

**FACTORS AFFECTING REHABILITATION OF CHILD OFFENDERS IN KIMUMU
BOYS' PROBATION HOSTEL, ELDORET CITY, UASIN GISHU COUNTY, KENYA**

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for the Award of Master of Arts Degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice of Egerton
University**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in this university or any other university for the award of any degree.

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Date: 8th October 2025

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Recommendation

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DEDICATION

To my late beloved brother and friend, Daniel Manyange Ondari, whose sudden illness and death taught me a new meaning of life! Dan my brother, your strength, courage, and hope to the very end remains my source of resilience. Rest in peace, my dear brother- till we meet again on that resurrection morning!

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ABSTRACT

Child-related crimes have become common in the current society. As a response, governments have established rehabilitation centers to reform child offenders and bring them back to societal expectations. However, in Kenya, some child offenders released from probation hostels after completion of the rehabilitation process tend to continue with delinquent behavior and some get back to probation hostels again. Therefore, the study examined the factors that influence the rehabilitation of child offenders at Kimumu boys' probation hostel in Eldoret City. The specific objectives of the study were to; examine operational policy factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders, assess the institutional factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders, and evaluate staff-related factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel. The research was premised on relapse prevention theory, which gave a thorough and holistic explanation on the change of behavior in the rehabilitation process. A mixed method research design was utilized, and a census sampling technique was used to select the 44 participants into the sample whilst purposive sampling procedure was used to select 11 key informants. The methods of data collection adopted were interview and key informant interview. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data, while descriptive data analysis techniques were used to examine quantitative data. The study established that policies governing the conduct of staff and child offenders are rigid (77%), existing policies have hindered the rehabilitation process (86%), there are issues (56%) that policy issues with child admission and rehabilitation policies affect child offenders' rehabilitation (56%). The study also revealed that inadequate teaching and training equipment (64%) negatively affects the rehabilitation process. In addition, the study revealed that the staff at the hostel are well-equipped to handle the rehabilitation of child offenders (67%) and that staff in the study institution have a positive attitude (79%) towards rehabilitated child offenders. The study concludes that rigid and inflexible policies are the main obstacle to the customization of rehabilitation programs to the individual needs of child offenders. The study also concludes that the condition of the facilities, the amount of equipment, and the funding levels are the key factors that influence the rehabilitation process. In addition, the study concludes that the success of the rehabilitation programs is mostly based on the staff's adequacy, their attitudes toward offenders, and the stability of their positions. The study recommended rehabilitation programs to be more customized to the unique needs of child offenders by probation hostels carrying out a thorough review and revision of the existing policies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BJJ	Bureau of Justice Statistics
CCJS	Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
CCS	British Crime Survey
CJS	Child Justice System
IEAYC	Institute of Economic Affairs Youth Compendium
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
PACS	Probation and After Care Service
RPT	Relapse Prevention Theory
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

As the world governments struggle to handle the issue of criminality, there is an impending fear that the number in regards to regularity and intensity of the crimes committed by children has only increased (NCRC, 2018). Child crime is a social problem facing many societies today as an increasing number of children violate societal norms and even commit more serious crimes (Onyango, 2013). Globally, statistics for juvenile delinquency has shown that 1.5 million juvenile delinquents were brought before norm enforcement agents between 1978 and 2018 in the USA (Puzzanchera et al., 2022).

The British Crime Survey (BCS) and the Canadian Centre of Justice Statistic (CCJS) have been seeing a great increase in the juvenile delinquency in the world with the previous decade (Munyo, 2013; UNDP, 2017). The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency is depicted to be generally on the increase in sub-Saharan Africa especially in the cities where two thirds of the population is between the ages 12 and 25. The majority of them reside in the poverty-stricken settlements lacking facility, servicing and protection (UN - Habitat, 2011).

In Kenya, approximately 57% of crimes reported to the police are committed by juveniles. Furthermore, mass media reports have equally highlighted an upsurge in crime and violence incidences perpetrated by children in all forty-seven (47) counties in Kenya. This increased incidence of child crime across the country is becoming a matter of grave concern among the public and security agencies. There is also an increase in the number of children in control of criminal gangs in the nation (Institute of Economic Affairs Youth Compendium, 2011; NCRC, 2012 and NCIC, 2017). Dzetor and Mantey (2018) explain that, aside from being controlled by a small number of individuals, juvenile delinquency is primarily a group activity. They found that between two-thirds and three-quarters of all offenses committed by children are carried out by members of gangs or groups, which can vary from highly organized criminal organizations to less structured street gangs. Even children who commit crimes alone often have ties to groups (Dzetor & Mantey, 2018).

As argued by Haque (2012), simple and complex societies experience juvenile delinquency, and it is mainly caused by distorted relationships among a group of people resulting in maladjustment and conflict. Most of the juvenile delinquents in the world have had enviable histories of delinquency in the societies and families before they perpetuate the same to greater heights or in towns (Dzetor & Mantey, 2018). According to The UNODC and World Bank, (2007) the family pathology is a major cause of the delinquency. Besides this, half of

juvenile delinquency cases, children subjected to domestic violence cases are also more susceptible to delinquent tendencies and violence in future.

Menard et al. (2001) demonstrate that juvenile delinquency and substance abuse are interconnected during adolescence, with substance use being more widespread during this period compared to early adulthood. Consequently, both crime and substance abuse tend to intensify during adolescence. Juvenile delinquency poses significant challenges to families, public safety, the well-being of the children involved, and law enforcement agencies, resulting in substantial national costs for addressing these issues. As a result, child crime is a critical concern that every country strives to combat, recognizing that inadequate nurturing of young offenders can lead them to become lifelong criminals, ultimately disrupting societal peace and stability (Hess & Drowns, 2010).

UN Habitat (2011) demonstrates that children arrested due to conflict with the law on theft account for 45%, assault 23%; drug possession (10%), mugging (10%) while manslaughter covers 7%. The most widespread weapons of the crime were firearms, pangas (machetes) and knives. Most of these crimes were committed in the pretext to get money (UN Habitat, 2011), an indication of failure to offer genuine avenues to the young to address their needs and/ or financial demands as recognized by law (Agnew, 2020; Mears & Cochran, 2020) or the emergence of a "criminal" generation (Jennings et al., 2019). In response the Kenyan government developed probation hostels to assist; in providing rehabilitation to the child offenders, to reduce the likelihood of repeated offending, to provide a safe space in the society where the child offenders can stay (Kenya National Council for Children's Services, 2021; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019).

