

## **Effect of Counseling/Modeling on Behaviour Modification of Juvenile Delinquents in Eldoret and Kakamega Rehabilitation Centres**

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### **Abstract**

There is a growing concern with the growth and prevalence of Juvenile delinquents (JD) in rehabilitation centres in Kenya. Juvenile delinquency has become an intricate social problem that significantly influences all members and processes of a social structure. In January 2016, Eldoret Juvenile Remand Home alone had 155 juveniles which is its full capacity. It is against this background that this study examined psychotherapeutic interventions in behaviour modification of JD and recommended measures that would increase the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic interventions in rehabilitation centers of JDs in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of counseling on behaviour modification of JD in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs. The area of study was Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs. The study adopted Merton Functional Theory of Juvenile Delinquency as the theoretical framework. The study adopted the descriptive and explanatory research survey designs. The target population was comprised of delinquents in Kakamega and Eldoret Rehabs, administrators, trainers and counselors in the rehabs and probation officers. A sample size of 149 respondents comprising of 127 JD, 13 trainers, 5 probation officers, 2 counselors and 2 administrators of the Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs participated in the study. Saturated sampling catered for the delinquents, probation officers, rehab administrators and trainers. Research instruments that were used in this study included questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. A Pilot study was carried out to ascertain validity and reliability of the instruments and a

reliability coefficient of 0.7 was deemed acceptable. Descriptive statistical tools and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Study findings showed that counseling had a significant effect on behaviour modification. This implies that counseling is an important tool in bringing discipline among juvenile delinquents and for overall rehabilitation programmes which can enhance behaviour modification. There is therefore need for psychotherapeutic intervention at both individual and group level for delinquents so that they can change their behaviour.

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**Keywords:** Juvenile delinquents, rehabilitation centres

### **The study problem**

The challenge of juvenile delinquency is fast becoming more and more complex and global. Furthermore, programmes aimed at prevention of crime are either ill equipped to address the current realities or such programmes are non-existent. Many developing nations have not done much to address such challenges and international programmes are not enough. Generally, the current activities to fight juvenile delinquency are described by the absence of systematic action and the lack of task-oriented and effective psychotherapeutic interventions with the offenders, whether real or potential. Therefore, the current study sought to address the effects of psychotherapeutic interventions applied on behaviour modification of juvenile delinquents in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs.

The Children's Department in the Ministry of Labor Social Security and Services faces difficulties in rehabilitating juvenile delinquents due to the rapid increase in the numbers of delinquents and young offenders in Kenya. The juvenile justice system places them in rehabilitation centers with the hope that when given close supervision by the law enforcers' delinquency will reduce. Eldoret and Kakamega are examples of towns that host such rehabilitation centers. However, on reintegration into their families and society some of them resume their delinquent behaviour. In addition, there are still many juveniles in the streets of Eldoret and Kakamega as well as in Kenya as a whole something that creates concern on what can be done in regard to bringing juvenile delinquents to the mainstream of the society. This study examined the psychotherapeutic interventions used by therapists/counselors for behaviour modification among delinquents in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabilitation centers in Kenya.

Although many studies have been done on juvenile delinquents in Kenya, for example, a study done by Odera (2013) in Nairobi which indicated that the rehabilitation programmes for the juvenile delinquents in Kenya were carried out in deplorable conditions which have greatly affected the juveniles' rehabilitation process; psychotherapeutic interventions and its effects on

behaviour modification among juvenile delinquents had not been explored yet the existence of juvenile delinquents has remained a threat to the society. In essence, there is no empirical evidence from the literature the present researcher came across to show that delinquency can be addressed through psychotherapeutic interventions in childhood. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address the above gap examining psychotherapeutic interventions and their effects on behaviour modification of delinquents in rehabilitation institutions in Eldoret and Kakamega towns in Kenya.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The study thus sought to test the following null hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: Counseling/modeling has no significant effect on behaviour modification of juvenile delinquents in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs

### **Theoretical framework**

The study was based on the Functional Theory of Juvenile Delinquency. William (2000) built on Merton's (1957) theory and describes Functional theory of juvenile delinquency as the results of a bad rapport between goals and the legal ways of achieving them. Merton (1957) stressed on two types of social and cultural structure that is culturally defined goals and the acceptable means to their achievement. He asserted that the society's success goals are widely shared, while the means of or opportunities for attaining them are not. According to Khromina (2007) functional theory investigated how social order is maintained and created through the maintenance and promotion of societal institutions such rehabilitation centres.

