



Prison Reforms and Strategies to Improve Practices of Education Offered to Prisoners in Kamiti Maximum Prisons, Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Worldwide, governments are majorly concerned with the problem of rehabilitating inmates into law-abiding citizens. In Kenya, the Government has introduced Prison reforms to boost prisons' capacity to rehabilitate inmates. They include reforms to improve the living conditions of the inmates, the provision of teaching and learning materials and the terms of service of the warders. However, there are concerns that prisons are still faced with the problem of rehabilitation as inmates persist in criminal behavior. This paper explored recommendations that will help to improve teaching and learning practices in KMSP. This paper used reinforcement theory, whose leading proponent is B.F. Skinner (1974). The research utilized a descriptive design with a survey method of data collection. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather primary data. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively to get general frequencies and percentages to discuss the findings. Qualitative data were outlined and dealt with into topics and classifications. Based on the results of the paper, the following recommendations were made. There should be provision of better teaching and learning resources and improvement of living conditions for both inmates and warders. Recommendations for further studies included similar research that can be conducted in a female prison.

Keywords: Prison, Inmates, Kamiti Maximum Security Prison.

Background of the Study

A significant function of prisons is rehabilitating inmates (Arbour et al., 2021). Prison education is one of the methods used to achieve rehabilitation. International legal instruments recognize education as an entitlement (Prais, 2020). Imprisonment should only deprive the inmates of their other civil liberties, but they should be allowed to participate in educational activities. A probe into the prison population reveals that a majority are male. Worldwide there are 10.1 million inmates on any given day, with fifteen men in Prison for every female (López-Torrecillas et al., 2021). Inmates can be regarded as a marginalized society (Ignjantovic, 2021). This is because governments have failed to supply basic social infrastructure and amenities generally provided to the rest of society. These infrastructure and amenities are critical for human existence and development. However, inmates lack access to health facilities, proper housing, sports facilities, and sanitation. Cid et al. (2021), notes that inmates live under squalid, inhuman, and degrading conditions. Regarding education qualifications, inmates have attained different qualifications upon incarceration, though it tends to be weak.

To start with, in the USA, 41% have dropped out of school, 23% have obtained a high school diploma, and 13% have received post-secondary education (Connor & Tewksbury, 2015). In Nordic countries, Muth et al. (2021) found that 11.5% had not completed education, 33.8% had completed up to compulsory school, 16.5% had completed up to vocational education, and 2% had completed a bachelor's degree. In Sub-Saharan Africa, it was established that 16.55% did not have formal education, 65% had only completed primary education, 15.79 % had completed up to secondary education, and 2.48% had post-secondary education (Telisinghe et al., 2019).

Education must be provided to inmates for the benefits it accrues to the inmate, Prison, Government, and society. Prison education contributes to order, safety, and security in Prison. Flynn & Higdon (2022) argue that prison education rehabilitates inmates by inculcating knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that make them law-abiding individuals. Hence, reduces cases of criminal behavior by inmates that cause problems in Prison. Once released, it contributes to public safety and creates safer societies (Qasim & Webster, 2020). Having undergone prison education, ex-inmates have marketable skills that enable them to engage in gainful employment, which plays a significant role in reintegration into society. Eventually, it reduces recidivism among ex-inmates. Internationally ratified agreements have significantly influenced the Provision of education to inmates. Governments agreed to the Framework for Action to satisfy basic learning requirements and established an international consultative forum in 1990 in Thailand. Thus, many governments took measures to improve the education offered in prisons. According to Gould (2018), governments and other stakeholders have invested in educational hardware such as construction, furniture, and teaching-learning equipment. They have also invested in psycho-social support from family and counseling services. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were also ratified in 2015. Molleman & Van den Hurk, (2020) states that in an attempt to meet the purposes as set by SDG, governments and other stakeholders have worked towards ensuring all men and women in Prison have access to education of good standards on an equal footing. SDG 4 and 5 aim to provide equal access to high education standards and empower the female gender. Therefore, governments have introduced

more vocational education programs for women and girls that they have yet to participate in and are paid well, such as automotive mechanics, carpentry, and construction. Globally, prison reforms are international as governments attempt to improve prison conditions. Thus, enhancing the Prison's capacity to provide education and eventually rehabilitate the inmates.

Statement of the Problem

Kamiti Maximum Security Prison has not been able to rehabilitate inmates effectively. This problem is evident since inmates still engage in acts of criminality such as mobile telephone fraud, strikes, same-gender relationships, and contraband smuggling. Recidivism rates are also high in KMSP. Furthermore, despite the introduction of prison reforms, inmates still live and study in poor conditions. They lack proper teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, computers, learning machines, and chalkboards. There are also inadequate necessities such as food, Medicare, sanitation, clothing, and bedding. Additionally, warders need to be more motivated to work despite the poor terms of service and living conditions. Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to find out whether prison reforms have had an impact in the provision of education in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison.

The following objective guided this paper:

- i. To explore appropriate strategies that can be used to improve the Provision of existing prison education offered to inmates in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison.

