environment via a continual feedback loop and that the system is a heuristic of understanding as opposed to an actual tangible structure (White et al., 2019). In other words, theory emphasizes that the analysis should focus on family members interactions as opposed to focusing on individuals (Day et al., 2006) while at the same time being able to address the emerging issues in the family relationships.

Empirical Review

Psychosocial Factors

There are many perceived psychosocial factors that affect the nuclear families of the incarcerated male prisoners. Most of these are brought about by the expectations that are as a result of the disgruntled family members. There are studies that have reported that the fact that the individuals have expectations then it means that when there are expectations then the same is able to bring about congruence (Loosen et al., 2020). The authors also established that there existed a direct connection and a nexus between the expectations when the same are not met and the congruence. The study by Voorn et al., (2021) have also affirmed that the needs and the expectations of those partners who are not incarcerated or those who have been left outside free can be affected with time; this affects the decision making of these partners and hence the a stance of incongruence and increased frustrations engulfing the non-incarcerated partners.

Some of the personal expectations by the female partners of the incarcerated males led to changes in expectations and development of certain comping mechanisms and stances (Bekiroglu et al., 2022). The authors also reported that there are partners who were able to stand their ground and with their marital vows while others made a decision to never being alone while their partners are still in incarceration. These were some of the strategies that enabled the partners on the outside (freedom) or those who are non-incarcerated to be able to adopt to the incarceration of their partners and the consequences that came with the same. This is an indication that even though most of the partners who most likely want to be strong and wait for their partners, some of them found it difficult while other fell into the temptations of picking other partners hence destroying the initial family setup. However, if the incarceration of one of the partners in the marriage had not happened then most likely the separation between the partners would not have happened. This also becomes worse when there are children involved, this is because the children would feel like their father has been betrayed and this also goes for the other children of the new couple who would also feel like they belong more than the original children do. The blended family can be able to survive but this would also depend on the time of the incarceration of the first partner.

There have been efforts towards the assistance and provision of support for the families of the incarcerate prisoners in Kenya not much has been done towards the establishment of the same or the implementation of such a program by the government or the public sector. However, there are non-governmental organization that are trying to get a system and a proper channel through which they can be able to support the families of the incarcerated members of the society. The study by Ungvarsky (2019) demonstrated that the children that have had a background that is positive and those who are able to have interaction that are positive with a caregiver then they are able to form attachments that are secure. In this case, when there are caregivers who have been assigned to these children through the children's department; they

will be able to secure attachments, promote comfort for such children, reduce the negative effects of the incarceration, and as such develop a realistic and health sense of self.

The experience of both parents is one of the best things that can happen to a child if all conditions allow. However, in some instances the upbringing of a child by one of the parents is necessitated by circumstances and conditions that are in mostly cases no avoidable. The conditions might include among others, cases of unwanted pregnancy, divorce, death, separation or in some instance incarceration of one of the parents. In this study, the researcher will investigate the influence of the male parent or father's incarceration on the psychosocial wellbeing of the nuclear family members.

There are not very many studies that are in the available literature in relation to the behaviors of the children who are left behind as a result of the arrest of the parents and or incarceration. The data that could have been collected during arrests and incarcerations in relation to the records and the status of these children is also limited or not available. This is because in most cases arrests are conducted when crimes has been committed and as such, it is a delicate or sensitive situation for any researchers to go seeking for data in such settings. The immediate experience is the restrain of cash and expenditure for the children and the caregivers after the arrests or incarceration. This is because in most cases the cash is committed towards the justice system fir the legal battle that is ahead before the convictions and imprisonment. Some of these issues and challenges are able to manifest and show their existence in areas such as children of the incarcerated dropping out of schools, skipping meals, borrowing money for basic commodities and necessities and taking of credit. It might also manifest itself in the auctions and sale of the properties belonging to the imprisoned individuals given that now they are no longer able to maintain them and finally the children might start fending for themselves by maybe going to the streets or even joining the labour force due to poverty. In most case, families are also forced to sell-off their assets in order to be able to survive and or meet day-to-day requirement and needs within the house.

