EFFECTS OF CUSTODIAL SENTENCE ON RECIDIVISM AT SHIMO LA TEWA PRISONS IN MOMBASA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to establish the effects of custodial sentence on recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County, Kenya. Specifically this study analyzed the social factors, prison rehabilitation programmes and the influence of time spent in prison on recidivism. This study was motivated by the fact that despite the growing emphasis on rehabilitation of convicts, the rate of successful reintegration back to society has been very low. This study therefore endeavoured to establish whether custodial sentence predispose convicts to become non-conforming members of society moments after release. The specific objective of this study was to assess how social factors influence recidivism, to establish how prison rehabilitation programmes influence recidivism and to examine how time spent in prison influence recidivism. The study was guided by two theories; deterrence theory and rehabilitation theory. The study limited itself to three prison facilities with different administrational structure in Mombasa County namely; Shimo la Tewa Maximum, Shimo la Tewa Women's and Shimo la Tewa Medium prisons. Explanatory sequential mixed method research design was used since the study sought to examine how various variables influence recidivism. Purposive and stratified sampling technique was applied to select respondents for this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores and simple regression analysis by the use of SPSS software. Qualitative data from interview schedules was analysed through thematic analysis and a verbatim report. This study has established that education level, employment status after release, family composition and type of family background, rehabilitation programmes offered and time spent in prison significantly influenced recidivism among re-offenders incarcerated at Shimo la Tewa prisons. Consequently, a correlation was established between the level of education attained by the respondents and the type of crime committed. Furthermore, the study established that most respondents did not go beyond primary level education and the common crimes committed by the recidivists at the facilities were robbery, drug trafficking and defilement. The recidivists felt that if they had attained high level of education they would have better opportunities and have had a stable income and engaged in better practices. About a half indicated that their level of education forced them to resort to crime as a suitable alternative. In terms of policy, this study recommends that prison authorities emphasize on mandatory attendance of inmates to academic training offered in prison as education is seen as the single best predictor for employability and empowering individuals, thus if stressed reduces recidivism immensely. More so, in terms of policy prisons should reassess rehabilitation programmes offered to fit the specific and individual needs of inmates as prisons are seen as criminogenic and breeding grounds for more recidivists if such measures will not be reached. Given the rise of recidivism bred in Kenya prisons, this study is of the view that further study be done to cover a wider area to enhance generalization on all prisons across the country.

Key Words: *custodial sentence, recidivism, Shimo la Tewa prison, Mombasa County, Kenya, social factors, rehabilitation programmes, time spent in prison, convicts, criminogenic*

INTRODUCTION

Prison is a relatively modern invention having been in existence for less than 300 years (Morris & Rothman, 1995). Prisons have their roots in the north-east of the United States and in Western Europe and have subsequently spread around the world, often in the wake of colonial expansion. Prisons were places of detention where people waited to be tried until fine or debt was paid or until court disposal was implemented has existed for many centuries. But the use of prison as a direct disposal of the court to any significant extent can be dated to a relatively recent period (Coyle, 2005).

The earliest use of imprisonment was to hold defendants awaiting trial and dates from the ninth century; by the thirteenth century a network of 'county gaols' had been established. They were small, as was their population, and were privately owned by local Lords who profited by charging prisoners for accommodation, food and other services. Prison in medieval England was not regarded as punishment in its own right and its function was to detain rather than punish, those imprisoned faced extremely unhealthy conditions and risked disease and starvation. Incarceration was justified as retribution and enforced as a deterrent, its success was measured by its capacity to simply detain and prevent escapes (Muncie, 2001).

By the mid-19th century a number of key shifts had taken place: from arbitrary state involvement in penal practice to a rationalized and centralized state-organized system: Differentiation between criminal groups in the classification and categorization of prisons and prisoners into separate groups such as men and women, adults and young offenders, remand and convicted, required specialized forms of intervention from accredited professionals or experts. With these processes the prison emerged as the dominant instrument for changing undesirable behaviour and became a favoured form of punishment (Cohen, 1985).

