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Influence of Probation on the Management of Juvenile Delinquency Prevalence in Rarieda Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: *Juvenile delinquency prevalence is widely acknowledged to be a global and nationwide' educational, social and law enforcement problem. It is the most powerful predictor of substance abuse, school dropout, suicidal thoughts, and early sexual intercourse. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of probation on management of juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools in Rarieda Sub-county, Siaya County, Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population was 1176 persons, comprising of 672 class teachers, 168 principals, 168 deputy principals, 168 heads of guidance and counselling in Rarieda Sub County in Siaya County, Kenya. Stratified random sampling technique was used to yield sample size of 291 determined using Krejcie & Morgan table (1970). Structured questionnaires and interview guides were the main tool of data collections. Quantitative data was analyzed by both descriptive and inferential statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 20.0) i.e. correlation and presented by use of tables. Qualitative data was analyzed in themes and sub themes and to be presented using quotations. The use of probation officer's had a significant positive influence on juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools of Rarieda Sub-County, Siaya County. There is need for school management to conduct weekly student's interviews and home visits in order to reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools.*

Key Words: *Probation, Management, Juvenile Delinquency, Prevalence*

I. Introduction

Globally, juvenile delinquency is a serious challenge in educational programmes and has caused a lot of setbacks for secondary school students in their educational pursuits (O'Connor, Peterson, & Erickson, 2014).In the United States, juvenile delinquency in high schools has become one of the most troubling issues that school administrators and principals face while attempting to reform public education. As many as 75% of juveniles fail to graduate from high school compared to 3% of non-juvenile offenders (Barry, Chaney, & Chaney, 2015). To address the negative effects of delinquency, various prevention and reduction programs such as court-based systems have been implemented throughout the United States (Annette & Amy, 2015). In South Africa according to the recent studies of 2016 many children commit lots of criminal activities

and they are also prone to some environmental factors and poor parenting in most cases (Smith & Rodley, 2016). Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem in Tanzania especially in cities as it has been recorded as the main reasons that prompt students to drop out of school at 36.2 % (Basic Education Statistics report, 2009/10).

In Kenya, the prevalence of juvenile delinquency remains a factor yet to be thoroughly examined among secondary school students as about 10 % of school non-attendance by children is due to delinquent acts (Mlowosa, Kalimang'asi, & Bundala, 2014). The cases of indiscipline leading to delinquent behaviors for the years 2010-2015 were (61.3%) in Rarieda Sub-County which was higher than those experienced in Siaya County at 60.1% and national at 60.2% (Siaya County Director of Education office, 2015).

A study conducted in Rarieda Sub-County established that, the level of juvenile offending is high among students in public secondary schools (Onyango & Simatwa, 2016), despite the results, the study focused on the influence of physical punishment ban on student discipline and factors suspected to predispose students to delinquents in public secondary schools in Kenya, thus, ignoring the juvenile offending intervention. It is in this regard that, the current study assessed influence of court intervention on juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary school in Rarieda Sub-county, Siaya County, Kenya.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Influence of probation on prevalence juvenile offenders

Some agencies have considered these factors to create specific interventions to reduce juvenile offending. For example, the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children identified several key elements necessary for an effective juvenile delinquency program (Dembo & Gulledge, 2016). These family-friendly and innovative elements are: (a) parent/guardian involvement, (b) a continuum of services, (c) collaboration with community resources, (d) school administrative support and commitment, and (e) ongoing evaluation (Dembo & Gulledge, 2015). The Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3 (JP3) has attempted to integrate these elements into their juvenile programming since 2017, when they first began. The case manager tries to maintain communication with the student and parents, school personnel, and outside community resources the student is referred to within the same jurisdiction. Ongoing evaluation of the student's progress is conducted throughout the life of the case and a report is always issued.

Attending or juvenile Officers*:* The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce delinquents. According to MaclLdowie (2015), the appointment of officers had an immediate and lasting effect on attendance in Kent schools which later reduced a number of criminal activities within the states. It must be emphasized that the effect was particularly felt when the officers picked up delinquent activities on their first day of absence. Gerrard, Burhans and Fair (2013) also maintain that assigning a juvenile to serious cases of delinquency and their families does increase attendance rates.

Study by Azizi and Ramli (2013) reported that about 10% of school non-attendance by children in Kenya was due to truancy. Olley studied 169 street youths in Ibadan, Nigeria (Azizi *et al*, 2009) and about 47% of these had a history of juvenile delinquency. These studies suggest an association between truancy and being on the streets as well as that truancy is an important contributor of non-attendance at school. Gumpel and Meadan (2013) indicated that other factors that have been reported as associations with juvenile delinquency are level of parental education, amount of adolescents' unsupervised time, poor school grades and illicit drug use.

