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OUTCOMES OF REINTEGRATION PROCESS ON BEHAVIOR CHANGE AMONG JUVENILE EX-OFFENDERS RELEASED FROM REHABILITATION CENTERS IN KENYA

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Abstract

Purpose: Rehabilitation Centers (RCs) play a key role for effectiveness of social cohesion procedures mostly on juvenile reintegration processes and behavioral change. The reintegration model adopted by rehabilitation centers may be affected by unavoidable social dynamics, which inadvertently influence the degree of behavioral change. Consequently, this study analyzes the results of the reintegration process on behavior change among juvenile ex-offenders released from rehabilitation centers in Kenya.

Methodology: The study employed a qualitative research methodology whereby a descriptive survey design was implemented. The study constituted a purposive sample of ten (10) juvenile ex-offenders, seven (7) rehabilitation center managers, ten (10) immediate relatives of juvenile ex-offenders, and ten (10) community leaders. Qualitative data was availed by deploying interviews and observation guides while thematic analysis technique was implemented to analyze the data, which was then tabulated. The study also implemented open questionnaires and is qualitative data.

Findings: According to the information availed by the study, Majority of the ex-offenders 8 (80%) agreed that the skills they acquired were useful and they rely on the skills acquired to earn income while the rest 2(20%) felt the skills did not benefit them in any way. Majority 8 (80%) said they were happy after reintegration while 2(20%) of Juveniles were unhappy. Additionally, the study determined that rehabilitation centers in Kenya have no holistic system of juvenile reintegration. Consequently, the study pointedly determined that the reintegration process adopted by rehabilitation centers in Kenya induce little effect on behavior change among juvenile ex-offenders.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study is theoretically relevant and progressive. The study is particularly feasible because it succinctly points to new and actionable, as well as restorative measures, which can improve the effectiveness of reintegration process on juvenile behavioral change in Kenya. The study is also robust in terms of policy relevance as it refurbishes existing policies in order to ensure the efficacy of juvenile reintegration. The policy shifts include increased allocation of fiscal resources to meet the exigencies of rehabilitation centers, adoption of holistic reintegration procedures, and enactment of tenable reintegration follow-up processes.

Keywords: *Rehabilitation Centers, Juvenile, Reintegration, Behavior Change*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The often-multifaceted plethora of challenges experienced by individuals when transitioning from childhood to adulthood can effectuate the development of delinquent behavior. In most cases, the delinquent behavior can cause aggravated conflicts, which may or may not involve socially and morally reprehensible acts like violence and theft. More often than not, parents and guardians, by virtue of being the primary caregivers of transitioning youngsters, have the responsibility of instilling discipline and punitive measures to curb the wayward behavior. However, if the situation escalates, the government, through its actors in the criminal justice system, may intervene (Bannis, 2012). According to Harris and Mooney (2019), delinquent behavior among the youths is highly likely, which facilitates the prevalence of a significant portion of juvenile offenders in a country's criminal justice system. Thus, finding an effective and sustainable method of addressing sustained delinquency among the youth is a significant concern for the government.

In first-world nations such as the United States, marked improvements have been realized in the field of juvenile rehabilitation. The restorative justice programs instituted across various states in the US enhance the overall effectiveness of addressing the causes of delinquent behavior while, at the same time, fostering the enactment of proper measures to remedy the effects of juvenile delinquency (Howell, Wilson, Sickmund, Hodjes & Howell, 2017). As a result, juvenile offenders in the US have better access to rehabilitative procedures, which ultimately increase the likelihood of behavioral change once they reintegrate back into the general society. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, juvenile offenders are put through a systemic process of rehabilitation to facilitate behavioral change (Hoyle & Rosenblatt, 2016). Not only does this increase the probability of instilling better behavior but also serves as significant enabler of effective social reintegration.

In South Africa, the juvenile justice system relies mostly on diversion programs to curb the spread of delinquency. According to Gwatimba and Raselekoane (2018), although mostly effective, the diversion programs alone cannot fully stem the tide of juvenile delinquency in South Africa. Nevertheless, South Africa's juvenile diversion programs are notable in that they are succinctly tailored to address the burgeoning problem of juvenile offenders in the country. As a result, the South African juvenile justice system is better equipped in terms of handling instances of juvenile offenders. However, according to Chikadzi (2017), the overall success of the juvenile diversion programs is impeded by the lack of routine follow-up processes during and after reintegration. Consequently, juvenile ex-offenders face a higher probability of recidivism in South Africa.