The primary goal of hostels is to offer suitable educational programs to child offenders sentenced by a court of law. Additionally, hostels aim to address their psychological and physiological well-being, ensure their physical protection, and support their emotional health and overall interests (Kariuki et al., 2019). Further, Mugo et al. (2006) states that probation hostel presidents are to receive, treat, manage and reform children who have been involved in conflict with the law and afterwards reintegrate them back into their communities. According to the Children Act 2022 (Cap. 141), Laws of Kenya (GoK, 2012), probation hostels are legally obligated to provide care and protection to children in their custody and to prioritize the best interests of the child in all their actions. The process of social reintegration is guided by the Kenyan rehabilitation center management policies, which state that it is a collaborative work of the Child Justice Agencies (CJA), i.e. probation officers, children's officers, and Probation hostel managers. The GoK (2013) notes that, SPO, SCO and those in charge of probation

hostels have a chain of communications and consultations that are expected to affect the treatment or understanding of any particular rehabilitation project on each child and facilitate their social reintegration. The probation officers also undertake the task of rehabilitation projects of the 2nd order in the social reintegration.

Rehabilitations programmes in hostels include counseling, education, spiritual welfare, vocational training and life skills training courses such as masonry, mechanic, tailoring and dressmaking, aimed to positively uplift child offenders to become norm abiding members of the society (Onyango, 2013). Despite the apparent desire and effort by the Kenyan government and non-governmental entities towards mitigating child crime through rehabilitation, the phenomenon has continued unabated due to the rate of reform is low as released child offenders returning to their previous delinquent behavior indicating that the rehabilitation process might be marred with challenges leading to the above situation (Boakye, 2013). It was therefore essential for a study to assess factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The rate of child offenders entering government rehabilitation institutions in Kenya is rising. Child crime has shown an increase rapidly in Kenya. After offending Kenyan law requires that child offenders are arrested and taken through the child justice process where they are committed to probation hostels as a response by the government to rehabilitate and bring them back to societal expectations. After rehabilitation, children are reintegrated to society where in most cases they re-offend with more serious crimes and are committed back to probation hostels. Literature has pointed out that social, economic, and political factors contribute to the recidivism of rehabilitated child offender while factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels have been ignored. This study, therefore, investigated factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels that are likely contributing to re-offending of child offenders to inform policy formulation for effective child offenders' rehabilitation in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1: Broad Objective

The broad objective of this study was to investigate factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya with specific attention to Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel in Eldoret City, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The study had the following objectives:

- i. To examine operational policy factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret City, Uasin Gishu County.
- ii. To explore influence of institutional factors on the rehabilitation outcomes of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret City, Uasin Gishu County.
- iii. To evaluate staff-related factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret City.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What are the operational policy factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret city, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya?
- ii. What is the influence of institutional factors on the rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret City, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya?
- iii. How does staff related factors affect rehabilitation of child offenders in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Eldoret City?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Child crime was and is still a problem facing society at the time of this study. As a response, governments had established rehabilitation centers to reform child offenders and bring them back to societal expectations. However, in Kenya, some child offenders released from probation hostels after completion of the rehabilitation process tended to continue with delinquent behaviour, and some got back to probation hostels again. This study investigated factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in a probation hostel in Eldoret City that might have been leading to this phenomenon.

Findings of this study, therefore, have both theoretical and policy implications. Theoretically, the study contributed to literature on factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. This study also added to the existing body of knowledge about rehabilitation of child offenders. On the policy implications front, the findings may help the government and other policy-making institutions to come up with appropriate policies to address factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels with the goal of fostering child offenders' rehabilitation process to enhance conformity of social norms. This also suggested appropriate policy solutions and recommendations towards mitigating child crime and rehabilitation.

The findings of the study are also helpful in the management of probation hostels to know the factors affecting effective rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels that had a bearing on re-offending; hence they could come up with measures to address them with

a view to enhancing the child offender reform process. The findings also stimulate further research to fill gaps created by this study. This ensures a holistic approach to the understanding of the phenomena of the child offender rehabilitation process to foster a harmonious society where norms were respected and upheld.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study focused on investigating the factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders within probation hostels in Kenya, with particular emphasis on the Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel located in the city of Eldoret. The research was conducted in the year 2024, utilizing interviews as the primary method for data collection. Although the study acknowledges the existence of broader themes related to child criminality and various delinquent behaviors exhibited by juveniles, it narrows its focus to the specific elements that impact the rehabilitation process in probation settings. This targeted approach aims to provide a detailed understanding of the rehabilitation factors unique to the context of probation hostels in Kenya.

The study faced limitations that may impact the comprehensiveness of its findings. Access to certain information was restricted due to the institutional classification of probation hostels as penal and correctional facilities, which are generally not open to public scrutiny. This challenge was mitigated through the acquisition of a consent letter from the Director of Children Services.

Additionally, the study's design necessitated the translation of interview questions into languages familiar to the respondents, which could potentially influence the nuances of their responses. Furthermore, due to legal protections for children and the sensitive nature of the study, the researcher was unable to directly engage with the child offenders themselves. This absence of firsthand accounts from the juveniles limited insights into their personal experiences within the rehabilitation process. As a result, the findings may not fully encapsulate the diverse perspectives and experiences that could contribute to a more holistic understanding of the rehabilitation factors affecting child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya.

Firstly, to mitigate the challenges associated with restricted access to information, the researcher sought additional permissions from relevant authorities and stakeholders beyond the initial consent from the Director of Children Services. Establishing partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations that focus on juvenile justice may have provided alternative avenues for accessing valuable data and perspectives. Engaging these local organizations could facilitate a more inclusive approach, gathering insights from a broader spectrum of individuals involved in or affected by the

rehabilitation process. Secondly, to improve the quality of data collected through translated interview questions, the researcher could involve bilingual assistants or experts proficient in both the language of the respondents and English. These individuals could ensure that the translations not only captured the literal meaning of the questions but also maintained the context and cultural sensitivity necessary for conveying nuances. Employing culturally relevant terms and phrasing could help in obtaining more authentic and accurate responses from the participants.