Afande and Maina (2015) conducted a study on Causes and Approaches Used in the Management of juvenile delinquency prevalence in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira North District, Nyamira County, Kenya. The study revealed that the main causal factors of truancy include individual factors, institutional factors, and family backgrounds and community factors. The individual factors include: anxiety and fear; poor social skills; low self – esteem; anti-social behavior; scholastic failure; learning problems; cognitive style; poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons. The institutional factors include: dilapidated school building and poor facilities; school size; movement between classes during lesson changes; classroom management; bullying; educator learner relationship; teaching or instructional approach.

The family and community factors include: socioeconomic status of parents; marital status of parents; poor involvement and supervision; peer influence; violence and drug use. The findings also show that the approaches used in the management of juvenile delinquency prevalence in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others. In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made: there is need for the management of schools to accord the students opportunities for connection and social bonding; there is need for the management of schools to emphasize students' commitment in schools; the

management of schools should endeavor to involve students in as many school activities as possible, including day-to-day management of the schools; and belief and values should be emphasized as they are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong.

Annette and Amy (2015) conducted a study on court interventions on juvenile delinquency prevalence Prevention: The Impact of Provider Contact in Intervention Efficacy. As a follow-up test to correlation, a one-sample chi-square test was conducted to assess whether the number of case manager visits had an impact on a student receiving outside referrals. The results of the test were not significant, c2 (11, N = 311) = 15.70, p< .01. Although the results were not significant, they are still important since the proportion of visits with the case manager is related to outside referrals at the attribute level of "none" (P = .20); two visits with the case manager were proportionately the same (P = .19). The limited number of case manager visits with a student is associated with receiving no outside referrals. The chi-square test indicated a proportion of dismissed cases were significantly associated with zero truancy at the time of exit, at 10.7%, c2 (18, N = 270) = 166.52, (p = .000). This clearly shows the improvement in school attendance after receiving services through the Travis County JP3 truancy prevention and reduction program.

Mentoring is also viewed as an important strategy for improved student attendance. Research on national mentoring programs, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Across Ages, demonstrate that mentoring has a positive influence on student attendance (Herrera, et al., 2007). Dubois and colleagues (2002), however, conducted a meta-analysis of research on mentoring programs and found that on the whole these programs have only a small effect on students. This claim appears to be an anomaly in the research as several studies identifies positive effects on student attendance from mentoring programs.

For example, claims regarding the efficacy of Big Brothers/Big Sisters have been consistent across multiple studies and years (Grossman & Tierney, 1998). Big Brothers/Big Sisters has been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement (Herrera, et al., 2007). Similarly, the Check and Connect Program, which pairs adult mentors with middle and high school students, has undergone rigorous evaluation and been found to improve attendance among student participants (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christensen, 2003).

Community and economic factors can negatively affect students' ability to attend school on a regular basis. These factors include low socioeconomic status of a neighborhood, lack of job availability for students, a large proportion of single-parent homes, a lack of affordable transportation or child care, and parents who have multiple jobs (Hendricks et al., 2010; Sutphen et al., 2010; Lan & Lanthier, 2003). A student may be unable to attend school regularly because he or she needs to be employed during school hours to help the family financially or to provide for his or her own children. Such economically challenged families face delinquent citations when students are chronically tardy or absent. Individual student factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, social development, learning disabilities, drug/alcohol use, misunderstanding of attendance laws, physical or emotional illness, lack of school-engaged friends, a lack of proficiency in English, and family needs can all influence a student's decisions to attend school regularly (Hendricks et al., 2010 Sutphen et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2010; Lan & Lanthier, 2003).

Study conducted by Sälzera, Trautweina, Lüdtkea and Stammb (2012) conducted a study on Predicting adolescent crimes: The importance of distinguishing between different aspects of instructional quality. The study established that high achievement standards were associated with a lower truancy rate at both the student and the class level, whereas fast instructional pace was associated with more truancy at both levels. A perception of the workload as being too low was an additional predictor of high truancy at both the student and the class level.

In addition to court-based programs, other types of prevention and reduction programs have been implemented to address and alleviate consequences of juvenile offending: student and family–based programs, school-based programs, community-based programs, school and community-based programs, and law enforcement-based programs (Dembo & Gulledge, 2009; Sutphen, Ford, & Flaherty, 2010). Only a few studies have been conducted to measure the effectiveness of these programs aimed at preventing or reducing truancy (Maynard et al., 2013). These studies have demonstrated only short-term positive outcomes due to a lack of attention to addressing the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency (Dembo&Gulledge, 2009; Sutphen et al., 2010).