Prison population has continued to grow in many parts of the world. The population has risen to 73% of countries included in the world prison population list. The largest prison populations is China with 2.55 million, USA 2.19m, Russia 0.87m, Brazil 0.36m, India 0.33m, Mexico 0.21m, Thailand 0.16m, South Africa 0.15m and Iran 0.15m (Van Dijk, 2007). Increase in prison populations often result in overcrowded prison facilities if prison construction does not keep pace with demand. UN Crime Survey show very high occupancy rates in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America in particular (UNODC, 2005). In Brazil, approximately 75% of the prison population are in the penitentiary system and 25% are in cells in police stations, which do not have minimum conditions for incarceration of prisoners (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

In Africa, large percentage increases have been seen in North African countries such as Algeria 76% and Morocco. South Africa's prison numbers peaked in 2004, falling back from 188,000 then to 158,000 in 2014. Prison numbers have risen in some but not all East African states. Ethiopia's prison population increased from 55,000 in 2000 to 93,000 in 2011, with smaller percentage rises in Kenya and Uganda. Rwanda's prison numbers which hugely

increased following the genocide have fallen dramatically since 1998. Tanzania and Zimbabwe report fewer prisoners today than 15 years ago. West and Central African countries have seen increases; some relatively small as in the case of Cameroon, others sharper as in the case of Nigeria (UNODC, 2015).

The population of convicts in Kenya has grown three times since 2010, according to the Economic survey. The Survey indicates that the population of convicts stood at 88,631 inmates in 2010, but rose to 221,974 inmates in 2015. The population has however fluctuated with 2014 recording an increase by 20,472 inmates from 2013. In 2014 however, 109,629 were imprisoned and the prisons recorded an increase of 6% in daily average population of inmates. This however went down by 10.6 per cent last year. The population of previously convicted as per the survey stands at 111,055 for the year 2011 to 2015. The year 2015 alone according to the survey recorded the number of previously convicted at 17,683 (KNBS, 2016).

The phenomenon of prisoner re-entry presents a wide variety of challenges to the returning individuals, members of their families, local communities and the government. Those returning from prison are very likely to return to a life of crime. Convicts leaving prison are often highly likely to be unemployed. This coupled with the stigma attached to a criminal conviction, can hinder returning prisoners as they attempt to gain employment and become productive members of society (Van Dijk, 2007).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Prisons in Kenya are charged with the mandate of correction and rehabilitation of offenders. The government has made enormous efforts by providing additional budget allocation to prisons, more trained staff, increased rehabilitation programmes and humane environment for purposes of total exit for convicts and consequent reduction of recidivism. Despite these efforts, recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons' poses a challenge as previous offenders are readmitted back to the facilities. It is upon this premise that this study intended to establish why reoffending rate is on the increase.

BROAD OBJECTIVE

The broad objective of this study was to establish the effects of custodial sentence on recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To assess how social factors influence recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County.

2. To establish how prison rehabilitation programmes influence recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County.

3. To examine how time spent in prison influence recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Factors Influencing Recidivism

Stigmatization of Ex-convicts: Goffman (1963) defines stigma as a mark that discounts a person's credibility, endowing him/ her with detrimental characteristics. Stigma is also seen as a label placed on individuals or groups that result in devaluation associated with undesirable characteristics (Link & Phelan, 2001). Furthermore, stigma is considered to emanate either from self which is referred to as self-stigma or from public which is referred to as public stigma. Public stigma can be termed as discrimination imposed by more powerful groups such as the community or government on the labelled group (Link & Phelan, 2001), while self stigma takes place when the minority group in the case of ex-prisoners, internalizing such beliefs against themselves (Mak & Cheung, 2010).

Kobayashi & Kerbo (2012) assert that, stigma that comes with arrest and sanction can be transformed into shame and embarrassment which can be seen as deterrence for future law violations. This sentiment is contradicted by various scholars who see labelling of ex-convicts as not having any effect on deterrence. One of the scholars is Chen (2004) who views stigma as harmful to ex-convicts and can further lead to anger and resentment rather than shame and remorse, which increases the likelihood of recidivism. On the other hand, Winnick & Bodkin (2008) concur that, once the negative label is internalized, the labelled individual may adjust his/ her behaviours to match such new evaluations and in the case of ex-prisoners such internalization justifies their returning to deviant activities.

