

Relationship Between Social Support And Resilience Among Juvenile Delinquents In Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Social supports are critical in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents which could boost their resilience and help the juveniles endure a variety of challenging circumstances in life. This study investigated the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya. The study addressed three specific objectives: to assess the levels of social support among juvenile delinquents, to examine the levels of resilience among juvenile delinquents, and to establish the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya.

Materials and Methods: The study was informed by the social support theory and resilience theory. The target population were juveniles between the ages of 13-17 years. The participants of the study were 100 juvenile delinquents. The study adopted a census sampling technique. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, and inferential statistics such as the Pearson coefficient correlation were employed.

Results: Findings revealed that 40.3% (n = 39) of the juvenile delinquents, were at moderate level of social support, 33.4% (n = 33) had high social support, while 26.3% (n= 26) of the juvenile scored low level of social support. The study found that that 41.3% (n = 42) of the juvenile delinquents scored high level of resilience, 34.4% (n = 30) of the juvenile delinquents had low level of resilience, while 24.3% (n= 26) of the juvenile, were at moderate level of resilience.

Conclusion: The study established that there was a positive relationship ($r = .353, p = .004 \leq 0.05$) between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya. The study recommended that the juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, who were at low level of resilience and low level of social support be helped in counseling and psychological assessments in order to possibly identify issues that could be responsible for the low levels.

Keyword; Social Support, Resilience, Juvenile Delinquents, Prison.

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I. Introduction

Social supports are critical in the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents which could boost their resilience and possibly help the juveniles endure a variety of challenging circumstances in life. (Meyers et al., 2017). social support is a broad concept that describes an individual's perception of a network of social resources (Zhou, 2014). It entails deep emotional closeness that a human person obtains and the material benefits one enjoys from significant others. Common forms of social support may include; knowledge and skill support, appraisal support, emotional support, instrumental support and informational support (Drageset., 2021). Emotional support comprises aspects such as trust, concern, love, and listening. Whereas, appraisal support consists of responses that boosts self-confidence and self-esteem. Informational support comprises of advice, suggestions, and directions. Instrumental support consists of labour, services, time, money, and tangible aid for the human being. All these are crucial ingredients that could enhance resilience among juvenile delinquents (Moeini et al., 2018). Social support calls for adequate presence of helping relationships for the positive thriving of the human being. This is a critical need for every human that facilitate and promote good mental health and resilience (Drageset, 2021; Kent, 2018).

Resilience, based on its etymology, comes from the Latin verb "resilire", "resalire" which means to "rebound or recoil, walk or leap back and bounce back". From 1839 the term "resilience" was used to signify the ability to recover from adversity in the sense of strength (Khaminych, 2016). Resilience refers to positive adaptation on life despite experiencing adversity. It is the ability of an individual to bounce back in spite of the

experience of harsh realities of life and to remain firm even in moments of temptation. Some factors that possibly facilitate resilience may include personal determination and choice, biological-genetic factor, environmental factor, family factor, socio-economic factor, cultural-spiritual factor, and psychosocial support (Pai et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Galantini (2018a) maintains that resilience does not negate the reality of human “vulnerability”. It recognizes vulnerability, adaptability, and “sustainability” of one’s life amidst life’s existential situations. This existential situation may include failure, losses in life, death, lack of basic life support systems, betrayal, rejection and deprivation. It is essential that the human person devices ways of surviving. Resilience is fundamentally entrenched in humans, but requires skills that could make it outstanding and useful among juvenile delinquents (Grygorenko & Naydonova, 2023).

Juvenile delinquency is a burden and a threat to the existence of families and communities. Shoemaker (2010) argues that juvenile delinquency is a criminal act committed by young people under the age of 18 years. This act is classified in six basic groups on the ground of the kind of crime committed: incorrigibility, truancy, and larceny (ranging from petty thefts to armed robbery). It also includes destruction of people’s property, violence against individuals or a community and sexual transgressions of rape ranging from homosexuality to heterosexuality (Hirsch, 2017). Ansell (2016) showed that numerous factors played significant role in a teenager’s delinquent habit, and can be categorized into two groups: individual or personal factors and situational factors. The individual or personal factors include personality traits such as submissiveness, defiance, hostility, impulsiveness, feelings of insecurity, fear, lack of self-control as well as emotional conflicts. Situational factors may be ascribed to family, companions, movies, school environment as well as work environment (Haveripet et al., 2021).

