



Challenges facing Juvenile Delinquents Rehabilitation Centres in Kenya: A Case Study of Othaya Rehabilitation Centre, Nyeri, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Incidences of juvenile delinquency have been escalating at an alarming rate. The government has established rehabilitation centres for admitting adolescents who for some reason have had contraventions to the legal system. Rehabilitation of these children is a key component in ensuring that they are successfully empowered to live amicably in the social order. This study sought to assess the challenges facing Othaya Rehabilitation Centre, Nyeri County, Kenya. The research objective was, to assess the challenges encountered by tutors and learners in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre in Nyeri, Kenya. The research design was essentially descriptive with qualitative and quantitative approaches and was guided by B.F. Skinner's Theory of Operant Conditioning. The target population of the study consisted of all learners and teachers in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre. There were 103 learners and 9 teachers. The study employed census survey and thus the entire population was included in the sample because it was a manageable number. The research instruments included two sets of questionnaires, one for teachers and the other for the learners. A pilot study was conducted in a neighbouring rehabilitation centre in Kirinyaga County and the data collected used to compute the reliability of the instruments using Chronbach alpha which yielded a coefficient of .810, which indicated that the instruments were reliable. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages and the findings were presented in form of tables and narrations. The findings of the study revealed that teachers had not received any in-service training on handling juvenile delinquents, were not motivated, there were no incentives for good performance and the teachers received no parental support in molding the learners. The research established that the counseling programmes existing in the rehabilitation centre were perceived as generally effective, pupils were exposed to sporadic bullying by their colleagues, teachers were occasionally absent and missed classes and pupils had inadequate breaks to play a part in co-curricular activities. Lastly, the study revealed that there existed poor hygiene conditions and there was frequent theft of personal items. The study recommends the need to sensitize parents to provide for the physical and the psychological needs of the learners, provision of training opportunities for teachers and improvement of safety and living conditions for the learners.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquents, rehabilitation, in-service training, counseling, vocational training.

INTRODUCTION

Incidences of juvenile delinquency have been escalating at an alarming rate all over the world. While physiological and psychological dynamics have their take, social causes contribute significantly in manifestation of juvenile delinquency (Youth Alive Kenya, 2006). According to Le Roux (1993) majority of the children result to crime and delinquency due to socio-economic and other factors within the family or immediate environment and some of the major predisposing factors are alcohol and drug abuse,



poverty, dysfunctional families, diminished influence of the extended families in child rearing, the collapse of the traditional social structures, as well as emergence of new social edict especially in urban areas. Juvenile offenders are habitually suspended from school, at other times they may be arrested and confined in a juvenile confinement facility before being permitted to rejoin their former school. The fundamental goal of juvenile rehabilitation centres is to offer suitable instructional programmes to young offenders convicted by a law court and which takes into consideration their psychological and physiological health, protection from physical harm, interests and emotional wellbeing. Children's Act (2001), states that provision of guidance and counseling, supervision, and facilitating agreeable affiliations between juveniles and the society, inculcating adaptive moral values, discipline and recognition of personal and cultural identities have been widely acknowledged as the pillars of juvenile rehabilitation programmes. Despite the strong emphasis on education of the incarcerated children, challenges in rehabilitation centres are just beginning to earn the attention it deserves. Arnette (2000) observes that educators, including teachers and managers, in rehabilitation centres face unique challenges in their daily interaction with juvenile offenders committed for institutional rehabilitation. These problems impede the timeliness and quality of academic programmes dispensation to the adolescents' undergoing rehabilitation school or correctional facility (Feierman, 2009). However, despite there being several alternatives for the juvenile adolescents in terms of engagement, there are also various levels of provisions of support for the offenders and their immediate family. A well-regulated rehabilitation system involves strict adherence to implementation of legal and policy frameworks to promote quality and accountability by persons and institutions conducting the rehabilitation. The UN Human Rights Council explicitly states that countries ought to ensure that appropriate regulatory frameworks, in tandem with the international human rights requirements, and standards are strictly adhered to before an individual or organization is licensed to provide rehabilitation services, and addresses any negative impacts of the rehabilitation (Namusoby, 2016).

Motivation is crucial in efficient and effective operations of any organization (Gupta, 2008). Amstrong (2007) adds that motivation helps in the best way to use or allocate resources, decrease of staff turnover, improvement of workplace relations, stress-free management of staff and higher job performance. However, Mogendi (2000) observes that there appears to be growing concerns that teachers working in juvenile correction centres are poorly motivated due to a cocktail of declining morale, career satisfaction and meager incentives. According to Analoui (2000) the low levels of motivation among teachers is mirrored in poor professional performance, misconduct, content delivery, teacher centred practices, monitoring and mentorship. Additionally, poorly motivated teachers dedicate fewer hours to co-curricular activities, teaching preparation and marking.