Braithwaite (1989) sees stigma as disintegrative shaming in which no effort is made to reconcile the offender with the community. Link & Phelan (2001) further asserts in the case of ex prisoners, the mark of being an ex-convict endures long after initial release from prison and the stigma of stereotyping, labelling, discrimination, status loss, and separation experienced by ex-prisoners is considered as invisible punishment. Braithwaite (2000) further stresses on the negative consequences stigma has on ex-convicts. Stigma is viewed as possessing a channel that increases the attractiveness of forming criminal subculture and it is the subcultures that neutralize the shame that would otherwise be experienced as a result of law breaking.

Social Support of Ex-convicts: The family unit is recognized as one of the strongest pillars of the support system in penal facilities and cannot be overlooked, because of the emotional and physical support it provides for the treatment of offenders. Hairston (1988:1991), Dowden & Andrews (1999) and Slaght (1999) point to the importance of family support and its positive impact on individuals, during and after incarceration. Hairston (2002) raises questions about the impact of imprisonment on children and families and the extent to which families might be resources and assets rather than liabilities in promoting safer resourceful communities.

Berg & Huebner (2011) view social support especially those created through social ties as important especially for prisoners during their re-entry. They examine the relationship between social ties, employment and recidivism. Their findings suggest that family ties have

implications for both recidivism and job attainment and hence, the family unit plays an important role in the life of an offender. Pritikin (2008) further observes that incarceration disrupts connections between inmates and their families making it difficult for offenders to reintegrate upon release and avoid engaging in criminal behaviour. Therefore, it is on this basis, that this study sought to establish how family social support system plays a critical role in the reintegration of ex-convicts back to society and consequently reducing recidivism.

Employment of Ex-convicts: Ex-offenders suffer from a variety of serious difficulties as they attempt to re-enter society. Among the most challenging situations they face is that of re-entry into the labour market. Employment rates and earnings of ex-offenders are low by almost any standard though in most cases they were fairly low even before the offenders were incarcerated. Low employment rates seem closely related to the very high recidivism rates observed among those released from prison (Holzer et. al., 2003).

The necessity of understanding employer attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders is paramount, as finding legitimate employment upon release has been cited as one of the most important aspects of successful reintegration into society (La Vigne & Kachnowski, 2005). Coupled with the many challenges of securing employment, almost two-thirds of offenders are assisted financially by family members upon release from prison (Shollenberger, 2009). Moreover, many challenges have been reported by Holzer (1996) who discovered that, becoming financially independent for ex-offenders can be a daunting task given that the majority of jobs in the current labour market require a higher qualification, specific work skills, or prior work experience.

Difficulties in obtaining legitimate employment increase the pressure and temptation for former offenders to earn a living through illegitimate means. Their inability to obtain quality employment is one of the biggest risk factors for offender recidivism. Although post-incarceration employment prospects will vary greatly depending on the nature of the conviction, the duration of incarceration and other circumstances may result to decreased expected lifetime earnings (Pritikin, 2008).

Influence of Prison Rehabilitation Programmes on Recidivism

Correctional programmes are aimed at equipping inmates with survival life skills to enable them to lead a crime free life upon release, reduce prison population to manageable levels and breaking the offending cycles among others (Gendreau & Ross, 1979). However, Gona et al. (2014) point to the fact that, prison population continues to rise and the majority of the convicted offenders are not first offenders which leads to questioning the efficacy of correctional programmes implemented by correctional facilities. Arguments on efficacy of prison rehabilitation programs and whether it has ameliorative effect on criminality and recidivism continue to elicit varied discussions.