Thirdly, to compensate for the inability to interact directly with child offenders, the study employed a mixed-methods approach by incorporating secondary data sources such as case studies, rehabilitation program records from social workers and counsellors involved with these children. This could provide supplementary perspectives and enrich the understanding of the rehabilitation process, providing a more rounded view that includes professional insights. Lastly, conducting follow-up interviews or focus group discussions with staff members and other stakeholders involved in juvenile rehabilitation could help capture the complexities of the rehabilitation process. These discussions could reveal the operational challenges, successes, and intervention strategies in place, further illuminating the factors impacting rehabilitation outcomes.

By implementing these remedies, the study could have bolstered its findings, leading to a deeper understanding of the rehabilitation factors affecting child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Child in conflict with the law refers to a person who is above the age of twelve years, but below the age of eighteen years, who has been dealt with or punished in accordance with part XV of the Children Act 2022 or any other written law for contravention of the law (The Kenya Children Act, 2022).

Institutional factors refer to aspects affecting rehabilitation of juvenile offenders entail issues negatively impacting on the juvenile rehabilitation due to failure of probation hostel management to provide for facilities, teaching and training equipment and psychosocial support.

Juvenile justice refers to criminal law applicable to persons under the age of 18 years.

Juvenile offender: In the context of this study, juveniles are those people who have not reached adulthood nor the age of majority or children in the age of ten to eighteen years.

Operational policy factors entail guidelines to probation hostels on the requirement and procedure of admission, rehabilitation, and release of juvenile offenders. In this study admission process, nature of the treatment, and release process of juvenile delinquents from probation hostels will be considered.

Probation hostel entails any institution which provides the reception, maintenance, training and rehabilitation of children pursuant to an order of a Court. The institution provides temporary accommodation to child offenders where, under close supervision, basic needs, vocational training and formal education is provided.

Recidivism is a tendency of juvenile delinquents re-offending and being committed back to rehabilitation institutions and or graduating to adult criminals.

Reform refers to make an improvement, especially by changing a person's behavior or in the structure of something.

Rehabilitation process is the process of helping an individual achieve the highest level of function, independence, and quality of life possible.

Rehabilitation refers to specific practices designed to directly reduce re-offending among young people. It focuses on particular types of interventions aimed at helping youth change their behavior, rather than describing the broader social or administrative settings in which these interventions occur.

Staff factors entails issues from the side of probation hostel employees that negatively affect child offenders' rehabilitation like the number of personnel, training of personnel and capacity building.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of existing literature relevant to the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. It delved into the theoretical underpinnings and empirical findings from various geographical contexts, including developed countries, developing nations, African countries, the East African region, and specifically Kenya. The review aimed to establish a foundational understanding of the multifaceted nature of child offender rehabilitation and to identify key factors that had been documented as influencing its effectiveness. The resultant sub-topics thus include the operational policy factors, institutional capacities, and staff-related dynamics within these rehabilitation environments.

2.2 Operational Policy Factors Affecting the Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The rehabilitation of child offenders within the frameworks of various juvenile justice systems worldwide presents several operational policy factors that directly impact the effectiveness of these programs. A review of literature across developed countries, developing nations, African contexts, East African region, and specifically Kenya highlights the common challenges and successes that contribute to or hinder juvenile rehabilitation.

The Child Justice System (CJS) is a vital framework that ensures children who have committed offenses are held responsible for their actions while taking into account their age and developmental maturity (King'ori, 2011; U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). The goal of the CJS is not to punish children for their behavior, but rather to provide them with the support and guidance they need to make positive changes and become productive members of society (Lawpedia, 2021).

The justice system to children researches the available norms, laws, process, structures, as well as institutions in order to ascertain that the rights and legal guarantees of children are not overlooked and violated. Children who are involved in crime should be addressed by a specific justice system where they are placed in certain rehabilitative platform where measures are applied depending on their needs and developing capacity (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). Rehabilitative programs can be developed to offer alternatives to the juveniles on how they can generate income (Morselli & Roy, 2020; Piquero et al., 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019).

Juvenile delinquents' re-entry into mainstream society is critical since rehabilitation lays the groundwork for leading a healthy lifestyle in the community once they are released

from the juvenile justice system (Bradshaw & Roseborough, 2005). Rehabilitative programs may be established to provide legal alternatives for income generation, such as providing increased economic opportunities for adolescents and young people (Morselli & Roy, 2020; Piquero et al., 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019).

The system of Child justice in Kenya consists of several bodies, which include court, juvenile prison, juvenile detention homes, line remand homes, and children department (Wambugu et al., 2015). The courts have the responsibility of identifying whether a child has committed an offense or not. On being released on remand, Okech (2017) indicates that the children can be sent to rehabilitation schools and even adult prisons. In addition, certain rehabilitative practices help present realistic alternatives to recidivism (Cochran et al., 2021; Mulvey et al., 2020; Piquero et al., 2020).

Though there has been a paradigm shift in child rehabilitation practices in Kenya as the punitive model is replaced with the egalitarian and restorative model, policies related to the assessment of child offenders have lagged behind (Kariuki, 2019; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019). According to Waittherero (2011), the legal system that governs CJS in Kenya does not specify the age of criminal responsibility of children, does not assure them of legal counsel, and lacks child-friendly forms of courts, rehabilitation institutions, and personnel familiar with the special needs of children. The conditions in probation hostels and in remand have been reported to vary, but most of them complain of poor sanitation, insufficient bedding arrangements, run-down facilities, and lack of recreational facilities (Amnesty International, 2020; Human Rights Watch, 2021).

According to laws and policies that guide child justice, The Constitution of Kenya 2010, The Children Act 2022, Criminal Procedure Code, Probation of Offenders Act, Persons Deprived of Liberty Act, Sentencing Policy Guidelines, Bail and Bond Policy Guidelines among others, upon arrival at the holding facility, children must be taken through proper orientation of the holding facility (ODPP, 2020). Good orientation inspires confidence and reduces the urge to escape from the institution. Medical inspection should also be carried out to establish any existing medical needs. With respect to girls in conflict with the law, whether on remand or serving a custodial order, sanitary pads and facilities for personal hygiene ought to be availed. Informed by the good life rehabilitation model, children confined in institutions must be provided with basic provisions including food and clothing (Department of Children's Services, 2021). The current study assessed if the laws and policies are followed right from admission to and from these rehabilitation institutions.