Further, in the case of paternal incarceration then the mothers are forced to step-in where the fathers were working and this might prove difficult due to lack of experience. The problems for children of incarcerated fathers are compounded by the fact the mother might not have enough resources to single handedly deal with the behaviors and discipline of the children and still be able to fend for them or provide their basic needs. This leads to children experiencing health problems such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, cold, and cough, and malaria, typhoid among others like dental and skin problems due to lack of proper cleaning bathing and maybe malnourishment. From this stage the children might dependent on themselves for survival which brings in the issue of children experiencing certain problems such as feeling loneliness and sadness due to parental imprisonment; lack of sleep for days and experiencing trauma due to separation and fear of the unknown like the police and other men.

In Kenya some of the support system that have been put in place in order to help and support the families of the incarcerated individuals are mostly public facilities and are fostered by the government. Some of these support system start early from the prisons themselves where the prisoners are allowed and given a change to get into the education system and be able to learn skills that would be beneficial to them when they are released. They are also allowed to get skills and certification for different levels of the education systems that can be applied when they are released.

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METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was utilized for the investigation of the association between psychosocial wellbeing and the incarceration of the male parents. The study investigates the psychosocial effects of incarceration of a male parent on the nuclear families in Kenya specifically in Nairobi.

Data Collection

The collection of data was conducted by use of the primary research tools and instruments that is the questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered online to the respondents by use of the survey monkey systems. Questionnaires were completed by the respondents who had consented and had the link or access to the questionnaires. The procedure was adopted because it appeared to be favorable to both the researcher and the respondents due to proximity, costs, mobility, accessibility and convenience to both.

Empirical Model Specifications

The descriptive research design was utilized in this article. Primary data through the primary research tools the questionnaires was adopted for the collection of the dataset. The questionnaires were administered among families with fathers or male parents who were under incarceration or recently released from imprisonment in Kenya. This were composed of a total of fifty (50) respondents who had experienced incarceration or those who are currently incarcerate and are serving their time in the Nairobi West prison. The Statistical packages for social sciences was adopted for the analysis and management of the primary data that was collected. The tables and figures were used for the presentations of the result and findings. The main inferential statistics that was estimated was the regression model that is the ordinary least squared regression to present the association between the phenomenon under study.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where by:

Y = Psychosocial Effects

β_0 = Constant term

β_1, β_2, β_3, &β_4 are the independent variables coefficients

X_1 = Incarceration

X_2 = Gender

X_3 = Number of visits (provision per period)

ε = Error term.

The study adopted the Statistical Packages for social sciences in order to assess the relationship between the incarceration of a male parent and possibility of psychosocial effects on the nuclear family members in Kenya. Results and findings were estimated and presented by use of summary graphs. The descriptive statistics that is measures of dispersion and measures of central tendency were estimated and presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The correlation statistics below indicates the diagnostic tests that was adopted for this study. It shows the Pearson correlation that was estimated for the variables under investigation. All the correlation coefficients shows below between he different variables that is the dependent variable psychosocial effect and the explanatory variables that is the gender, prison visits and incarceration were found to be positive. The correlations were established to have been

statistically significant and positive since the significant or the p-value for the different variables were found to have been less than the critical value that is 0.05.

Table 1: Correlation

		Gender1	Visits	Incarceration	Psychosocial
Gender1	Pearson Correlation	1	.223*	.839**	.877**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047	.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Visits	Pearson Correlation	.223*	1	.459**	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047		.000	.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Incarceration	Pearson Correlation	.839**	.459**	1	.965**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	80	80	80	80
Psychosocial	Pearson Correlation	.877**	.500**	.965**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	80	80	80	80
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.979[a]	.959	.958	.72504
a. Predictors: (Constant), Incarceration, Visits, Gender1				

In this section the results in table3 below shows the analysis of variance for the established model. It shows that there was an R-squared coefficient of 0.959 that is an indication that there was a goodness of fit in the estimated model. It is also an indication that the explanatory variables that is the gender, number of visits and the incarceration of the male parents explains about 95.9% of the changes or the variation in the psychosocial effects or problems in the nuclear family.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	937.998	3	312.666	594.780	.000[b]
	Residual	39.952	76	.526		
	Total	**977.950**	**79**			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychosocial						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Incarceration, Visits, Gender1						

The results in the coefficient table below suggests that there was a positive statistical significant association between the gender and the psychosocial effects. Coefficient for the variable gender was found to have been 1.874 that is an indication that the unit change in gender leads to a 1.874 change in the psychosocial wellbeing of the nuclear family. The positive coefficient for the variable number of visits means that there was a positive association between the number of visits and the psychosocial effects. The same indicates that when there is a unit change in the number of visits the same leads to a 0.289 change in the psychosocial wellbeing of the members of the nuclear family.