Esperian (2010) emphasize the importance of rehabilitation programmes among convicts to reduce rates of recidivism. Esperian offers strong support for the argument that it is far more profitable for states to fund education classes for inmates, for two reasons: first, doing so reduces recidivism dramatically and second because educating felons eliminates the costs

associated with long term warehousing. Similarly, the Ohio state prison system looked at the impact education and job training had on recidivism over a two-year period. Their findings suggest that about 28% of offenders who complete or achieved some form of educational program recidivate within the two year window. Inmates who did not receive any educational program, 30.4% returned to prison within two years (Wilkinson & Stickrath, 1995). More importantly, provision and completion of prison provided rehabilitation programs is viewed to have an impact in reduction of offender recidivism. Hence, it was significant to establish if completion of rehabilitation programs by convicts at Shimo la Tewa have any impact or correlation with re-offending.

Influence of Time Spent in Prison on Recidivism

Crime is viewed as essentially a learned behaviour that is rational, but illegal, response to a set of isolating social conditions. The efforts to reduce re-offending should focus on changing the social conditions that precipitate learning of these behaviours in crime plagued environments (Mauer, 1999). Prison environment exerts an influence upon inmate misconduct, especially interpersonal violence, above and beyond the influence of the characteristics of inmates (Bottoms, 1999).

Prison condition is a major determinant of whether one is more likely to become a professionalized criminal since they provide an environment in which prisoners can socialize with each other. Moreover, prison is depicted as a small space where prisoners are stuck for many years with plenty to talk about and there is no doubt that crime and techniques will come up during conversations (Neminski, 2015). On the contrary, Sampson and Laub (1993) view length of incarceration as not having any effect on future offending of ex-convicts. They assert that there is no direct effect between length of incarceration or duration an offender spends in a correctional facility and future offending. They further claim incarceration is unimportant in explaining crime over the life course of an offender.

Goodstein & Wright (1989) see prison life as exerting negative influence on inmate's attitudes, values, modes of social interaction and self concepts, causing prisoners to be less capable of succeeding in the community after release. Comparably, Pritikin (2008) further claims the dangerous conditions inside these institutions tends to increase crime to a greater extend once convicts are released rather than reform them. Thus, it was vital to establish whether prison and conditions of life inside study area precipitate re-offending once offenders are released back to society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence is a forward-looking punishment philosophy because it recognizes that we cannot change the past, deterrence holds that the best society can do is to prevent wrongs from being committed in the future. Deterrence theory suggests that if the pain derived from the punishment of a criminal act outweighs the pleasure or gain derived from that act, the rational person will not choose to engage in the crime (Kessler & Levitt, 1999). Deterrence is

therefore at its core a utilitarian punishment philosophy. By raising the cost of crime through imposing higher rates of imprisonment, crime rate declines as individuals make rational decisions based on the perceived certainty of arrest and the perceived severity of punishment (Grasmick & Bryjak, 1980). One problem with deterrence theory is that it ignores the aetiology of understanding the causation of crime and how to ultimately correct and reform offenders to reduce recidivism. Deterrence is based on the belief of punishing the offender rather than concentration on rehabilitating them. It goes further to ignore community inclusion in the rehabilitation process. A major gap in the theory is that it fails to explain and take into consideration such ideologies as offenders being rational actors who consider the consequences of their behaviour before commission of a crime, reason re-offenders are not deterred by severity of punishment moment after release.

Rehabilitation Theory

Rehabilitation theory rapidly emerged as rebuttal to Robert Martinson's (1974b) influential "nothing works" essay, which theorized that few treatment programmes reduced recidivism (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). The concept of rehabilitation rests on the assumption that criminal behaviour is caused by some factors. This perspective does not deny that people make choices to break the law, but it does assert that these choices are not a matter of "free will" (Cullen & Jonson, 2012). Rehabilitation perspective main goal is to intervene and change those factors that are causing offenders to break the law (e.g. antisocial attitudes, bad companions, dysfunctional families) and unless these criminogenic risks are targeted for change, then crime will continue (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Therefore, from this perspective, correctional and rehabilitation approach is preferred to deterrence in shaping convicts to become conforming members of society. Punishing the offender, unlike, addressing what can be done to rehabilitate them simply is seen as not curing the society of recidivism. Thus, for custodial sentence to be effective it should be viewed as a path for rehabilitating convicted offenders rather than punishing them which can lead to resentment towards the system resulting to recidivism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used explanatory sequential mixed method research design. Explanatory sequential mixed method research design is defined as a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing or integrating both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research problem (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003; Creswell 2005). In this study, quantitative data was collected using survey questionnaires after which the results was analyzed and then explained in a more detailed manner by qualitative data collected through interviews. Furthermore, this design was essential because this study sought to examine how various variables influence recidivism among re-offenders at Shimo la Tewa in Mombasa County.