In USA, young offenders constitute a major portion of the US crime problem; as a result, the government has been vigorously pursuing methods of crime reduction through interventions that aim at the education system such as quality education services. This aims at bringing up a successful community which can easily be reintegrated back to the society. Argentina promulgated a law to safeguard the rights of child offenders by laying a framework of dealing with institutionalized juveniles before being integrated back to society (UNICEF, 2010). US Department of Justice (2007) states clearly that children's justice system applies appropriate child protection acts, edicts, processes and organizations in ensuring that the rights of the child are not only treasured but also protected. According to Bradshaw and Roseborough (2005) programmes have been put in place through which children who act



against the law are rehabilitated. These programs take into consideration children's needs and operate within a specialized justice system. With the aim of changing behaviour, these rehabilitative programmes include guidance and counseling, probation, observation, confinement, teaching, intellectual skills training and behavioural modification.

Stephanie and Corinne (2011) conducted a study to assess Ghana's juvenile justice system compliance to the law and its adherence to global human rights protocols that the government had sanctioned. The survey established that juvenile remand homes and correctional centres were plagued with many challenges; in relation to infrastructure, houses within the environs of the rehabilitation centres had not been renovated for several decades, there was insufficient space resulting to overcrowding in the facilities and boys had a tendency of engaging in fighting with each other. On staffing, the study found out that there were inadequate numbers of social workers at the correctional centres. This was deficient in relation to the number of juveniles accommodated in the facility and the necessary management. In addition, the correctional centres lacked qualified professionals resulting in workers being assigned diverse roles at the correctional centres as counselors, teachers and supervisors without due regard of their professional and academic qualifications. The study further revealed inadequate security arrangements where a single security guard was allocated to watch over a compound with several facilities at night. In general, the rehabilitation centres suffered from lack of funding making them to greatly rely on grants from Non-Governmental Organizations because the government has not prioritized committing meager resources to finance skills training for young offenders. Kaderi (2004) observes that borstal institutions in Ghana's juvenile correctional justice system lack the simplest practical vocational teaching equipment required to change the juveniles which include; leather work, wood work, dress making, soap-making and other hands on skills that capture and occupy the minds of the young offenders.

Background to the Study

According to UNICEF (1999) most of the rehabilitation schools in Kenya were set up during the colonial era and have received little in terms of expansion. As a result, these institutions cannot put up with the growing demand of the thousands of children loitering in the streets (Ngundo, 2005). The Government of Kenya has ratified numerous international declarations on human rights and education such as the Jomtein Conference (1990), UNESCO (2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MoEST, 2003) which unequivocally emphasizes the provision of quality education to all children. In Kenya, the Department of Children Services (DCS), is given the obligation of running and advising the management of juvenile rehabilitation schools to the finest wellbeing of the child. The mandate of the rehabilitation schools is stipulated by the Children's Act (Cap 586), Laws of Kenya (GOK, 2002). The institutions were based on the British Borstal system admitting children who are in conflict with the law (circular to the magistrates' No. 1 of 1909). The institutions were expected to re-socialize young offenders, build their self-esteem and fit them back to the society, but this turned to be punitive oriented prison for young offenders (Ndunda, 1978). The functions of rehabilitation schools include: among others, provision of social training by way of disciplining the child, provision of spiritual nourishment to the child through religious institutions, provision of academic training to the child to ensure that committal to the school does not adversely affect schooling, equipping the child with useful skills which would enable the child to be economically reliant, assisting children obtain admission to regular schools upon completion of the rehabilitation period as well as arrangement for after care services (GoK, 2002). The Government of Kenya addresses the endowment of education and skill as indispensable human rights for all its citizens and is enshrined in the governments overall



development strategy (MoEST, 2005). In this regard, the government perceives education as an enduring goal to enhance Kenyan social- economic development and utilize the environment in sustainable ways. The entry behaviour to schooling encompasses the underprivileged and the children at risk and is undoubtedly a basic tool for nurturing and the safeguard of democratic traditions.