Around the world, the problem of juvenile delinquency has increased considerably between 2009-2019 (Feld, 2019). Based on a survey of juvenile crimes in cities, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2019), disclosed that in Europe only, juvenile lawlessness had grown by 2.6% in contrast to the previous year’s reported increase of 1.7%. On the other hand, South Asia, Latin America and North America were noted to have juvenile delinquents’ increase rates of 0.7%, 3.9% and 1.8% respectively. The soaring rates of juvenile delinquency in Latin America have been ascribed to drug use (Haveripet et., 2021). Reports by the United Nations (2019) showed that juvenile misconduct continued to rise largely as a consequence of persistent unemployment among youth. According to Kimingiri (2015), social support empowers juvenile delinquents to be better persons, confident, face challenges without fear, be stable in life, reform, reintegrate in communities, and minimize anti-social behaviour and enhances resiliency. Based on the global perspective, studies show high connection between social support and resilience among juvenile offenders. This is due to the fact that effective social support allows juvenile offenders to access emotional, appraisal, information, and instrumental support, thereby enabling them to meet their needs that may also enhance resilience (Hershberger et al., 2016).

In China, Roberts et al. (2015) used qualitative approach to examine the relationship between social support and psychological wellbeing of students. It was reported that perceived social support has a significant impact on PWB ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 6.509$, $p = .000$). Additionally, resiliency partially mediates the relationship between perceived social support and PWB ($\beta = .041$, $t = 2.339$, $p < 0.001$). The research concluded that social support was not only important in promoting psychological well-being of students but also bolstered their resilience and spirituality. In Iran, a study by Sabouripour et al. (2017) focused on the resilience determinants among students. In the study, 134 males (53.4%) and 117 females (46.6%) participated in this study. In addition, more than half of the respondents, 61.4% (N=154) were single and 38.6% (N=97) were married. Reports indicated significant relationship between optimism and resilience among the students ($r = 0.597$, $p < 0.01$). There was a significant positive relationship between resilience and the dimensions of social supports. Specifically: significant others ($r = 0.355$, $p < 0.01$), family support ($r = 0.311$, $p < 0.01$), and friend support ($r = 0.211$, $p < 0.01$). There was a significant and large relationship between resilience and self-efficacy with ($r = 0.715$, $p < 0.01$).

In South Africa, Machisa et al. (2018) examined the effect of social support on psychological resilience of intimate partner violence victims. most of the participants were less than 44 years of age (69.4%), had attended secondary education (80%), had not worked in the past year (56.6%) and were in current intimate relationships (77.3%). It was also revealed that juvenile delinquents expected parental support while in prison. Lack of parental support made the juveniles express their emotions through fighting and thus lower resilience.

In Nigeria, study findings by Ebuhi and Omogbemi (2011) revealed among other factors that lack of social support, especially from parents, contributes to juvenile delinquency. The participants were within the ages of 10-18 years with a mean age of 14.2 +/- 2.0 years, 70% had attained primary school education. Of the 53.3% that dropped out of school, 65.6% did so due to financial problems, 6.3% as a result of poor performance as well as peer pressure accounted for 28.1%. A total of 71.7% of the students were brought to the school by the police; 52.5% on account of roaming while lack of parental control, stealing, robbery and fighting accounted for 16.9%, 11.9%, 10.2%, and 8.5% respectively. Majority (58.6%) of the students had both parents alive while 12.1% had both parents deceased. About 25 (41.7%) of the respondents admitted to committing a crime out of which 88% was stealing, 4% were involved in armed robbery and 8% in house breaking. Of all the socio-demographics

characteristics of the respondents explored, only their educational level was found to be significantly associated ($p = 0.0197$) with criminal behaviour. Mother's educational level ($p = 0.0245$), maternal alcohol consumption ($p = 0.0173$) as well as kind of treatment (0.0245) received from step mothers were significantly associated with criminal behaviour.

In Kenya, Onyango (2013) studied the effectiveness of education, vocational training, life skills, counselling and scouts. The targeted population were the 3rd year juvenile delinquents, welfare officers, class teachers and vocational training instructors from the three institutions who were a total of 179 and purposively selected. The study selected a sample size of 89 respondents. The rehabilitative programmes that were common among the schools for the juveniles were counselling and education at 98.6 % each, spiritual welfare at 97.2%, life skills training at 95.8 % and agriculture at 77.8%. Vocational training was ranked at 43.1 % while fashion and design was rated that 11.1%. The study established that rules and regulations helped the children to become good role models, obedient and disciplined at 98.6%, children were able to do the right things at 97.2% and became law abiding citizens at 94.4%. They were able to differentiate between good and bad at 77.8%, stayed away from drugs at 65.2%, and revealed that while these factors were not effectively implemented, they contributed to resilience of juvenile delinquents. These various studies carried out were not very specified in articulating the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents. This was a gap this study sought to address.