Study Area

The study was conducted on re-offenders in three prison facilities in Mombasa County namely; Shimo la Tewa maximum, Shimo la Tewa Women's and Shimo la Tewa Medium in Mombasa County. Mombasa County is the second largest city in Kenya after Nairobi. It is located on the Eastern coastline bordering the Indian Ocean. Coast province has a total of sixteen prison facilities, serving various districts of the province (The Prisons Act, 2009). The sixteen facilities are under the command of the Regional Prison Commander and each of the facility is headed by an Officer in Charge. Shimo la Tewa maximum, Shimo la Tewa Women's and Shimo la Tewa Medium was fit for this study due to its high recidivism rates compared to other prison facilities in the coastal region. The three prison facilities have a population of 3196 prisoners and 519 re-offenders as at November 2018 (Shimo la Tewa prison, 2018). Shimo la Tewa prison is situated on the northern part of Mombasa District and in Kisauni constituency. The three prison facilities are best suited as there is need to study prospects that predispose ex-convicts to reoffend.
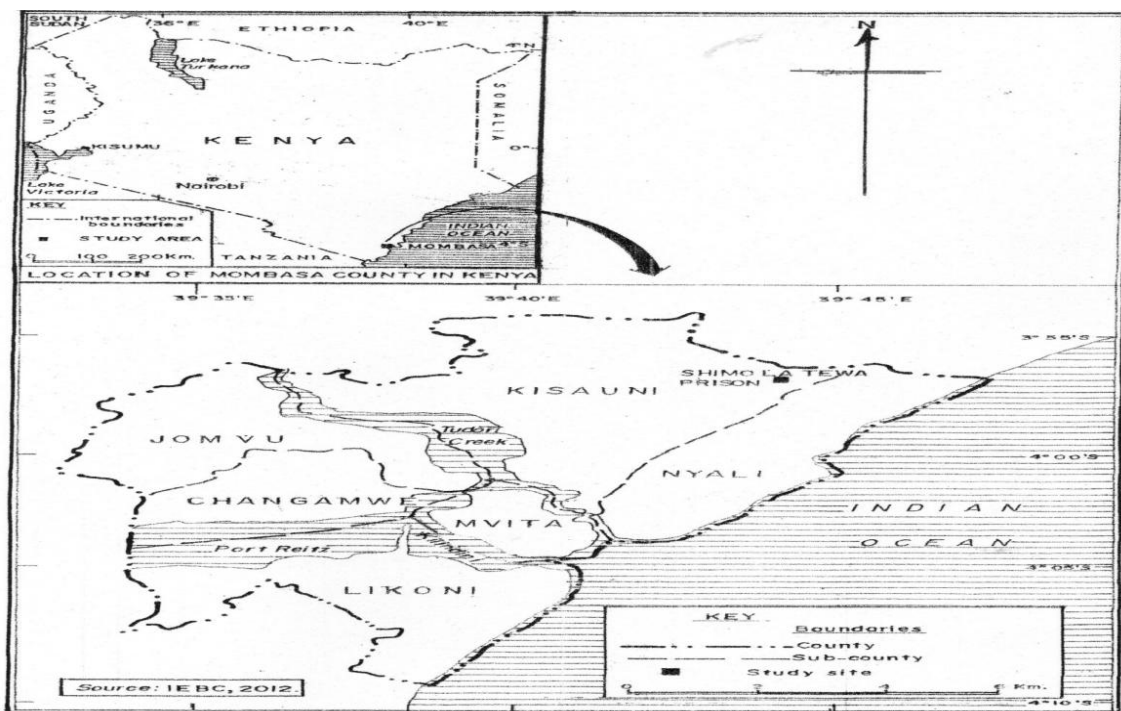