Problem Statement

A study by Okutoyi (2005) found out that rehabilitation institutions encounter numerous challenges in their attempt to achieve their goals of restoring the young offenders. In particular, the study identified scarcity of resources and trained workers, limiting campus environment and archaic laws as the major challenges. The study endorsed a critical need to develop the centres to permit them provide more operative services for the juveniles by ratifying comprehensive statutes, increased funding to modify the environment and also to provide incentives to motivate the staff in the rehabilitation centres. In the light of the above discoveries, the rehabilitation of child offenders will necessitate an all-inclusive methodology that includes all stakeholders. Ngundo (2005) argues that juvenile delinquents have emotional and behavioral disorders that need to be given the right professional assistance for them to excel in academic work. However, provision of quality instructions and related services for children under special circumstances like in rehabilitation schools has not been adequately emphasized (MoEST, 2001). In line with this, good progress has been attained from the time when the free primary education policies in January 2003 were introduced (DFID, 2009). However, this growth has been disproportionate across different segments of primary schooling. Andango and Mugo (2007) observe that although primary education has captured intense focus in relation to policy formulation, education of children in rehabilitation schools and those serving prison sentences has not been explicitly addressed. Many children now identified with behavioral and emotional disorders are children who require intensive and sustained help for them to attain competitive levels of academic achievement. Therefore, there is need to carry out studies to generate empirical information that can inform policy on the impact of the challenges facing the rehabilitation centres on academic achievement among juvenile delinquents. Limited literature exists on challenges facing the Othaya rehabilitation Centre, Nyeri County Kenya and hence the need of this study.

Objectives

- i. Assess the challenges encountered by teachers in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre in Nyeri, Kenya.
- ii. Find out the challenges encountered by learners enrolled in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre in Nyeri, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted by this study was a descriptive research. This design was appropriate for the study because it enabled investigation of the variables as they were without being manipulated by the researcher. The target population was all the 103 learners and all the 9 teachers at the Othaya Rehabilitation Centre. According to Oso and Onen (2004) sampling is the procedure of picking typical entities to facilitate the investigator to access data pertaining to the population. However, Kothari (2004) asserts that circumstances where the target population is a small one, there is no need to resort to selecting a sample, and rather a census inquiry which consists of an entire inventory of all items in the population should be conducted.



When all subjects in the population are included in the study, no hint of coincidental option is left out and utmost accuracy is obtained. Accordingly, in this study all the 103 learners and nine teachers at Othaya rehabilitation Centre were included in the study because the target population was small and thus a manageable number. Data was collected using two sets of questionnaires and analysis was done using descriptive statistics. The computer software SPSS version 20.0 was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion are in accordance with the objectives of the study.

a) The first research objective sought to assess the challenges encountered by teachers in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre in Nyeri, Kenya. The opinions of the respondents were captured in a likert scale with a range from; to a great extent (4), somewhat (3), to a little extent (2), not at all (1). The responses were used to compute a mean score (\bar{x}) for each statement on a scale of 1 to 4. The findings are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Challenges Encountered by Teachers at Othaya Rehabilitation Centre

		To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a little extent	Not at all	<i>n</i>	\bar{x}
1.	The teachers work allocation is reasonable.	3	4	1	1	9	3.00
2.	Counseling programmes offered to learners are effective	1	2	5	1	9	2.33
3.	There is security for learners and teachers in the centre.	1	4	4	0	9	2.67
4.	Teachers get parental support in molding the learners.	0	2	3	4	9	1.78
5.	Vocational training workshops are equipped.	0	1	5	3	9	1.78
6.	There are teaching/learning resources.	0	1	6	2	9	1.89
7.	The centre has controls of learners' behavioural problems.	1	3	5	0	9	2.56
8.	Teachers are provided with incentives for good performance.	0	0	0	9	9	1.00
9.	Teachers in the centre are motivated.	0	1	3	5	9	1.00
10.	Teachers have in-service training on handling juvenile delinquents.	0	0	0	9	9	1.00

Analyzed data presented in Table 1 provides a summary of challenges encountered by teachers at Othaya Rehabilitation Centre. As indicated in the Table, the response on teachers work allocation is reasonable had a mean score of 3.00 indicating that it was reasonable to a



great extent. The mean score of counseling programmes ($\bar{x} = 2.33$) indicated that according to the teachers the programmes offered to learners were effective to a very little extent. The security for learners and teachers in the centre ($\bar{x} = 2.67$) showed it was rated as moderate. Parental support to teachers in molding the learners was rated ($\bar{x} = 1.98$) thus showing it was to a very little extent. On whether the vocational training workshops are equipped ($\bar{x} = 1.88$), which indicated it was to a very little extent. In relation to availability of teaching/learning resources ($\bar{x} = 1.89$) which indicated to a very little extent. The respondents indicated that the rehabilitation centre had controls of learners' behavioural problems to a moderate extent ($\bar{x} = 2.56$). Teachers were not provided with incentives for good performance ($\bar{x} = 1.00$). Teachers in the centre were not motivated at all ($\bar{x} = 1.00$). Lastly, the teachers had not received any in-service training on handling juvenile delinquents ($\bar{x} = 1.00$).