In addition, Khromina argued that functionalism devote much attention to the phenomenon of social change which is a process of 'evolution' in which social institutions(rehabilitation centres) become highly functional through their differentiation as well as their adaptation of common norm. This theory explains why some youth become delinquents and why others are more delinquent than others. The lower class is said to have a higher rate of delinquent behaviour than the upper and middle classes. The upper and middle classes also experience delinquency but to a lesser extent compared to the lower class.

This theory was relevant to the present study in that most juvenile delinquents in the rehabilitation institutions are from the lower economic strata of society (Oliver, 2000).The lower class is characterized by extreme poverty, most families living in abject poverty. This deprives them from attaining their basic goals in life which may lead to frustration. Most children are neglected by their parents because they cannot afford to feed them. As a result, children resort to illegal means like stealing to satisfy their hunger drive. However, it is essential to put into focus that the children of the middle class and upper

class are also delinquents but their delinquency is covered as their parents use their resources to bail them out. This study fits into this theory in that, improving counselor child efficacy reduces delinquency. Children are sensitized on the need to respect other people thus disengaging from wrong behaviour like stealing or fighting and channel their energy to productive activities

### **The Research Design**

In this study, explanatory and descriptive research surveys were adopted. Cooper and Schindler (2000) indicate that explanatory research survey focuses on why questions. In answering the 'why' questions, the study is involved in developing causal explanations. The explanations argue that phenomenon Y (behaviour modification) is affected by variable X (psychotherapeutic interventions). These designs were chosen because they were relevant to the research objectives of the study and were practical in testing the study hypotheses. In trying to investigate the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, the study did not manipulate the psychotherapeutic interventions and behaviour modification; the independent and dependent variables. They had already occurred. The challenge thus, was on how to control variance, when one has no control over the variables. The study did not control variance by direct manipulation or by random assignment. Explanatory research survey is used to refer to a research whereby, other than creating the treatment, examines the effect of a naturally occurring treatment after it has occurred (Kumar, 2005). In other words, it is a research design that attempts to discover the pre-existing causal conditions between variables. On the other hand, Bechhofer & Paterson (2008) note that descriptive research tries to verify formulated hypotheses that refer to the present situation in order to elucidate it.

### **Study target Population**

The target population comprised of all juvenile delinquents who were incarcerated in the two selected rehabilitation centers in Eldoret and Kakamega. These includes; Kimumu Probation Hostel (KPH) hosting 47 delinquents and Kakamega Rehabilitation School (KRS) with 80 delinquents. This gave a total of 127 juveniles. The study also targeted 2 administrators from the juvenile institutions, 13 trainers and 2 counselors. Further, 5 probation officers were be included in the study.

Table 1 Target Population

	<b>Juvenile delinquents</b>	<b>Trainers</b>	<b>Counselors</b>	<b>Probation officers</b>	<b>Administrators</b>
Eldoret	47	4	1	3	1
Kakamega	80	9	1	2	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>

### **Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

Newman (2000) argues that the main element to consider in establishing the sample size is the need to keep it manageable enough. The current study used saturated sampling technique (Sampling until no new information emerges) to include all the 127 delinquents in the two juvenile institutions that are, KPH and KRS, 5 probation officers, 2 counselor 13 trainers and 2 administrators due to their inadequate numbers. According to Mugenda (2003) a big sample enables the researcher to reduce the sampling error. Therefore, the researcher has to always use a big sample. In this study therefore all the above respondents were included to constitute the sample. This gave a total of 149 respondents.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher used triangulation strategy to harvest data from the respondents. Three research instruments were used to authenticate the collected information. The research instruments that were used in the study includes: interview schedule, questionnaire and document analysis.