Commenting on the importance of monitoring and election policies in terms of the effectiveness of the Probation Orders program, MCNeill (2010) asserts that auditing the probation program regularly and conducting a review of it, including special staff training are key elements of the intensive supervision probation, which aim at achieving successful results of the need-based treatment of offenders. The PRI (2016) suggests that probation systems must be evaluated not only to determine whether they are indeed functioning optimally or not, but also to determine areas that they need to improve upon, including issues, among others, with respect to formulating annual research programs, since such issues spread light to issues of interest to the authorities (including the criminal justice system agencies), duty bearers, and the general population.

Despite these arrangements still we have an increasing rate of child offender cases, a high rate of re-offending of the children that have undergone rehabilitation in probation hostels which prompted this study to unveil the factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders committed to probation hostels.

On child processing policies, a study by Mantey and Dzator (2018) reported that the major challenge confronting rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents in Ghana is the process through which they are brought to the center. The study posits that before the individual is brought into the center, a complaint must have been made to the police, an arrest is effected, court process and then a sentence from a competent court of jurisdiction; a phenomenon associated with the regular court proceedings for criminals.

Many inmates viewed the process as a form of humiliation and societal rejection, believing that, as juvenile delinquents, they should not be treated as adult criminals (UNICEF, 2020). The study revealed that 80.6% of those not living with their parents reported they did not receive a fair or proper due process during their admission to the center (Save the Children, 2021). Further, the findings show that the legal framework and policies on admission and release process presents challenges (International Juvenile Justice Observatory, 2019). The humiliation and rejection become a challenge to child offenders to be rehabilitated (Haque, 2012). However, the study findings reflect the rehabilitation admission situation in Ghana, hence the current study investigated whether the admission process in probation hostels in Kenya affect rehabilitation of child offenders.

In her dissertation study on strengthening access to justice to a child in conflict with the law (Kingori 2015), she examined the issue of access to justice by the children. The analysis was critical of the current legal framework in Kenya in relation to the provision of the convention on the Rights of the child (CRC, 1992) and that of the African Convention on the

Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1999). The paper also looked into the administration of justice to juveniles and all the rights of the child as included in the right to assume innocence. Additionally, Njoroge and Wainaina (2019) observed that the Children Act of Kenya is not satisfactory in terms of access to justice and proposed revision of the Act to make it fully consistent with the international and regional standards. Whereas the research engaged in the examination of both international and domestic systems of law, the current research engaged in examination of domestic systems of law to deal with what factors are involved in the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

Ainsworth (2005) examines the performance of the judicial procedure in processing child offenders within the American justice system. The adequacy and fairness of the system in terms of the rights of the child offenders was questioned. In conclusion, the article opines that whether the juvenile court will stand up in the future is uncertain as there exist procedural inadequacies of the court hence there is a necessity to reconsider the nature of juvenile justice system. The article addresses the adequacy of the process of procedure to enforce the rights of the child offender, whereas this study addresses situation or operational policy factors impacting on rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels among others.

Globally, developed countries, juvenile rehabilitation systems often emphasize restorative justice principles. For example, the United States has established nuanced juvenile justice policies aimed at reintegrating young offenders into society through therapeutic, educational, and vocational programs (National Research Council, 2013). Findings by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2015) indicate that jurisdictions focusing on family-based interventions and community involvement report lower recidivism rates. Additionally, studies emphasize the importance of intensive supervision programs that include personalized counselling and mentorship as pivotal for positive outcomes in juvenile delinquency (McNeill, 2010). The integration of evidence-based practices in therapeutic approaches for behavioural issues is essential and has been echoed across several reports (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007).

Contrastingly, many developing countries face systemic challenges that inhibit effective rehabilitation. According to a study by O'Brien (2019), the lack of infrastructure, limited access to educational resources and inadequate training for juvenile justice personnel significantly undermine juvenile rehabilitation efforts. In Ghana, for example, Mantey and Dzetor (2018) found that prejudicial treatment during detention, including labelling and stigmatization, reduces the likelihood of successful rehabilitation outcomes. Additionally, the lack of community support post-release is a common barrier impacting reintegration efforts, as

evidenced in studies by Munten et al. (2020), suggesting that sustainable support systems are essential for reducing recidivism.

Within the African context, the challenges are particularly pronounced, with socio-economic factors contributing significantly to juvenile delinquency. UNICEF (2020), states that socio-political instability, poverty, and lack of educational opportunities propel youth towards delinquency. A comparative study by Khemfoo and Msiteki (2018), highlights that programs focusing on family dynamics and community engagement have shown promise in rehabilitating juvenile offenders in South Africa. However, these programs often lack consistency in implementation due to inadequate funding and political instability (Nkosi & Otwori, 2018).

The East African region presents a complex overview of juvenile justice and rehabilitation. In Tanzania and Uganda, for example, studies (Kimaro, 2018; Mugisha, 2017) have indicated a reliance on punitive measures rather than rehabilitation. Research by the East African Law Society (EALS, 2020) underscored the urgency for policy reform that aligns with international human rights standards focusing on holistic rehabilitation methods rather than mere punishment. A key finding from a regional assessment (Makama, 2021) advocates for integrating cultural norms and values into rehabilitation strategies to enhance acceptance and effectiveness. Additionally, effective training for personnel involved in juvenile justice roles is highlighted as critical in bridging gaps in understanding child psychology (Mugisha & Monyani, 2019).

In Kenya, the provision for child rehabilitation has been framed by a combination of legislative frameworks and rehabilitative ideals enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and the Children Act (2022). According to Mugo et al. (2006), despite efforts towards reform and rehabilitation, significant challenges persist in the structures governing probation hostels. The lack of adequate resources and facilities impedes the implementation of necessary programs which can effectively cater for the psychological and developmental needs of child offenders (Otieno & Kamau, 2021).