The study thus shows that teachers encountered several challenges that could have a negative influence on implementation of rehabilitation programmes and academic achievement by learners in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre. This is in agreement with a study in Ghana by Stephanie and Corinne (2011) which revealed that there was inadequate staffing at correctional centres. In addition, the correctional centres lacked qualified professionals resulting in workers being assigned diverse roles at the correctional centres as counselors, teachers and supervisors without due regard of their professional and academic qualifications. The study further revealed inadequate security arrangements where a single security guard was allocated to watch over a compound with several facilities at night. These findings concur with a case study conducted at Shikusa Borstal Institution by Okutoyi (2005) which revealed that the institution faced numerous challenges in their attempt to fulfill their obligation of restoring the young offenders comprising of; inadequate resources, untrained or semi trained employees and a limiting working environment. The researcher recommended the necessity to comprehensively address the challenges in these centres so as to enable them offer effective restorative services.

b) The second research objective sought to establish the challenges encountered by learners enrolled in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre in Nyeri, Kenya. A five point likert scale where (5) was always, (4) often, (3) sometimes, (2) rarely and (1) never was used to assess the challenges encountered by learners. The responses were used to compute a mean score (\bar{x}) for each statement on a scale of 1-5. Table 2 gives a summary of the findings.



Table 2: Challenges Encountered by Learners at Othaya Rehabilitation Centre

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	<i>n</i>	\bar{x}
Bullying by other learners.	12	23	46	18	4	103	3.20
Teachers are absent for lessons.	11	29	39	18	6	103	3.20
Inadequate textbooks.	4	13	56	24	4	103	2.83
Centre has poor hygiene conditions, eg toilets, dormitories, classrooms, dining halls, etc	13	49	27	11	3	103	3.56
I am subjected to corporal punishment when I misbehave.	3	17	44	21	15	103	2.64
I suffer from theft of personal items, eg, pens, books, soap, clothes, shoes, toothpastes.	12	50	28	10	3	103	3.56
I have opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities, eg ball games, clubs, societies, athletics	11	28	35	25	4	103	3.17
The accommodation facilities in the centre are poor.	19	42	29	9	3	103	3.60
Diet provided by the school is of poor quality.	23	53	21	5	1	103	3.17
We are promptly provided with medical care in case of sickness.	15	31	54	3	0	103	3.56

The results presented in Table 2 show that bullying by other learners sometimes occurred in Othaya Rehabilitation Centre which was rated ($\bar{x} = 3.20$). Teachers' absenteeism from lessons was rated as occurring sometimes ($\bar{x} = 3.20$). Lack of textbooks ($\bar{x} = 2.83$) indicated rarely. The study established that the facilities at the centre often had poor hygienic conditions ($\bar{x} = 3.56$). The respondents revealed that corporal punishment was rarely used in the centre as a means to address misbehaviour ($\bar{x} = 2.64$). The respondents indicated that they often suffer from theft of personal items ($\bar{x} = 3.56$). The learners indicated that they sometimes had opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities ($\bar{x} = 3.17$). The accommodation facilities in the centre were rated as poor ($\bar{x} = 3.60$) and the diet was provided to the learners was sometimes of poor quality. Lastly, the learners indicated that prompt provision of medical care in case of sickness often occurred. The results of this study show that learners in the rehabilitation centre encountered myriad of challenges that could compromise the goals and objectives of the entire rehabilitation process. These findings concur with Kaderi (2004) who observed that juvenile correctional centres, lack the basic technical and vocational training equipment or workshops and usually work with broken down equipment. Similarly, on Ghana's juvenile justice system it was established that the juvenile correctional centres were plagued with many challenges; in relation to the physical infrastructure the houses in the rehabilitation centres had not been



renovated for several decades, there was rampant overcrowding in the facilities and boys had a tendency to engage in fighting each other (Stephanie and Corinne, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research revealed that teachers encountered numerous challenges that could have a negative influence on implementation of rehabilitation programmes and academic achievement of juvenile delinquents at Othaya Rehabilitation Centre. In particular, teachers had not received any in-service training on handling juvenile delinquents, they were not motivated and there were no incentives for good performance. In addition, the teachers received no parental support in molding the learners. Lastly, the counseling programmes offered to learners were viewed as largely effective. The study also found out that the juvenile offenders were frequently bullied by their older colleagues, teachers' non-attendance of lessons was common, the pupils were provided with limited chances to take part in co-curricular events, hygienic conditions in the centre were poor and the pupils frequently lost personal items due to theft. Informed by these results, the study recommends the need to provide in-service training for teachers to provide them with incentives for good performance. It is also important to sensitize parents and bring them on board in the rehabilitation efforts carried out in the centre. The study further recommends the need to ensure safety of learners in the centre through eradication of all forms of bullying and theft of personal items. Lastly, the study recommends the need to increase the openings for learners to take part in co-curricular activities and improvement of sanitary conditions in the centre.

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