### **Data and results**

#### **Counseling and Behaviour Modification**

Counseling not only brings discipline among the delinquents but also makes delinquents confident to believe that there are people who care about them (Mugerwa, 2010). It was therefore deemed important by the study to determine the level of counseling in Eldoret and Kakamega rehabs and its effects in modifying the behaviour of juveniles. Results on counseling are as presented in table 2

Table 2 Counseling on Behaviour Modification

		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
We are often given counseling sessions	Freq.	0	4	8	21	87	4.59	0.761
	%	0	3.3	6.7	17.5	72.5		
Counseling is done at individual level	Freq.	4	2	4	39	71	4.43	0.904
	%	3.3	1.7	3.3	32.5	59.2		
Counseling is done at group level	Freq.	6	2	5	33	74	4.39	1.015
	%	5	1.7	4.2	27.5	61.7		
The counseling services I have received have helped me to be able express my feelings without fear	Freq.	1	2	8	27	82	4.56	0.765
	%	0.8	1.7	6.7	22.5	68.3		
My counselors have helped me to understand the consequences of any bad behaviors and being disrespectful.	Freq.	2	4	9	22	83	4.5	0.898
	%	1.7	3.3	7.5	18.3	69.2		
Due to counseling services I have received everything I do now will not only affect me but even those who love me like my parents	Freq.	0	1	11	36	72	4.49	0.698
	%	0	0.8	9.2	30	60		
Counseling has helped me develop feelings of remorsefulness	Freq.	0	2	12	30	76	4.5	0.745
	%	0	1.7	10	25	63.3		
My counselors have helped me understand the benefits of education.	Freq.	1	3	7	20	89	4.61	0.781
	%	0.8	2.5	5.8	16.7	74.2		
I feel confident with my counselor and services he/she gives to me and he/ she is my role model.	Freq.	0	2	6	37	75	4.54	0.674
	%	0	1.7	5	30.8	62.5		
Counseling stresses on clear form and consistent discipline	Freq.	0	3	7	32	78	4.54	0.721
	%	0	2.5	5.8	26.7	65		
Counseling helps me communicate with others positively	Freq.	2	0	5	30	83	4.6	0.726
	%	1.7	0	4.2	25	69.2		

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A= agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree  
Source: Survey Data (2016)

The respondents confirmed that they are often given counseling sessions (mean = 4.59, SD = 0.761). Counseling is done both at individual (mean = 4.43, SD = 0.904) and group level (mean = 4.39, SD = 1.015). The counseling services have helped the respondents to express their feelings without fear (mean = 4.56, SD = 0.765). For instance, delinquents have been able to speak out their evils making it easier for those concerned with their care and rehabilitation to intervene. Besides, the counselors have helped the respondents to understand the consequences of any bad behaviours and being disrespectful (mean = 4.5, SD = 0.898).

Furthermore, counseling services have made it possible for the respondents to understand that everything they do now will not only affect them but also those who love them for instance parents (mean = 4.49, SD = 0.698). In light of this, the respondents have developed feelings of remorsefulness (mean = 4.5, SD = 0.745) and they understand the benefits of

education (mean = 4.61, SD = 0.781). Moreover, the respondents feel confident with their counselor and services they are given (mean = 4.54, SD = 0.674). This may be due to juveniles feeling comfort in disclosing distressing or personal information. It has been suggested that the decision to consult a health professional may be less important than the initial decision and act of revealing the problem to anyone at all (Williams & Healy, 2001). By disclosing to others, people can feel understood and accepted, thereby beginning the healing process (Hanna, 2002).

The findings are supported by second counselor that:

*“Although many people are anxious regarding talking about themselves and personal issues to others, most people find that after meeting with a counselor, they want to talk about their issues and come to trust the counselor. For individuals who have difficulty identifying or disclosing their feelings and thoughts, outlets such as writing, painting, or playing music we allow them to get in touch with their emotions so that they will be then able to open up to others. It may also be possible to reframe self-disclosure as something positive” (counselor#2)*

This confirms with Hanna (2002) argument that counselors could portray disclosure to a therapist as something that takes courage. Anyone can ignore their own thoughts and feelings, but it takes guts to be honest about them and not back off from what you are really about. It was further revealed that the counseling stresses on clear form and consistent discipline (mean = 4.54, SD = 0.721). It also helps the respondents to communicate with others positively (mean = 4.6, SD = 0.726). This result implies that most of the items of counseling were scored above average indicating counseling services were offered adequately among juvenile delinquents in the Kenyan rehabilitation centres.

In line with the results, Phillips, (2009) postulates that counseling is effective in reducing juvenile delinquent behaviour and leads to appropriate behavior modification among the children. Besides, good family modeling is associated with decreased affiliation with delinquent peer (Huey *et al.*, 2000). Similarly, Wilson (2000) affirms that it is interesting to note that individual counseling appears to be an effective form of treatment for non-institutionalized serious offenders but not for institutionalized offenders. Moore (2000) juvenile probationers should receive one on one counseling from citizen volunteers in addition to regular probationary supervision.