Onyango (2013) and Wambugu et al. (2015) confirm that existing programs often fall short due to systemic issues related to training, staffing, and coordination among criminal justice agencies. Although the vision for rehabilitation is clear, the outcomes remain hampered by constraints such as overcrowding in facilities, inadequate psychological support systems, and insufficient vocational training opportunities, as noted in reports by the National Council for Children's Services (2016).

Moreover, Kingori (2015) critiques the Kenyan legal framework governing juvenile justice, identifying gaps such as the unclear definition of age limits for criminal responsibility and insufficient guarantees for legal representation for child offenders. Furthermore, the operational policies must prioritize mental health assessments and provide necessary interventions to address the unique rehabilitative needs of the children; failure to do so can exacerbate cycles of re-offending (Kariuki et al., 2019). The need for comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks is advocated by research (Boakye, 2013), emphasizing that policies governing child rehabilitation must adapt based on continuous feedback and empirical evidence to facilitate constructive reform measures

In conclusion, Kenya's government has taken some steps to improve the child justice system through sector reforms. One notable effort has been transforming approved schools—originally based on a punitive juvenile justice approach—into rehabilitation centers aimed at helping young offenders (Odera, 2013). However, these efforts haven't yet yielded the results hoped for. There has been a rise in dropouts and repeat offenses within these centers, suggesting that the reforms may not be fully effective. Researchers like Walker and Bishop (2016), Steinberg et al. (2015), and Bright et al. (2014) have pointed out that how well rehabilitation centers work often depends on the individual characteristics of the children involved. Sadly, there haven't been many studies like this focusing on Kenya or other developing countries, which makes it harder to understand what truly works and what doesn't in these contexts. The study herein investigated factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

2.3 Influence of Institutional Factors

The rehabilitation of child offenders is multifaceted and influenced significantly by the institutional capacity within which these young people are served. Various institutional challenges such as inadequate personnel, lack of resources for teaching and training, overcrowding, and insufficient facilities can severely impede rehabilitation efforts.

The nature of rehabilitation of child offenders also rests on the institutional capacity to change the behavior of child offenders in probation hostels (Mawanda & Wamala, 2018). The institution may fail to effectively rehabilitate child offenders due to capacity of the personnel, unavailability of resources for training and teaching equipment as well as the number of child offenders in the hostel at a particular period (Kariuki et al., 2019). Studies have shown that rehabilitation of delinquents is greatly influenced by various institutional challenges (Haque, 2012). This literature review will first critically examine literature on capacity of probation hostels, funding, facilities, nature of teaching and training as well as availability of equipment

for training, the number of child offenders in these institutions and associated challenges in child offenders' rehabilitation.

A review of Ghana juvenile justice system compliance with the law, and its adherence to international protocols that the Ghanaian government themselves studied was conducted by Stephanie and Corinne (2011). Moreover, there are multiple issues in juvenile remand homes and correctional centers; regarding infrastructure, the houses within the territory of the rehabilitation centers were not renovated in decades, there is a lack of space that overloads the facilities, and boys would fight one another (Mwangi & Otieno, 2020). However, this study majorly focused on general infrastructure in rehabilitation centers while the current study focused on the nature of training and equipment in probation hostels and how they influence rehabilitation of child offenders.

Mutemi (2017) established that the Kenyan prisons service is faced with several challenges in discharging its mandate of rehabilitation. These are highlighted in the literature review above but can be summarized into severe overcrowding, shortage of food, clean water, diseases, and unskilled prison personnel. From the Human Rights Watch World Report of 2001, Kenyan prisons are faced with shortages of food, clean water and adequate clothing; limited access to medical services; corruption as well as prisoner human rights violations. Diseases which are often the predictable consequence of overcrowding, malnutrition, unhygienic conditions, and lack of medical care remain the most common causes of death in Kenyan correctional facilities.

Lack of resources within the service also leads to a lack of awareness of the few existing community structures and services provided by the government, as outlined in the Community Service Order (CSO) Act (Karanja & Mwangi, 2020). This Act provides that public work shall be available to inmates and may include activities such as construction or maintenance of public roads, afforestation works, environment conservation, water conservation projects, and maintenance work in public schools, hospitals, and other social amenities. The nature or type of public work shall be determined by the court in consultation with the Community Service Orders Committee (Kamau & Wanjiru, 2021; Mutemi, 2017).

There are few underdeveloped rehabilitation programs targeting the psychological needs of women offenders, with most initiatives primarily focusing on their economic empowerment. The study findings led to the conclusion that the rehabilitation programs within Kenyan women's prisons are not effectively addressing the unique psychological needs of women offenders, which contribute to their criminal behaviors. This inadequacy is due to the absence of gender-responsive programming, limited research on women and crime in Kenya,

insufficient training of wardresses in gender-responsive treatment, and poor planning and management of available funds from both government sources and prison income-generating projects (Ondeng, 2008; Otieno & Ochieng, 2020).

The community plays a vital role in the successful rehabilitation of offenders within their communities; however, this role has not been fully utilized. Additionally, it was found that the Probation and Aftercare Service Department faces significant staff shortages and a heavy workload, which hinder effective supervision, monitoring, and follow-up of probationers. To address these challenges, implementing a well-managed 'Volunteer Probation Officers' Programme which recruits qualified and trustworthy professionals, including retired personnel and religious leaders from local communities could positively and effectively support the enforcement and success of Probation Orders, thereby enhancing offender rehabilitation outcomes (Kipng'etich, 2015). The current study focused on factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels since the children committed to these institutions are not from the community where the institution is based.

According to a study by Njoka et al. (2019), the teachers were not trained on how to deal with offending children, nor were they motivated or given incentives to be good performers and the parent did not offer any support to the teachers in terms of shaping the children. The study documented that there were inappropriate hygiene conditions and also items belonging to individuals were frequently stolen. The study suggests that there is need to sensitize the parents to meet both the physical and psychological needs of the learners, to train the teachers where possible and on safety and living standards of the learners.