A study by Annette and Amy (2015) conducted a study on juvenile delinquecyreduction and prevention: where the impact of provider contact in intervention efficacy. The study recommended that future research should include an analysis of all samples and databases; a longitudinal study of the JP3 intervention, including analyses of additional variables such as specific outside referrals, student GPAs, whether or not students were promoted to the

next grade level, and the history of siblings who had delinquent issues or dropped out of school; and a study using a control group and randomization. It would be beneficial to know how much of the program's resources are being put into the prevention portion of the program in comparison to the intervention portion of the program. Moreover, it would be advantageous to know whether the program's prevention strategies are effective so that these strategies can be replicated. Further research on this program and its long-term effectiveness should be conducted in order to determine whether JP3 or programs like it are short-term or long-term solutions for truant students. Finally, a follow-up study using all students from the chosen school year(s) and using all variables that were not assessed during this study is recommended.

According to Madernather (2005), the youth reportedly make up 43% of prison inmates nationally, and of this number, Gauteng has the highest number of offenders in prison. These statistics are disturbing. A media report concurs with these findings and adds that currently there are 13 prisons housing juveniles, of which a great percentage is between 14 and 18 years old (Slamdien, 2010). A case in point is that of Sebokeng Township where, according to Dhlamini (2009), statistics gathered by the Department of Social Services indicate that in January 2006 alone, 66 youths were charged with various criminal offenses ranging from rape, assault, robbery, shoplifting, being in possession of marijuana and posing as police officers. In her research on juvenile delinquency in this township, she concluded that adolescent offending could be a form of communication, an unconscious cry for help from families and society.

In Kenya, juvenile offenders are taken to the Rehabilitation Schools for character reformation. However, the ability of these schools to deliver the programmes in a manner that is beneficial to this group of youth is questionable. For instance in his study, Kikuvi (2011) showed that none of the schools have all classes (1-8) leading to non- continuity even in the counseling process and subsequent rehabilitation process. At the same time there are no trained counsellors with a staffing rate of (7.7 percent) for combined nursing and counseling while another (15.5 percent) combined teaching and counselling.

A study by Onyango (2013) on effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes on juvenile delinquents in Kenya. A survey of rehabilitation schools in Nairobi County. The study found out that the rehabilitation programmes for the juvenile delinquents in Kenyan rehabilitation schools were counseling, Education, spiritual welfare, vocational training and life skills training courses which included - masonry, mechanic, tailoring &dressmaking, carpentry & joinery and barber for the boys, hair dressing, tailoring & dressmaking, fashion & design and bakery for the girls. Training in agriculture and personal hygiene were common for all the children in the institutions.

A study by Wategi (2008) focusing on the youth and crime employed the use of focus group discussions by selecting a few youth group members to describe the crime situation in the Eastland region of Nairobi and unstructured interview which encouraged the youths to talk freely about the issue of crime. The study found out that the police had been killing these youths indiscriminately as a way of halting youth crimes among the slum dwellers. The few surviving ones have either been educated or nurtured by the church to escape crime or have joined a youth group for provision of basic needs.

III. Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. According to (Saunders et al., 2014), descriptive survey allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. The research design was appropriate for this study since it allowed collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to obtain in-depth information on influence of court intervention strategies on prevalence of delinquency in secondary schools. The target population was the principals, deputy principals, class teachers, heads of guidance and counselling in 168 secondary schools in Rarieda Sub County. The target population comprised of 672 Class teachers, Students 168, 168 principals, 168 deputy principals, 168 heads of guidance and counselling teachers making a total population of 1176 (Siaya County Director of Education Office, 2015).

Table 3.1: Sample size for each Group

Ward	Population
Principals	168
Deputy principals	168
Class teachers	672
Heads of guidance and counseling	168
TOTAL	**1176**

The sample size was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan table (1970). According to the table, the target population of 1176 persons corresponded to a sample size of 291 persons. The sample was distributed proportionately across all the strata as indicated in table 3.

Table 3. 2: Sample size for each Group

Ward	Population	Group Sample size $n_i = (N_i X n)/N$
Principals	168	42
Deputy principals	168	42
Class teachers representative	672	165
Heads of guidance and counseling	168	42
TOTAL	**1176**	**291**

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the deputy principals, class teachers' and heads of guidance and counselling whereas interview schedules were used to collect data from the school principals and this is because of their small sample size. The data was analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20.0) software. Qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed based on themes and sub themes and to be presented using statements.