Studies have shown that many correctional facilities provide social support to offenders in Kenya, but 47% of ex-convicts relapse or return to criminal behaviours after being discharged from prison (Avosa et al., 2020; Stahler et al., 2013). According to Oruta (2016), the rate of recidivism in Kenya is two-thirds, an implication that a high number of former prisoners will relapse and then go back to prison. This high rate of relapse and crime among convicts and ex-convicts is a major concern and calls into question the effectiveness of social support. It was against this background that this study sought to examine the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Prison, Kiambu County, Kenya.

II. Theoretical Framework – Social Support Theory

Social Support Theory originated from the work of Francis T. Cullen in 1994 which was titled; social support as an organizing concept for criminology. The theory assumes that social support in the form of supportive societies and relationships can aid in the reduction of crime rates and individual criminal behaviour. Cullen (1994) argue that social support promotes social control and criminal justice, while Cao et al. (2010) emphasized the need to invest in social support systems to prevent or reduce risk for crime. Social support includes social resources which people depend on to deal with difficulties and mental health issues (Thoits, 1995). Cullen et al. (1999) maintain that social support entails transmitting human, cultural, material, and social capital between individuals and community members. Support is often provided informally, through social relationships, but support can also be provided formally by an entity with an official status, such as government assistance programs or the justice system.

Within the framework of a social support theory, as postulated by Cullen (1994), people can find emotional, informational, and practical support from their social networks and relationships when facing stress or adversity. The notion suggests that an individual's overall health outcomes, coping techniques, and well-being can be greatly influenced by their social support networks. There are many different people that can provide social support, such as family, friends, the workplace, and the community.

Blackbyrn (2024) further holds that social support comes in many different forms, such as instrumental, emotional, and informational help. Offering consolation, compassion, and inspiration to people in need is a form of emotional support. Instrumental support is giving people in need material resources or helpful advice. Emotional support such as comfort, empathy, and encouragement can be obtained from family, friends, or a support group for an individual who is in a distressing situation. Informational support is assisting people in navigating difficult circumstances by offering counsel, direction, or knowledge. Giving people in need material resources or helpful advice is an example of instrumental support. Social support acts as a buffer and as a protective factor in reducing the negative impact of stressors on a person. For example, a person with strong social support networks may experience less stress and better physical and mental health outcomes in response to challenging experiences (Blackbyrn, 2024).

Social support has a short-term and long-term impact on juvenile delinquency. More importantly, juveniles who benefit from various social support are likely to indulge less in criminal activities compared to juveniles who do not receive social support at all. In the long-term, social support can help juveniles to meet their basic needs and through this, it may stimulate positive behaviour change thereby helping to reduce incidences of delinquent behaviour (Thoits, 2011). It is possible that social support may help juveniles refrain from delinquent's behaviours and increase resilience, and a lack of it could accelerate the likelihood of delinquent behaviours.

Social support may nurture self-control behaviour, regulate anger, build strong social bonds, reduce the involvement of juveniles in delinquent acts and as well protect them from stress and other antisocial behaviours.

However, one of the weaknesses of the social support theory is that it can be unpredictable. An individual cannot rely on it, because human generosity is basically an act that is of the free will of other people, hence getting support from others may not be very consistent (Lincoln, 2000).

III. Methodology

This study adopted the correlational research design where quantitative data were measured, then used to address the study problem. Rose et al. (2012) indicate that correlation research shows the degree of association between the research variables rather than a causative connectivity. In this research, the association between social support and resilience among juveniles at Kamiti was established. The study adopted a census sampling technique. The target population were juveniles between the ages of 13-17 years old. The participants of the study were 100 juvenile delinquents. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) and the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, and inferential statistics such as the Pearson coefficient correlation were employed.

The research at first obtained permission from Tangaza University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (TU-ISERC). The researcher further sought an authorization from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Also, clearance was sought from Kamiti Prison authorities, before proceeding to administer the instruments. The researcher also sought the consent of the participants before attempting to distribute the questionnaires. Upon agreement with the researcher and the deputy in-charge of the YCTC, on the appropriate date and time, the questionnaires were administered to the juvenile delinquents in Kamiti Prison at YCTC.

IV. Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section shows the findings from the demographic characteristics of participants of this study. This includes; age, level of education, and number of offenses, and they are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage
under 13 years	1	1.0
14-15years	8	8.2
16-17years	89	90.8
Level of Education		
Primary school	50	51.0
Secondary school	33	33.7
College level	10	10.2
University level	5	5.1
Number of offenses		
1-2 offenses	83	84.7
3-4 offenses	6	6.1
5 and above offenses	9	9.2
Total	98	100%

It can be observed in Table 1 that, a majority 90.8% (n= 89) of the participants were between the ages of 16 and 17years. In contrast, the age range of under 13years were at 1.0% (n= 1). Regarding level of education, most 51.0% (n= 50) of the participants had attained primary education, while 5.1% (n= 5) attended University education. Further, it was found that a majority 84.7% (n= 83) of the juvenile delinquents had committed 1-2 offenses. Participants that committed 3-4 offenses represented 6.1% of the sample (n= 6) representing the least predominant of the ranges.