The research question for the paper was:

- i. Which are the appropriate strategies that Kamiti Maximum Security Prison should adopt to improve the Provision of current education offered to inmates?

Review of Related Literature

Reinforcement theory, whose leading proponent is B.F. Skinner (1974) guided the paper. The reinforcement theory suggests that a given behavior is a function of the consequence of the earlier behavior. Rewards offered for a particular behavior will encourage one to persist, whereas removing negative experiences discourages the re-occurrence of that behavior in the future. Within the current study context, prison reforms have been introduced as positive reinforcement to improve prison conditions for Inmates and warders. The improved prison conditions make them feel appreciated; thus, they are motivated to cooperate and become willing to engage and fully put more effort into education activities. While at the same time, prison reforms also act as negative reinforcement. Prison reforms remove the inhumane conditions that push inmates and warders not to cooperate in prison education. This helps to enhance rehabilitation of inmates through prison education. Reinforcement theory is essential for this study because it explains that prison reforms can affect prison conditions. Consequently, these conditions will lead to success or failure in rehabilitating inmates through prison education. This guided the researcher in exploring strategies to curb the problem through policies for all the relevant stakeholders in prison education.

Ferguson (2018) argues that prisons should start by assessing the current status of educational and vocational training practices. The aspects being assessed can include the teaching personnel involved

and the curriculum; whereby they will look into how the curriculum is decided and reviewed. Lastly, there is the aspect of teaching resources. Under this, they will assess the libraries found. The information acquired from the assessment will provide a basis for the Prison to identify shortfalls and take steps to improve the current education provision.

Dianovi et al. (2022) investigated the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in improving the rehabilitation of inmates. The study established that some of the misconducts that inmates were involved in included drugs and substance abuse and frequent prison riots against the prison administration. These misconducts hardened the inmates and therefore prevented them from being rehabilitated effectively. However, the paper established that guidance and counseling to the inmates would assist in curbing such misconduct and facilitating rehabilitation.

Kudaibergenova et al. (2019) conducted a study assessing the effectiveness of living conditions in improving the provision of prison education. The study established that poor living conditions, such as poor accommodation within the cell blocks, lack of proper food, and poor medical services, negatively affected the inmates. They were, therefore, unable to learn effectively. The study further established that improving these living conditions would help make the inmates' lives comfortable. Thus, they can participate and gain proper knowledge from their education activities.

Okwelle & Deebom (2018) study attempted to determine the appropriate strategies to improve vocational training in prisons in Northern Nigeria. The study adopted a census survey research design. Data were collected principally using questionnaires. The study recommended the following strategies based on its findings for improvement in practices of Prison vocational education. The Government should provide adequate and qualified vocational training instructors. Adequate structures and facilities for teaching and learning are necessary. This research will look into possible solutions for improving instructional activities at KMSP.

Hansen (2021) examined ways of strengthening prisons in their role of rehabilitating inmates through prison education. The study suggests equipping prison libraries with different reading materials for the inmates undergoing prison education. This is important because inmates can use it for research, thus increasing their knowledge (Linnane, 2021). Apart from that, it provides a stress-free environment whereby inmates can escape the harsh reality of confinement through the characters they read in novels they find in the library (Novitsky et al., 2022). This paper investigated if the provision of prison libraries can be used to improve prison education.

Inmates should be able to participate in leisure programs (Sells et al., 2020). These sessions can help offenders release tension that has built up due to the jail environment's harmful character and monotony. It can also provide rigorous exercise while reducing the time offenders engage in dangerous behaviors (Peleg-Koriat & Weimann-Saks, 2021). Weight lifting, jogging, exercising, football, music, theatre, and chess should be available to inmates. Inmate teams can play basketball, football, and other sports against teams outside the jail (Shi et al., 2022). This paper investigated if the provision of recreational facilities can be used to improve the provision of prison education. Schiff & Leip (2019) studied strategies that can be used to improve the performance of prison warders in their various duties and responsibilities. The study established that the Government

should improve the wardens' housing by repairing the old houses and providing new houses. There should be the employment and deployment of more warders in prison to reduce the workload, and it will also improve the security situation in Prison. Lastly, the Government should improve warders' salaries and allowances, as it will motivate wardens to work harder in their duties and responsibilities. This paper investigated the different strategies that can be used to improve warders' performance in various prison education duties.

Research Methodology

According to Kamkhaji (2022), a study design is a method or plan for generating solutions to issues. This study's data was collected using a descriptive design with a survey method. The research design enabled the investigator to assess, narrate and document a phenomenon as it occurred. This research design was used because it enabled the researcher to collect data in the natural environment, yielding high-quality and honest information. Moreover, the research design provides qualitative and quantitative data that offer an extensive and intense understanding of the research topic. This study aimed to discover how prison reforms have affected the trends and practices of education within KMSP. This design enabled the researcher to examine reliable, candid, and sincere opinions and views regarding how prison reforms have affected the provision of education in KMSP. Therefore, this led to real and accurate data that provided a profound understanding of the topic.