IV. Findings

Table 4.2 Use of probation officer's strategy

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**	**Freq**	**%**
Weekly collection of referrals reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools	64	29.2	51	23.3	16	7.3	80	36.5	8	3.7
Weekly student's interviews reduce juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools	62	28.3	31	14.2	21	9.6	32	14.6	73	33.3
Weekly home visits reduce juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools	41	18.7	65	29.7	28	12.8	68	31.1	17	7.8
Behavior change letters to parents reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools	53	24.2	64	29.2	37	16.9	44	20.1	21	9.6
Academic and behaviour interventions reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools	54	24.7	25	11.4	38	17.4	62	28.3	40	18.3

The findings on use of probation officer's strategy showed that teachers used weekly collection of referrals and behavior change letters to parents reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools. Sometimes weekly student's interviews, weekly home visits and academic and behaviour interventions were used to reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools of Rarieda Sub- County, Siaya County.

4.1 Use of probation officer's strategy

The respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale their level of agreement on several statements describing the use of probation officer's variable as summarized in Table 4.4. The study findings showed that most of the respondents 115(52.5%) agreed that weekly collection of referrals reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools, with 7.3% undecided and 88 (40.2%) disagreed. At least 93(42.5%) of the respondents agreed that weekly student's interviews reduce juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools, with 9.6% undecided and 105(47.9%) disagreed.

Most of the respondents 106(48.4%) agreed that weekly home visits reduce juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools, with 12.8% undecided and 85(38.9%) disagreed. Most of the respondents 117(53.4%) agreed that behavior change letters to parents reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools, with 16.9% undecided and 65(29.7%) disagreed. At least 79(36.1%) of the respondents agreed that academic and behaviour interventions reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools, with 17.4% undecided and 46.6% disagreed.

4.2 Juvenile Delinquency Prevalence

The respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale their level of agreement on several statements describing the juvenile delinquency

prevalence dependent variable as summarized in Table 4.7. Most of the respondents 123(56.2%) agreed that the rates of suicidal thoughts reduce as a result of court interventions, with 12.8% undecided and 68(31%) disagreed. Majority of the respondents 119(54.3%) agreed that high school drop outs reduce as a result of court interventions and 100(45.7%) disagreed. At least 107(48.9%) of the respondents agreed that substance use and abuse reduce as a result of court interventions, with 16.4% undecided and 76(34.7%) disagreed. At least 107(48.9%) of the respondents agreed that the rate of suicidal attempts reduce as a result of court interventions, with 18.3% undecided and 72(32.9%) disagreed. At least 95(43.4%) of the respondents agreed that early sexual intercourse reduce as a result of court interventions, with 31.3% undecided and 56(25.6%) disagreed.

Table 4.3 Juvenile Delinquency Prevalence

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
The rates of suicidal thoughts reduce as a result of court interventions	51	23.3	72	32.9	28	12.8	36	16.4	32	14.6
High school drop outs reduce as a result of court interventions	62	28.3	57	26.0			60	27.4	40	18.3
Substance use and abuse reduce as a result of court interventions	47	21.5	60	27.4	36	16.4	60	27.4	16	7.3
The rates of suicidal attempts reduce as a result of court interventions	56	25.6	51	23.3	40	18.3	44	20.1	28	12.8
Early sexual intercourse reduces as a result of court interventions	64	29.2	31	14.2	68	31.1	40	18.3	16	7.3

On the dependent variable the juvenile delinquency prevalence most of the respondents agreed that the rates of suicidal thoughts and high school drop outs reduce as a result of court interventions. The substance use and abuse, rate of suicidal attempts and early sexual intercourse reduce as a result of court interventions in public secondary schools of Rarieda Sub- County, Siaya County.

4.3 Correlation Analysis of the Variables

The study sought to find out the strength of the influence of probation officers' strategy on juvenile delinquency prevalence. To achieve this Pearson's moment correlation was used. It was appropriate because all the variables were in interval scale. Results of the study showed that there is a significant influence of use of probation officers' strategy on juvenile delinquency prevalence ($r=0.732$, $p=0.00$) as summarized in Table 4.4. This implies that an increase in use of probation officers led to a rise in juvenile delinquency prevalence.

Table 4.4 Correlation Analysis of the Variables

		Delinquency	Probation
Delinquency	Pearson Correlation	1	.732**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Probation	Pearson Correlation	.732**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

The most influential strategy in relation to juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools of Rarieda Sub- County, Siaya County was court diversion, followed by taking juvenile offenders to court strategy and finally use of probation officer's strategy respectively since it had the highest correlation coefficients.

The use of probation officer's strategy positively affects juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools of Rarieda Sub- County, Siaya County. There is need for school management to conduct weekly student's interviews and home visits in order to reduces juvenile delinquency prevalence in public secondary schools.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

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