The increasing number of juvenile offenders, coupled with the inadequate disposition measures of the Kenyan juvenile justice system, hampers the overall functioning of the rehabilitation centers. Furthermore, the rise in the number of convicted juvenile offenders strains the capacity of rehabilitation centers in the country. According to Maroko and Kaluai (2018), this creates a situation whereby the already meager allocation of fiscal resources is stretched even further, thereby worsening the rehabilitative process. Moreover, the markedly dwindled financial resources leave little to no capability of designing and deploying effective reintegration

procedures. Additionally, the lack of enough financial support precipitates the development of various problems.

Juveniles face substantial challenges when released from reform schools. They are expected to successfully reintegrate into their families and communities, but also face a “dual transition” of developing from adolescents into adults (Panuccio & Christian, 2019). This process is mediated by juvenile aftercare, which provides post-release services in the community such as employment assistance, educational programs, vocational skills and counseling, as well as supervision, usually in the form of probation (Dum & Fader, 2013).). While studies show that forms of aftercare programming can facilitate positive outcomes for youth (James et al., 2013). The mere presence of aftercare services is an important but likely insufficient condition for successful juvenile reentry. The quality and content of aftercare services cannot be overlooked. While there are many program evaluations of aftercare services, the literature on aftercare lacks in-depth analysis of how workers deliver rehabilitative services within organizations. Across jurisdictions, juvenile aftercare may be delivered by aftercare workers often in private, contracted aftercare programs, juvenile probation officers, or some combination.

In Kenya, the purpose of juvenile behavior rehabilitation centers, according to (Mugo et al., 2006), is to rehabilitate children and reintegrate them back to the society for fully functional living. They also provide care, a function found in the children and young person’s Act (Cap. 141), Laws of Kenya (GoK, 2012). Research has shown that during the reintegration process other challenges emerge among the ex-juvenile offender. Purpose of the study was to determine the outcomes of the reintegration process on behavior change among juvenile ex-offenders from rehabilitation centers in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Juvenile offenders often require sustained intervention measures in order to rectify their behavior. The government of Kenya recognizes this prerequisite and, therefore, mandates and supports rehabilitation centers (RCs) across the country. The rehabilitation centers are tasked with curtailing future harm by remedying the criminal behavior of juvenile offenders. Practitioners in these centers are supposed to create and instigate the correct methodologies of behavioral change. Furthermore, according to Walden and Allen (2019), once a juvenile offender has completed their sentence, the centers are required to assist in reintegrating the ex-offender into the larger society.

Although rehabilitation centers play an increasingly critical role, their operational usefulness in Kenya is wanting. Conventionally, the juvenile rehabilitation centers in Kenya restrict their rehabilitative activities by adopting the most basic tenets of rehabilitation. Munene and Naomi (2017) postulate that juvenile rehabilitation centers in Kenya convolute the corrective process by facilitating the development conduct disorders. Furthermore, the success of juvenile reintegration is significantly hindered by the lack of sustainable follow-up processes. As a result, a higher portion of juvenile ex-offenders face a constant threat of recidivism, which ultimately shows that the reintegration process adopted by rehabilitation centers in Kenya has little to no impact on behavioral change.

Although the function of juvenile rehabilitation centers has been addressed severally in research, very little information is available to quantify the effectiveness of reintegration and its effects on behavioral change. Consequently, there is a clear need to identify the degree of behavior change induced on juvenile offenders as a result of undergoing through a systematic reintegration process.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine the outcomes of reintegration process on behavior change among juvenile ex-offenders after being released from the rehabilitation centers in Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

Reintegration is a process aimed at removing children from institutions and re-uniting them with their families and communities through intervention programs, and services designed to assist them resettle into their families and communities by networking with all relevant stakeholder (Stough & Phillips, 2016).). All care interventions should be planned and implemented to address the particular issues of a specific child's life. No two children or more share exactly similar opinion, sometimes though they are sibling (Harris, 2010).).