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Finally, the independent variables incarceration was established to have a positive coefficient that is 1.282 which is an indication that there was a positive relationship between these two variables. Further, the critical value was found to have a coefficient of 0.000 that is less than the critical value that is 0.05. This means that the association between the incarceration and the psychosocial effects on the nuclear families was statistically significant. Further, the positive coefficient also shows that in case of a unit variation in the incarceration that is maybe an increase in years of incarceration the same only increases the psychosocial effects with up to 1.282.

Table 4: Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-5.122	.572		-8.962	.000
	Gender1	1.874	.281	.302	6.675	.000
	Visits	.289	.059	.135	4.865	.000
	Incarceration	1.282	.098	.650	13.092	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Psychosocial						

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The article established that the issue of incarceration has significant psychological and psychosocial damages to the nuclear family and the incarcerated father. In general, increased incarceration or imprisonment rates leads to stifles in job opportunities and creation of income in a community, it also leads to economic mobility and stifles business growth in the affected areas. Incarcerations remains one of the most devastating things that could happen to a family and the incarcerated individual. This is because even after serving time by the prisoner it still haunts ten in their day-to-day lives and activities. For one it becomes a problem securing employment and getting their lives back. It is also important to appreciate that when the ex-convicts or former prisoners have been neglected by the society and denied opportunities for growth or reintroduction back into the systems it leads to a risk of criminality or criminal behaviors and incarceration again. The investigation established that the incarceration of the fathers or the male parents had negative psychosocial effects on the nuclear families of male prisoners in Nairobi west in Kenya. However, despite the results and findings it is important to note that further researcher is needed because the study does not exhaustively address all issues in relation to incarceration of the male parents. The results and findings suggests that the incarceration has significant negative effects that weakens the nuclear families, society and the overall communities. Therefore, this calls for reforms in the justice departments and the systems that are utilized in punishment in order to allow for collaborative efforts that will help the victims of the crime and those responsible to be able to come up with measures that would prioritize support services. Further, the rehabilitation and dignity among all humans and offer punishment that is not aimed and perpetuation of marginalization or discrimination of a section of the society.

In summary, it is the responsibility of the entire society to stand and raise a child that is either male or female and ensure that they are in a position to manage their affairs accordingly. Some of this include training of a child in a way that they keep of antisocial behaviours. This means physically, emotionally, spiritually and in terms of discipline in order to cater for and avoid

crime. If this was the case then the rates of incarceration would drop significantly and families and parents would stop suffering that is in most cases untold since most people suffer in silence.

The government of Kenya through the prions department should enact laws and policy that allows for parents to be able to interact with their families and maybe uptake roles that are designated for them. This means that the children and the nuclear family at large would not experience psychosocial suffering and effects because of the gaps that are left by the incarcerated parent whether male or female.

In conclusion, this study does not advocate or leniency in the established punishments and the adherence to the law when it comes to imprisonment and punishment of crimes. However, this study presents a different angle and a diverse view of the current state of affairs when it comes to punishments and incarceration. This is because, despite the fact that there is need for individuals to serve for their crimes it is also important to note that it would not serve the community if these efforts end up causing or creating more criminals in the process. If these children of incarcerated parents more so the fathers are unable to afford to access mentoring and proper upbringing that have been attributed to antisocial behaviours by most studies. Therefore, in order to ensure that the future generations is not only safe but is also secured from development of antisocial behaviours it is important for the government and policy makers to come up with ways in which these families and children are able to access their parents for a word or two.

The Kenya Prisons Services through the established rules and procedures can enact the available laws that allows for the support of family welfare and affairs. Further, the ministry of interior also has an obligation to ensure that even as they continue to weed-off the bad characters from the society that they ensure the continuity and the going concerns of the society. This is because the family is the basic unit of the community and the destruction of which the community would be at the risk of extinction.

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