As stated by Young et al. (2017), skill-based and education programs are an essential part of the effective rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. This indicator has been applied by Walker and Bishop (2016) who examined the cases of 14 communities and secure juvenile placement facilities. The 637 juvenile delinquents were tested on their skills by 10 independent rates at two intervals in a pre-test and post-test experimental trails. The initial rating (pre-test) took place 45 days after the admission of children to the center and the second rating (post-test) 30 days before their release. The study mainly evaluated the progression of socio-emotional skills including goal setting, consequential thinking, dealing with others, problem solving, dealing with distress, aggression control and impulse control (Walker & Bishop, 2016). These are the results of the conducted research over which skills are an effective indicator in the rehabilitation performance. The research outlines the drawbacks of employing such a measure as the need to use an experimental design and the large number of rates which are not only time consuming but also resources. Also, it may be challenging to choose the kind

of skill to evaluate because children are being taught a lot of skills within rehab programs. The study focused on the development of socio-emotional skills for children while the current study focused on the factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

Developed nations have better resources and frameworks in place for rehabilitating child offenders, thus prioritize evidence-based practices and therapeutic approaches, which have been shown to facilitate positive outcomes for juvenile offenders (Teich et al., 2021). A study conducted in the United States found that facilities with comprehensive programs focusing on education, vocational training, and mental health support lead to better rehabilitation outcomes (Aizer & Doyle, 2015). Effective institutional frameworks are necessary for ensuring children receive personalized interventions that cater to their unique developmental needs (Snyder et al., 2019). Similarly, in Sweden, evaluation of juvenile institutions indicates a significant correlation between positive rehabilitation outcomes and adequate funding and training for staff involved in juvenile reformation programs (Wikström et al., 2012). These findings underscore the importance of both infrastructure and personnel competence in achieving successful rehabilitation outcomes in developed countries.

Conversely, developing countries experience significant barriers that undermine the rehabilitation process. Research indicates that juvenile facilities in places like Ghana often suffer from dilapidated infrastructure, overcrowding, and inadequate educational resources (Nkrumah et al., 2018). In the broader African context, institutional challenges remain a pervasive issue in juvenile rehabilitation. A study in Nigeria revealed that inadequate facilities and lack of trained personnel dramatically impair rehabilitation efforts (Adesina et al., 2020).

Lack of gender-sensitive programming in many institutions further complicates rehabilitation, as these young women often face unique socioeconomic challenges that are not addressed by existing programs (Ogunleye et al., 2021). Reports from the South African Human Sciences Research Council emphasize that community involvement and support are vital for effective rehabilitation but are grossly underutilized due to weak frameworks (HSRC, 2020). Thus, the challenges of inadequate facilities, lack of resources, and absence of community engagement remain critical issues in many African countries.

Regionally, the East African region presents a mixed picture regarding the institutional factors that affect juvenile rehabilitation. In countries like Tanzania and Uganda, institutional frameworks have begun efforts to implement community-based rehabilitation models aimed at reducing incarceration rates (Mugisha, 2017). However, these efforts are often hampered by funding shortages and lack of staff training, as reiterated by the East African Law Society (EALS, 2020). Studies in the region have consistently shown a lack of sufficient vocational

training programs and intervention strategies, which directly contribute to high recidivistic behaviour among youth offenders (Narayan & Ojwang, 2019). Consequently, addressing these institutional issues is critical to improving juvenile rehabilitation outcomes in the East African region.

In Kenya, multiple studies have flagged institutional factors as significant challenges in the rehabilitation of child offenders. For instance, Kariuki et al. (2019), note that many probation hostels struggle with inadequate staffing and lack of training opportunities for personnel, which directly impacts rehabilitation effectiveness. Further compounding these issues, systemic overcrowding in facilities has led to a diluted quality of rehabilitative care, often resulting in minimal educational opportunities for children (Njoka et al., 2019). Moreover, the Kenyan government has acknowledged gaps in the training of staff within probation service facilities, with calls for intensive staff development to better address the complex needs of child offenders (GoK, 2019).

Reports from Kenya highlight similar challenges, where juvenile facilities are often underfunded and lack essential support services, including psychological counselling and educational programming (Mutemi, 2017). Factors such as these not only inhibit the effectiveness of rehabilitation but also contribute to cycles of re-offending. A study in India illustrated that poor institutional conditions directly correlate with elevated rates of recidivism and highlight the urgent need for reform across developing nations (Bhattacharya & Fulekar, 2019). Therefore, the study examined how institutional factors affect rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

2.4 Influence of Staff Related Factors

The rehabilitation of child offenders is a complex process that is significantly influenced by staff-related factors, including the capacity, training, attitudes, and availability of professionals within rehabilitation facilities. Recent research emphasizes that the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs largely depends on the competence, motivation, and ethical stance of staff members responsible for implementation. In developed countries, well-trained and adequately resourced staff is associated with better rehabilitation outcomes for child offenders (Smith & Johnson, 2020).

Globally, in developed countries, well-resourced rehabilitation facilities often prioritize staff training and development, resulting in higher rehabilitation rates. For example, the United States juvenile justice system has increasingly focused on staff qualifications and professional development as critical components for delivering effective rehabilitation programs (Gordon, 2016). Studies have highlighted that trained and qualified staff can implement evidence-based

practices that promote positive behavioural change among child offenders (Lipsey, 2018). Notably, the emphasis is placed not only on academic qualifications but on ongoing training and supervision, which help practitioners understand behaviour and apply appropriate interventions. Overall, the evidence suggests that high levels of staff training correlate positively with better rehabilitation outcomes in juvenile populations (Smith et al., 2020).

Conversely, in developing countries and African contexts, challenges such as limited training opportunities, insufficient staffing, and negative attitudes among staff hinder effective rehabilitation efforts (Mwangi & Otieno, 2022; Njeri & Karanja, 2021). Specifically in Kenya, studies highlight that staff capacity gaps and lack of specialized training contribute to the suboptimal rehabilitation of child offenders (Kipng'etich & Wambui, 2021). Addressing staff-related challenges through targeted training, capacity building, and attitude change initiatives is crucial for improving rehabilitation outcomes across diverse settings. Moreover, incorporating qualified and trained staff into rehabilitation programs remains a challenge. Research by Maphalala and Vawda (2017), reveals that inadequate training and high turnover rates among staff in juvenile facilities often impede rehabilitation efforts. Many staff members are overburdened and expected to juggle diverse roles without adequate support, which undermines their effectiveness (Aderibigbe & Tunde, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of professional development opportunities compounds the problem, leading to a deficit of expertise in effectively managing and rehabilitating child offenders (Kardzow et al., 2019). This stark contrast with developed nations highlights the need for systemic reform in the workforce related to juvenile rehabilitation in developing countries.