Reintegration may be positively or negatively affected depending on the degree of support young people receives in relation to these factors. For example, while some youth may return to supportive family environments, others may have no family or their home environment may be unsatisfactory due to violence or other risks (Ungar et al., 2013).). It was the wish of the researcher to establish the factors which contribute to successful reintegration of ex-offenders. The transition from custody to community should be jointly planned and managed from early in the sentence rather than simply rescue job left to the probation service or others after release (Mair & Burke, 2013).). During the first half of the twentieth century, both the DPAS and the new probation service continued to provide assistance to ex-offenders on a voluntary basis. In case of probation, this took the shape of voluntary after-care, a system whereby any prisoner could request assistance or support on release (Mair & Burke, 2013). Many ex-offenders will want to access the normal housing market in preference to the support housing sector and the role of housing advice centres is to build up contacts and to advice a whole range of offenders (Maguire & Nolan, 2012).).

According to Menon and Cheung (2018), reintegration encapsulates reentry services and procedures designed to prepare and assist a juvenile offender to enter back into the mainstream society. The necessity of these assistive measures is accentuated by the fact that juvenile offenders face a slew of challenges once released from rehabilitative incarceration. Bode (2019) notes that these problems include familial and communal pressure, sustained mistrust from other members of the society, and restricted access to some facilities in communal places such as schools and parks. Although it is virtually impossible to avoid such outcomes, rehabilitation centers prepare juvenile ex-offenders to respond to the challenges in several ways.

In the United States, rehabilitation centers focus on holistic juvenile reentry processes to promote better reintegration into the society as well as positive behavior change. According to Baglivio and Wolff (2018), the reintegration process practiced by juvenile rehabilitation centers in the United States involves four consecutive phases namely, entry, placement, transition, and community-aftercare phase. In the entry stage, the juvenile offender enters into residential placement, while the placement phase refers to the entire time that the offender stays in the facility. During the transitional phase, the juvenile offender vacates the residential facility and renters into the society, while the community after-care phase denotes a definite period after the juvenile offender is reintegrated into the community (Baglivio & Wolff, 2018).

Nevertheless, research contends that even the highly structured system of reintegration is subject to influence from external actors. According to Carter (2018), the efficacy of the systemic process of juvenile reentry in the United States is reduced by extraneous determinants, which include familial predispositions, peer association, substance abuse, and mental or physical health. Consequently, it is imperative for juvenile rehabilitation centers to consider the aforementioned factors prior to undertaking the juvenile reintegration procedures.

In South Africa, the process of juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration is mostly handled by civil society organizations (CSOs). According to Muntingh and Larnar (2018), the South African juvenile justice system does not have a highly systematized process as the one found in the United States. However, the government of South Africa, through the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), actively seeks to enhance the function of the country's juvenile justice system by adopting mandatory instructional models in juvenile rehabilitation centers. Magano (2016) notes that the Department of Correctional Services advocates for the teaching of basic occupational and social skills, vocational skills, and computer skills to juvenile offenders. The objective of inculcating these programs in the juvenile rehabilitation process is to enhance the chances of instilling positive behavioral change as well as facilitate the success of uneventful reintegration and reduces the instances of recidivism.

Research by Welch, Butler, and Gertz (2019) postulates that affected rehabilitation centers are incapable of implementing effective reintegration processes. Furthermore, the lack of reentry procedures upends the purpose of the often lengthy rehabilitation process, more so because it exposes juvenile ex-offenders to a higher probability for recidivism. According to Wang'ombe (2019), this scenario is prevalent in Kenyan juvenile rehabilitation centers, as epitomized by the increasing rate of juvenile recidivism in the counties of Nairobi and Mombasa. Although the subject of juvenile rehabilitation in Kenya is extensively addressed in research, there is a discernible gap in research dealing with the quality of reintegration of juvenile offenders. Moreover, insufficient data is available to properly quantify the degree of success attained by former juvenile offenders who have gone through the Kenyan system of juvenile rehabilitation. Therefore, this study endeavors to analyze the extent to which the reintegration of juvenile offenders contributes towards improving their behavior in the general society.

Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by Erwin Lermert's social reaction theory, which is also referred to as labelling theory. Labeling theory attributes its origins to French sociologist Émile Durkheim and his 1897 book, *Suicide*. Essentially, the social reaction theory asserts that once an individual

commits a crime, the immediate society will consider and label the individual as a criminal. According to Brown and Sefiha (2017), the labeled individual accepts the title and proceeds to act in accordance to it, which, in this case, is continuance of criminal tendencies. The fundamental principles of the social reaction theory account for the actors involved in the disciplinary process of the law. These actors include both formal and informal practitioners of social control namely, the law, the police, family, and the media (Brown & Sefiha, 2017).

According to Murray (2017), the social reaction theory is relevant in assessing the outcomes of juvenile reintegration, more so because it accounts for most of the actors involved in the process. As a result, basing the study on the social reaction theory enabled the researcher to properly scrutinize the role of juvenile rehabilitation centers, as well as analyze the impacts on juvenile behavior emanating from the existing juvenile reintegration processes in rehabilitative centers in Kenya.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey approach. Seven (7) of rehabilitation center managers, ten (10) community leaders, ten (10) juvenile ex-offenders were included in the study. Also, ten (10) immediate family members of the juvenile ex-offenders were inculcated in the study. The process of gathering qualitative data was driven through interviews and observation. The data was then analyzed thematically and the results were then presented in tables. Qualitative data was collected through open ended questionnaires which were distributed across the selected population.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Factors Contributing to Successful Reintegration

The table below shows the responses of ex-offenders when asked to talk about the successes that they have encountered after reintegrating into society.

Table 1: Usefulness of the skills acquired from the rehabilitation centers

Are the skills useful?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	80.0
No	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0

Most of them had secured employment, had got a place to live in, had stopped using drugs, were married and with children, had not committed any crime since they were reintegrated, had showed feelings of remorsefulness, had reunited with their families and some had gone back to school among many other successes. The following responses help to capture these themes that the ex-offenders expressed as success reintegrating into society. Majority of the ex-offenders 8 (80%) agreed that the skills they acquired were useful and they rely on the skills acquired to earn income while the rest 2(20%) felt the skills did not benefit them in any way.

4.2 Feelings of the ex-offenders on reintegration

The table below shows the feelings of the ex-offenders after they were released:

Table 2: Feelings after being reintegrated back to the society

Feeling after being reintegrated	Frequency	Percent
Unhappy	2	20
Happy	8	80
Total	20	100.0

The table above explains the feelings of the reintegrated offenders after they are released back to the society. Majority 8 (80%) said they were happy after reintegration while 2(20%) of Juveniles were unhappy. Some experienced jolt when released suddenly and without preparation and felt disoriented and confused by the transition from controlled living to life in free society.

4.3 Lack of Effective Reintegration Procedures

Table 3: Juvenile Reintegration Procedures

	Rehabilitation center managers	Community managers	Immediate family members of juvenile ex-offenders	Rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders
Effective reintegration mechanisms	0	0	0	0
Ineffective reintegration mechanisms	3	0	0	0
Available reintegration mechanisms	0	0	0	0
Unavailable reintegration mechanisms	7	0	0	10
Unaware of any reintegration mechanisms	0	7	10	0
Total	10	7	10	10

Out of the 10 queried community leaders, 3 (30%) responded that they were unaware of any reintegration procedures adopted by rehabilitation centers. A total of 7 rehabilitation center managers agreed that their institutions lacked the mechanisms to assist reintegration while 2 managers agreed that the mechanisms in place were ineffective. A total of 10 (100%) juvenile ex-offenders confirmed that they received no form of systematic reintegration from their

rehabilitation centers. Likewise, 10 (100%) of the immediate family members of rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders reported being unaware of any reintegration process.

4.4 Lack of Discernible Behavioral Impact

Out of the sampled community leaders, 1 (10%) indicated having observed positive behavior change in rehabilitated juveniles. The rest, 9 (90%), confirmed noting zero change in delinquent behavior in the rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders. A total of 7 (100%) rehabilitation center managers believed that rehabilitated juveniles could change, but had no concrete evidence to support their views. Additionally, 4 immediate family members of rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders concurred that they had noted some positive behavioral change in the rehabilitated juvenile while the rest (8) noted no change. When presented with the same question, 100% (10) of the rehabilitated juveniles claimed to have changed their behavior for the better.