Figure 2: Map of Mombasa County Showing Study Area

Population of the Study

The study targeted a population of 519 re-offenders in three prison facilities at Shimo la Tewa in Mombasa County namely; Shimo la Tewa Maximum, Shimo la Tewa Women's and Shimo la Tewa Medium. The three prison facilities had a population of 3196 convicted prisoners and 519 re-offenders as at November 2018 (Shimo la Tewa prison, 2018).

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study adopted simple random sampling. From a study population of 519, a sample size was drawn using Kerlinger (1983) formulae.

Sample size (n) = n/100 X 519 = 30/100 x 519 = 156

Where n= 30% of the population

Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used to select respondents for this study. The respondents were purposively chosen because records listing names, particulars and required characteristics of the re-offenders were easily accessed. In addition, the respondents having been incarcerated more than once had the required information for this study. Stratified sampling was essential in categorizing respondents according to their prisons facilities. From the total sample size n each sub-sample size (n_h) (the number of respondents in each ward) for the 3 prisons. The sample size of each ward is calculated as follows:

$$n_h = n \frac{N_h}{N}$$

Where h will be one stratum of the two strata, n will be the total sample size, n_h will be the sub-sample for each stratum, N_h will be the population in the stratum and N will be the target population. For example in Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prison; n_h will be calculated as follows:

156 x 213= 64 Respondents

519

Methods of Data Collection

Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The instruments were designed according to the research objectives. The questionnaire involved both open and closed questions on the 156 respondents. The interview schedules were specifically administered to the 3 heads of the prison facilities. The instruments were conducted at the prison facilities with the permission of the prison administration.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyze data. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences software to analyze quantitative data from the survey using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages and mean scores. The influence was tested using standard deviation using F-statistics. The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed through thematic content analysis.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Assessment of how Social Factors Influence Recidivism at Shimo la Tewa Prisons in Mombasa County

Education Level: The study did an examination of the educational attainment of the respondents at the three prison facilities which demonstrates that, most re-offenders are much less educated. It was discovered that 66.41% of the recidivists have little or no schooling background with 20.61% indicated that they have secondary education though most of them indicated that they did not finish their secondary education. The number of those that have post-secondary education stood at 6.87%. Only 8 of the re-offenders which is 6.11% have university education.

Results from the study showed that, crime increases with the decrease in the level of education. An examination of the recidivists' educational attainment demonstrates that lack of basic education, forced most recidivists to perform unskilled kind of jobs which later led them to engage in crime. From the findings, it can be concluded that crime is a negative externality with enormous social costs.

Employment Status before Re-offending: The study showed 106 (80.92%) had indicated that they were unable to get employment after their first conviction, saying that it was really a challenge when the community branded them as thieves or insulted them on the basis that they were ex-convicts. Stigma is the major reason why they did not feel equal even to ask for employment because employers would dismiss them in an unfavorable manner. Of those who got employment after their first conviction 25(19.08%), they indicated that they got petty jobs such as waiters, untrained guards, water vendors or cleaners which did not improve or even sustain their economic needs. For this reason they resorted back to crime.

Family Composition: Majority of the recidivists have siblings, 51 (38.93%) stating that they have 6-8 siblings, 43 (32.82%) more than 9 siblings and only 15(11.45%) who indicated they have more than 0-2 siblings. These findings imply that, most of the recidivists come from large families. Nonetheless, the large families coupled with high levels of poverty, they may not have received detailed attention by their parents or guardians for that matter. Thus, from the above findings, events of individuals during early stages of life and familial support are essential as they determine whether one will resort to criminal activities. Positive parenting practices during the early years and later in adolescence appear to act as buffers preventing delinquent behaviour and assisting family members already involved in such behaviour in desisting from further criminal activities.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1.007[a]	.731	.71	1.66239

a. Predictors: (Constant), How education level affects recidivism, How employment affects recidivism, How family setup affects recidivism,

How family relations affect recidivism.