Across Africa, institutional challenges continue to hinder rehabilitation efforts. In countries such as Ghana, studies have shown that the lack of qualified personnel affects service delivery. Ampofo et al. (2020), found that many rehabilitation institutions in Ghana suffer from poor staffing practices, with unprofessional and inadequately trained personnel leading rehabilitation programs. This challenge results in ineffective rehabilitation interventions and reinforces negative behaviours among young offenders. Moreover, there remains a significant gap in the understanding of cultural and contextual factors that affect juvenile behaviour, which trained professionals could address more effectively (Babb, 2021).

Regionally, in East Africa, while there have been some positive developments in juvenile justice, staff-related issues remain prevalent. A study conducted in Uganda highlights that rehabilitation programs often lack the necessary infrastructure to support staff training and development (Kasirye & Wamala, 2021). With many staff members lacking specialized training in behavioural management and intervention methods, the rehabilitation outcomes

tend to fall short (Maweje, 2021). Additionally, the socio-economic contexts that contribute to juvenile delinquency such as poverty and family instability—are frequently overlooked in training programs, which means rehabilitation strategies do not fully meet the complex needs of child offenders (Waweru, 2020).

In Kenya, studies have consistently highlighted staff-related factors as critical challenges affecting rehabilitation in probation hostels. For example, Kariuki et al. (2019) assessed the capacity of personnel in Kenyan correctional and rehabilitation centers and noted that many staff members were inadequately qualified and trained to manage juvenile offenders. This issue is compounded by high staff-to-offender ratios, making it difficult for personnel to provide adequate support to each child (Kikuvi, 2011). The Department of Children's Services has recognized the need for professional development, but implementation has been slow (Department of Children Services, 2020). Additionally, attitudes toward juvenile offenders are crucial; positive attitudes have been linked to more effective rehabilitation, while negative perceptions can inhibit the treatment process (Njoka & Kariuki, 2019). Overall, although various laws and policies guide rehabilitation efforts in Kenya, actual staffing practices and capacity continue to pose significant barriers to successful outcomes.

The capacity of personnel in probation hostels and how they influence child offender rehabilitation. Omboto (2013) conducted a study on the challenges facing staff rehabilitation of prisoners in Kenya and the mitigation strategies. The study established that prisons failure in rehabilitation rest on the people entrusted with the responsibility to reform the prisoners. The study established gaps in the capacity of officers in rehabilitation institutions in undertaking reform of offenders. Staff in rehabilitation institutions were not well trained hence this pose major challenge in the behavior change process. Omboto (2013) focused on challenges facing the rehabilitation process in prisons, while the current study focused on factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya.

Effective rehabilitation of child offenders depends heavily on officers who demonstrate integrity, specialized education, and targeted training to understand complex aspects of human behavior, motivation, and worth. Recent studies indicate that officers lacking appropriate training and ethical grounding are less capable of facilitating meaningful rehabilitation outcomes. For instance, research by Mwangi and Karanja (2020) highlights that the success of juvenile rehabilitation programs is closely linked to officers' professionalism, integrity, and their understanding of the psychological and social factors influencing juvenile behavior. Similarly, Wanjiru and Muthoni (2021) emphasize that well-trained officers with a deep

understanding of human development and motivation are essential for effective intervention, without which the likelihood of successful rehabilitation diminishes significantly.

Kariuki et al. (2019) carried out the research on the challenges facing Juvenile delinquents Rehabilitation Centers in Nyeri Kenya. The research found out that the correctional centers did not have qualified staff therefore workers were appointed various roles in the correctional centers as counselors, teachers and supervisors without paying consideration to their academic and professional qualifications. This can negatively affect the rehabilitation process since professional knowledge is required to holistically change the behavior of juvenile delinquents. However, this study employed quantitative methods to study the phenomenon of delinquent rehabilitation which is social in nature thus the current study employed mixed methods to capture the qualitative and quantitative aspects regarding factors affecting child offender rehabilitation in probation hostels.

Omboto (2010) in his study, has determined that many of the prisoners have university and college education whereas the prison officers are scarce in terms of education. This, according to the study, complicates rehabilitation process since the educational level of prison officers is low compared to the inmates. However, the study focused on rehabilitation of drug and substance abuse in prisons while the current study assessed factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. Thus, the knowledge to put forward by the current study will help in holistic understanding behavior change in probation hostels not only in Kenya but also in third world countries.

From the above studies, it is evident that capacity of personnel is crucial in delinquent rehabilitation process. With good education, officers in rehabilitation institutions are at a better position to guide the delinquents and offer best change behavior process due to their expertise knowledge in counselling, teaching and vocational training skills. Thus, this study established staff capacity in rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels since the nature of personnel greatly influences rehabilitation.

Nature of training and equipment challenges in child offender rehabilitation institutions is another focus of this literature review. A study conducted by Kaderi (2004) examined borstal institutions, which are part of Ghana's juvenile correctional justice system. The study found that these borstal facilities do not even provide the most basic and practical educational tools necessary for transforming juveniles. Specifically, they lack activities such as leatherwork, woodwork, dressmaking, soap-making, and other hands-on skills that are engaging and appealing to young offenders. Lack of vocational teaching equipment hinder rehabilitation process because technical knowledge is key in transforming behavior of child offenders in

probation hostels. Thus, the current study established whether probation hostels face similar challenge and how this affects rehabilitation of child offenders.

Sereta et al. (2016) on his study on an assessment of effectiveness of drug rehabilitation programs in Kisii County established vast majority of those in charge of helping the rehabilitees to recuperate from drug and substance abuse is of high qualification. From other research done previously, it was established that most staff have a minimum qualification of a diploma as required by NACADA. The study recommended deployment of more staff in the rehabilitation centers and refresher courses or workshops for service providers to reduce burn-out due to handling high numbers of clients and keep them informed of safeguarding service delivery in the rehabilitation. The study assessed the effectiveness of drug rehabilitation institutions on drug abuse and use while the current study will focus on factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

Research indicates that, beyond financial constraints, rehabilitation centers for child offenders face significant challenges such as congestion, inadequate recreational facilities, and poor infrastructure. These issues are felt acutely by both staff and rehabilitees, often leading to negative outcomes such as withdrawal from treatment before completion. Studies by Otieno and Wambui (2020), highlight that overcrowding and lack of proper facilities undermine the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts. Similarly, Muthoni and Karanja (2021) emphasize that poor infrastructure and limited recreational opportunities diminish motivation and engagement among rehabilitees, impacting their rehabilitation journey. Despite these insights, little research has been conducted specifically on the factors affecting effective rehabilitation within probation hostels, signaling a need for further investigation into these contextual challenges.