Table 4: Juvenile Behavioral Change after Reintegration

	Rehabilitation center managers	Community leaders	Immediate family members of rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders	Rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders
Strong affinity for change	7	0	0	0
Positive behavioral change	0	1	2	10
No change in delinquent behavior	0	9	8	0
Total	7	10	10	10

The high number of respondents confirming the lack of noticeable behavioral change supports Wang'ombe (2019) findings which indicated that rehabilitated juveniles often continue to behave delinquently after reintegration, thereby occasioning a high rate of recidivism in Kenya.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Discussion

It was found that majority of the reintegrated offenders were not on any form of supervision after release hence difficult to know the progress they have made after interviewing the managers, it was evident that there is no follow-up of the ex-offenders after they are reintegrated back to the society. They sighted lack of funds and lack of policies as some of the reasons why they were not able to do follow-up. It has been discovered that some of the ex-offenders have sighted cases where they have been discriminated upon on the basis of being ex-offenders. They were discriminated upon by some community members, family members, friends, institutions like schools and colleges failed to admit them and some employers denied them employment. Some

family members were not willing to accept their reintegrated members. Majority of the ex-offenders were happy to join their families and friends. Most of them were remorseful because of the crimes they had committed.

Majority of the family members had known the offenders for at least fifteen years which is good enough time to have known them well. Some of the ex-offenders had a lot of support from their families after reintegration while others were not supported by their families. Some ex-offenders were from poor families hence could not be supported as expected. Finally, the impact of juvenile reintegration on behavioral change is virtually nonexistent. According to the findings, a majority of immediate family members of rehabilitated juvenile ex-offenders, as well as community leaders, are convinced that delinquency does not change after reintegration. The uniform belief that juveniles can change, as shown by the responses from rehabilitation center managers, strongly suggest that juvenile rehabilitations institutions operate on conceptual idealism. This postulation is bolstered by the lack of convincing evidence from the managers that indeed, positive behavior was noted in the reintegrated juvenile ex-offenders.

Conclusions

The reviewed literature in the study accentuated that effective juvenile justice systems require equally efficient juvenile rehabilitation centers which would lead to effective reintegration of ex-offenders. Apart from highlighting the criticality of reintegration process, the study also discerned that reintegration is, in no small extent, the base determinant of behavioral change. Additionally, the study discovered that the juvenile rehabilitation facilities in Kenya lacked uniform and holistic procedures of reintegrated the rehabilitated juveniles back into their communities. Some of the ex-offenders received adequate of support from their families after reintegration while others lacked the support from their families since they were from poor families. Finally, the impact of juvenile reintegration on behavioral change is virtually nonexistent.

Recommendations

Having conducted the study and collected the findings, the researcher put forth the following list of recommendations: - Introduce more courses e.g. driving, mechanic, drama and music and horticulture. Rehabilitation center farming activities should be utilized to teach the offenders new and improved farming methods. This can provide the offenders with useful productive work after reintegration. More sessions of guidance and counseling as well as increasing the rehabilitation period to enhance exit of well reformed graduates. Open full pledge counseling unit is necessary because most offenders come to the rehabilitation centers loaded with various problems that have to be solved before any proper rehabilitation takes place. Psychologists should be there to provide professional diagnosis, counseling and treatment on individual or group basis. Vocational counseling is also necessary when it comes to choice of skills. The government through the relevant ministry should start an institution where the ex-offenders find refuge after release and from where they can be offered some employment and earn some income in preparation for proper community reentry. Offenders close to the end of their term should be allowed to work in the community and then go back to the centers to allow them socialize with community members. Follow-up programs should be intensified by the relevant ministry so as to

monitor the progress of the offenders. Supervision programs should be started to help follow-up the ex-offenders after they are released. The reintegration model adopted by rehabilitation centers should be re-evaluated to ensure that little interference from social dynamics.

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