Prison Rehabilitation Programmes Influence on Recidivism at Shimo la Tewa prisons in Mombasa County

Table 2: Rehabilitative Effects Associated With Vocational Activities Engaged During First Imprisonment

Activity	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	81	61.83
No	50	38.17
Total	131	100

The extent of effectiveness of rehabilitative programmes offered at Shimo la Tewa prisons was evaluated and the results were as tabulated in table 2; 61.83% were of the opinion that the vocational activities had a rehabilitative impact, while 38.17% held that the activities they engaged in did not have any rehabilitative impact on them at all. A significant majority of the respondents were thus affirmative that the rehabilitative programmes had, had an effect on them. Indeed, a less percentage (38.17%) felt that rehabilitation programmes were less helpful. From the findings of the study, this calls for the need to reassess these programmes and improve them with more efficient and effective programmes to suit the re-offenders needs across board.

Influence of Time Spent in Prison on Recidivism at Shimo la Tewa Prisons in Mombasa County

The prison dosage (length of stay) may have different conditional effects on factors associated with the individual, social context, sentencing structure and also with potentially many other factors. This study sought to find how incarceration affects heterogeneity and systematically examine incarceration heterogeneity.

Table 3: Effects of Time in Prison on Recidivism

Variables	Time spent in prison
Male	0.0519
	(0.206)
Female	-2.888***
	(0.280)
Age at prison release	0.0798***
	(0.00978)
Prior convictions	0.229***
	(0.0500)
Constant	9.465***
	(2.769)
Observations	131
F-stat	92.15
R square	0.396

Standard errors in parentheses. Time served in prison is measured in months. Crime type, fixed effects included. *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

The F-statistics of all first stage regressions are above 50, and the instruments are highly predictive of time served in custody. The study included controls widely used in the literature such as age at release and number of past convictions. In all regressions, the most predictive power for time served in prison.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social factors greatly influence recidivism among offenders and these factors include employment and source of income, education levels, family setup and family relations. Thus if these factors are taken into consideration during sentencing and tailor-making of convicts rehabilitation needs, then fewer cases of recidivism will suffice in the future.

Prison rehabilitation programmes was found to influence recidivism among incarcerated offenders. A significant majority of respondents were affirmative that the rehabilitative programmes had, had an effect on them. Indeed, a less percentage (38.17%) felt that rehabilitation programmes were less helpful and this calls for the need to reassess these programmes and improve them with more efficient and effective programmes.

Time spent in prison influences one's behaviour to a greater extent. The study thus concludes that an average prisoner has 2.5 prior convictions and almost 30 percent of the sample returns to prison, with or without a new sentence, within three years of release.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for prison authorities to emphasize on mandatory attendance of inmates to academic training offered in prison. Education is seen as the single best predictor for employability and empowering individuals, thus if stressed it will reduce recidivism immensely. Furthermore, with the trainings received, there should be linkage of ex-convicts to job agencies and employers as it will make them become more independent and at the same time reduce labeling of ex-convicts.

There is need for prison authorities to reassess prison rehabilitation programmes to fit the specific and individual needs of inmates. Further, inmates' suggestions should have a part when tailor-making and reviewing of such programmes in order for their opinion to be parcel when crafting the programmes and their consequent efficacy. Total inclusion and participation of the inmates and appreciation of the programmes will immensely reduce recidivism as inmates will exit the facilities fully empowered.

Prisons are criminogenic and there is much of learning of new behaviours that happen behind the prison walls. Efforts of reducing recidivism should mainly focus on changing the social aspects and environment that precipitate learning of such behaviours. Therefore, there is need to stress on alternative or suspended sentences such as probation for first time offenders especially, minor crimes. Moreover, first time offenders need not to be socialized to crime in prison but supervised and counseled and confining makes them become recidivists.

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