The study used two types of instruments to collect data. These were interview schedules and questionnaires. Data was collected using more than one instrument because it enabled the researcher to cross-check and substantiate the findings, therefore facilitating the validity and dependability of the data (Daftary et al., 2019).

According to Ahrens & Zascerinska (2015), selecting 20% of the informants is appropriate for extensive and in-depth studies. In descriptive research, Amareswaran Reddy et al. (2022) propose that 20% of the general population is appropriate for a study. On this strength, 20% of inmates, warders and Prison Administrators were sampled as respondents for the study.

Findings of the Study

Strategies to Improve Provision of Prison Education

The researcher sought to find out the different strategies that can be used to improve prison education provision to inmates. The results have been summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1: Strategies used to improve on the provision of prison education

STRATEGIES	SA	A	U	D	SD
	F (%)	F(%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Assessing the current status of prison education status	25(50)	23(46)	2(4)	0	0
Provision of adequate textbooks	28(56)	20(40)	2(4)	0	0
Providing adequate computers	19(38)	18(36)	7(14)	6(12)	0

Equipping classrooms with chalkboards	24(48)	22(44)	4(8)	0	0
Improving the diet of inmates	26(52)	23(46)	1(2)	0	0
Providing better health services to inmates	21(42)	22(44)	4(8)	3(6)	0
Provision of recreational facilities	19(38)	20(40)	10(20)	1(2)	0
Provision of better Housing to warders	24(48)	23(46)	2(4)	1 (2)	0

KEY: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; U-Undecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Source: Research Data 2022

In the findings, half of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed that assessing the current status of prison education can be used to improve its provision. Almost half at 46% agreed with the statement. Very few respondents (4%) were undecided about the statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The majority of the respondents agreed with the item. Therefore, this shows that assessing the current status of prison education can be used to improve its provision to inmates. These findings confirm the ones found by Braga & Rosa (2022). She also established that assessing the current status of prison education can improve education provision to inmates.

Moreover, Table 1 shows that 56% of the respondents strongly agreed that adequate provision of textbooks could improve prison education, 40% agreed with the statement, and 4% were undecided. None disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. A high percentage agreed with the statement. This shows that the respondents were of the view that adequate provision of textbooks can be used to improve the provision of prison education. The results are in tandem with the ones of Mufarreh et al. (2022), who found that providing more textbooks of recent text publications can improve prison education.

The results further show that 38% strongly agreed that the provision of computers could be used to improve prison education, 36 % agreed with the statement, 14% were undecided, and 12% disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. The results show that adequate provision of computers can be used to improve the provision of prison education. The findings are similar to those of Abdessemed (2016) who found out that providing high-quality computers to all classes can help improve provision of education in prison.

A probe into the findings revealed that 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that equipping prisons with adequate chalkboards can be used to improve prison education, and 44% agreed with the statement. Very few respondents (8%) were undecided, while none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This finding indicates that the provision of classroom equipment can be used to improve the provision of prison education. The results are similar to observations made by Tolbert & Hudson (2015) who found out that equipping prison with adequate chalkboards can help to improve the provision of education.

The findings further show that 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that improving inmate diets can improve the provision of education. Less than half of the respondents (46%) agreed with the

item, while 2% were undecided. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item. The findings, therefore, show that an improved diet can be used to boost the provision of education offered to inmates.

The findings reveal that 42% of the respondents strongly agreed that better health services could be used to improve prison education, and 44% agreed with the item. A few respondents (8%) were undecided, 6% of the respondents disagreed, and none strongly disagreed with the item. The findings imply that the provision of better healthcare services can be used to improve the provision of prison education. These results are the same as the ones observed by Ramaswamy & Freudenberg (2022), who established that improving the health services provided to inmates could improve the education provided to inmates.

It was further noted that 38% strongly agreed that adequate provision of recreational facilities could be used to improve education in prison. A significant proportion (40%) agreed, 20% were undecided, and 2% disagreed with the item. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. The majority agreed with the item, showing that adequate recreational facilities can be used to improve prison education. This finding is consistent with Young & Reviere's (2022) results. They found out that better recreational facilities can be used to improve education provision to inmates.

The results also show that 48% of the respondents strongly agreed that the provision of warder housing could be used to improve the provision of prison education. A significant proportion (46%) agreed, 4% were undecided, while very few (2%) disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that adequate provision of housing can be used to improve the provision of prison education. Similar findings were established by Lambert et al. (2022), who found that the supply of better housing to warders can improve prison education for inmates.

Recommendations

Based on the paper's findings, the following recommendations were made. First, the government should provide teaching and learning resources such as computers, textbooks, learning tools, and learning machines. The government and other stakeholders should improve the inmates' living conditions. The government should improve the warders' service terms, such as better salaries and prompt remuneration, and promotions to higher ranks for those who merit. The living conditions of the warders should also be improved by building better housing for them.

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