Establishing the Relationship Between Social Support and Resilience Among Juvenile Delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya

The Pearson correlational analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

<i>Relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents</i>			
		Social Support	Resilience
Social Support	Pearson Correlation	1	.353
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	98	98

Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.353	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	98	98

As seen in Table 2, findings revealed that there was a positive relationship ($r = .353, p = .004$) between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya. This is implicit of direct relationship. These findings imply a direct relationship; whereby, the higher the social support, the higher the resilience.

V. Discussion

Relationship Between Social Support and Resilience Among Juvenile Delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya

The third objective of this study was to establish the relationship between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County, Kenya. It was found that there was a positive relationship ($r = .353, p = .004$) between social support and resilience among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County, Kenya.

The findings of this study confirmed the finding of Roberts et al. (2015) in China. The outcome of the study demonstrated that resiliency partially mediates the relationship between perceived social support and PWB ($\beta = .041^{**}, t = 2.339, p < 0.001$). It was reported that perceived social support has a significant impact on PWB ($\beta = 0.374, t = 6.509, p = .000$). Also, the finding of this current study is similar with the findings of Sabouripour et al. (2017) in Iran. The study found significant positive relationship between resilience and the dimensions of social supports. Specifically: significant others ($r = 0.355, p < 0.01$), family support ($r = 0.311, p < 0.01$), and friend support ($r = 0.211, p < 0.01$). There was a significant and large relationship between resilience and self-efficacy with ($r = 0.715, p < 0.01$).

Social supports may be looked at as a necessity in Juvenile Correction Centres. This could enhance resiliency during and after reintegration of a juvenile into one's family and the society at large. Based on the finding of the current study, is indicative of a direct relationship between the two variables of this study, implying that the higher the social support, the higher the resilience; such that when the juvenile delinquents experience social support, their resilience is possibly increased as well to greater degree. Social support may include knowledge and skill support, appraisal support, emotional support, instrumental support and informational support (Moeini et al., 2018), and all these are crucial ingredients that conceivably enhance resilience among juvenile delinquents. Effective social support allows juvenile offenders to access emotional, appraisal, information, and instrumental support, thereby enabling them to meet their needs and deepening their resilience (Hershberger et al., 2016).

Also, the relationship between social support and resilience among offenders is a key area of research, highlighting how social networks and supportive relationships can impact the ability to cope with stress and reduce recidivism. According to MacKenzie and Gover (2023), social support, including from family, friends, and community resources, has been shown to enhance resilience among offenders by providing emotional, informational, and instrumental support. They hold that strong social support networks can improve coping strategies, increase feelings of self-efficacy, and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Lee and Chung (2023) further maintain that social support acts as a buffer against the stressors that offenders face, which can otherwise exacerbate mental health issues and lead to reoffending. Research demonstrates that supportive relationships can reduce the negative impact of stress and promote better psychological well-being. Hence social support plays a pivotal role in enhancing resilience among offenders. By buffering the effects of stress, improving mental health, and providing crucial resources and relationships, social support contributes to more effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

VI. Conclusion

This study concluded that the juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, in Kiambu County Kenya, had distribution of low, moderate and high level of social support and resilience respectively. This study concluded that there was a positive relationship between social support and resilience among the juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, in Kiambu County, Kenya. It is hardly refutable that social support plays a fundamental role in enhancing the building of resilience. Since humans are social being, capable of needing help in life, social support may motivate good behaviours and as such discourages delinquent acts.

VII. Recommendation

The Kamiti Maximum Security Prison authority may work in collaboration with counselling psychology practitioners to render effective counselling services to the juvenile delinquents. They could organize seminars

on psychological topics for the juveniles in order to broaden their understanding on mental health emanating from delinquent behaviours.

The families of juvenile delinquent may be educated on the importance of holistic presence in the life of their children and possibly offer their children support in their growths as well pay keen attention to the company their children move with. This may help mitigate negative influences from bad company. The Church and the community leader as well as NGOs may work in collaboration with families

Based on recommendation for future study, a qualitative study be conducted exploring factors contributing to delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison, Kiambu County Kenya. The qualitative study may allow the respondents to express their feelings and experiences regarding delinquent acts. This may enable them to respond to the open-ended questions so that in-depth information is collected.

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