However, based on interview schedule data from the probation officers, despite provision of counseling services being offered to juvenile delinquent, some of the delinquents still experience trauma, stress and withdraw systems and are homesick. One of the probation officers said that:

*“Most of the juvenile delinquents scream during the night as if there are having nightmares which are mostly caused by trauma and stress” (respondents#7, 13/2/2016)*

Another officer stated that;

*“There is prevalence of post trauma and stress which is higher among incarcerated female delinquents than among incarcerated male delinquents and higher than among youths in the community” (respondents#8)*

The above statements are supported by Hennessey, Ford, Mahoney and Siegfroid (2004) that traumatic stress symptoms may worsen as a result of juvenile justice system involvement. Court hearings, detention, and incarceration are inherently stressful, and stressful experiences that are not traumatic per se can exacerbate trauma symptoms. Girls in particular may be susceptible to trauma after incarceration due to their high rates of exposure to traumatic stress and the possibility of traumatization.

The study also found insignificant relationship between the number of times juvenile delinquent have been arrested and counseling services ( $\chi^2 (2, N = 100) = 66.675, p > 0.05$ ) also are not equally distributed according to the number of years in rehab. Further the study indicated that  $(2, 96) = 0.581, p > 0.05$  which shows that there are no significant differences between the effectiveness of counseling services on the frequency of law transgression. The study obtained  $\chi^2 (2, N = 100) = 50.552, p > 0.05$  which indicates that the effects of counseling services are not equally distributed according to the frequency of the law transgressions. This infers that those who have been arrested less times receive more counseling services than those who have been in rehab many times. This might be related to the fact that the new juvenile delinquent are said to be in argent need of those services with assumptions that they might be more willing to adjust their behaviour more quickly than those who have been in rehab more than 5 times

### **Discussion on Counseling and behaviour modification**

Counseling helps delinquents to express their feelings without fear and understand the consequences of any bad behaviour. Consequently, delinquents have developed feelings of remorsefulness. They also have an understanding of the benefits of education. In light of the foregoing, counseling sessions are given often both at individual and group level. There is thus confidence with the counselor and services given to delinquents hence they are able to communicate with others positively. It was revealed that counseling is an important tool in bringing discipline among juvenile delinquents. Besides that, counseling makes juvenile delinquents confident to believe that there are some people who care about them. Guidance and counseling is among forms of the services given to juveniles during rehabilitation. It was revealed during the study that juvenile delinquents undergo guidance and counseling at an



individual and group level. It was further revealed by the caretakers in both RCs that it is during guidance and counseling that juvenile delinquents confess and openly speak out their evils which give the concerned people a good ground for intervention. It was revealed further that guidance and counseling done at an individual level normally is done to special cases and those are the hard core children who take long to change their behaviors. In general the life-skills of the questionnaire are important to the participants according to the results. According to the self-score of the participants, they do not own all the life-skills that are important to them. The fact that the juvenile offenders score themselves on not having the skill on the items noted before can be explained by the risk factors of youth crime. Negative peers, negative leisure activities, substance abuse are risk factors for juvenile offending (Burton, 2007)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, counseling has been found to have a positive and significant effect on behaviour modification. Counseling leads to appropriate behaviour modification among the juvenile delinquents. It brings discipline among the delinquents and makes them aware that they are cared for. As such, they have developed feelings of remorsefulness and have understood the benefits of education.

### **Recommendations**

The study has revealed that counseling is of essence since it brings discipline among the delinquents. There is therefore need for psychotherapeutic interventions at both individual and group level for delinquents so that they can change their behaviour. Furthermore, with counseling, delinquents will be able to express their feelings without fear. Precisely, delinquents will be able to develop feelings of remorsefulness. They will also be able to understand the benefits of education. In order to do a way completely with the issue of juvenile delinquents, there should be early childhood interventions because it is a strategy which is aimed at nurturing well behaved children as they grow. This suggests that trauma specific interventions and treatment models are needed in order to address needs and prevent recidivism in the juvenile justice system. One way to increase help seeking may be to increase individuals' comfort, ability, and feelings of appropriateness about discussing problems with others. Another approach is to educate the general public that individuals often find relief concerning a problem after discussing it with someone else.

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