Wahu et al. (2020) sought to examine the influence of children's characteristics on the performance of Kenyan juvenile rehabilitation centers. The study recommended that the family should be engaged in the rehabilitation process of the children. The current study focused on factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in the institution where the administration and staff were able to share their experiences on child offender rehabilitation.

The process of rehabilitation is fundamental during reforming of child offenders. The nature of rehabilitation process can either result in effective rehabilitation process or distort it leading to failed behavior and behavioral transformation of the target group. The aim of confinement being to rehabilitate the child, the institutions must provide the necessary support to obtain this objective, especially in terms of education or vocational training and psychosocial support (United Nations, 2018).

Several studies have been undertaken on rehabilitation process and rehabilitation of offenders. Dzetor and Mantey (2018) conducted study on the challenges facing rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents in Ghana. The study established that counseling services that form the core of rehabilitation process were not effective. The study argued that counseling services at the rehabilitation centers were often left to church leaders rather than professional counselors. In fact, the counseling sessions, according to the study findings were merely sermons and teachings from the Bible which were largely Christian in nature. This is a setback in the rehabilitation process because delinquents need to be guided and molded so that they can amend their behavior in line with societal expectations (Stephanie & Corinne, 2011). Failure to provide proper counseling services will affect behavior change and lead the juvenile to recidivism. In addition, counseling session being sermons characterizing Christian teaching is likely to hinder rehabilitation process because delinquents have diverse religious backgrounds, thus subjecting a Muslim or Hindu delinquent to Christian ethos and principles will not be beneficial hence the process of rehabilitation becomes challenging. The study focused on challenges facing rehabilitation of offenders while the current study focused on factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels to prevent recidivism and ensure a reformed child to fit societal values.

The Children Department under the ministry of Labour and Social Protection Kenya (2021), undertook research on Assessment of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration Programmes, Services and Practices for Children in Conflict with the Law in Kenya which was aimed at designing programmes that address the real needs of the children who find themselves in conflict with the law and especially those committed to statutory children's institutions. The report revealed that there are adult offenders in prisons in Kenya who began offending as children which is a failure to rehabilitate and effectively reintegrate children in conflict with the law.

This study shows a gap in the rehabilitation process which results to unchanged child. The study majorly focused juvenile justice and policies with the aim of designing programmes and policies to ensure juvenile justice while the current study will focus on the factors that affect rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya and how they influence reformation of child offenders. Failure to rehabilitate and effectively reintegrate children in conflict with the law predisposes them to recidivism resulting in criminality in adulthood and undermines the possibility of them leading productive lives (Children Department, 2021).

There exists minimal research on rehabilitation programs affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. For instance, Achieng (2009) investigated the socio-

economic factors leading to juvenile delinquency in Nairobi. Nyabonyi (2000) touches on delinquent behaviors in various categories of primary schools and compares delinquent behaviors between female and male primary school pupils. Grace (2007) looked at the issue of young criminality within the Nairobi suburbs with reference to youth gangs. The case put much emphasis on the Mungiki movement and street families. The paper also evaluated some of the structured methods of dealing with this kind of crime and Kikuvi (2011), studied the Rehabilitation of Delinquent Adolescents in Kenya focusing on the Challenges and Implications of Counselling.

Miriti (2015) contributed to the current study by investigating the challenges involved in rescuing, rehabilitating, and reintegrating street children in Nairobi County. The researcher discovered that although all the institutions studied had rehabilitation programs in place, these programs were lacking in many ways, particularly in providing vocational training for street children who were not academically gifted. These children often struggled academically and were unable to keep up with school, leading to a relapse back onto the streets. Additionally, those who completed rehabilitation and were reintegrated into their communities lacked practical skills to support themselves, which resulted in many returning to the streets. The findings also revealed that a significant cause of relapse among street children in rehabilitation institutions was drug addiction.

In conclusion, staff-related factors play a significant role in shaping the rehabilitation outcomes in probation hostels. The evidence from various contexts underscores the importance of investing in staff training, addressing staffing shortages, and fostering a positive culture within institutions. This multifaceted approach will enhance the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and help reduce recidivism among juvenile offenders.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 The Relapse Prevention Theory

A theoretical framework is an application of theory, or a set of concepts drawn from the same theory to explain an event or shed some light on a phenomenon or research problem. This study will adopt Relapse Prevention Theory (RPT).

The Relapse Prevention Theory is associated with the work of Marlatt and Gordon (1980). The theory was developed out of the cognitive behavior model by Banduras' (1977) self-efficacy theory. The Relapse Prevention Theory explained an integrated and complete framework of explaining the behavior change within the rehabilitation process. The theory offers a platform of determining the efficiency of rehabilitation projects on clients. This theory states that interventions able to bring change in behavior at the beginning may not last longer

and be able to prevent any relapse. The treatment of relapse prevention educates individuals with the behavioral and cognitive skills in coping with high-stress situations.

RPT for substance-abusing offenders. Most corrections professionals are aware of the growing research evidence that rehabilitation programs based on cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) are among the most effective treatments to reduce recidivism. So, it is not surprising that the flood of drug-involved offenders into correctional systems in the 1980s and the influence of the “what works” movement emphasizing evidence-based correctional practice led to the implementation of correctional programs based on RPT.

Relapse Prevention (RP) is a self-management treatment approach in which individuals who are trying to change their behaviours are taught how to anticipate and cope with the problem of relapse. According to relapse theory, if the child offender has gained adaptive coping skills to adequately address the internal and external challenges to his or her control through skills gained during rehabilitation in probation hostels, the offender will not relapse. However, if the skills are not sufficient to meet the challenge, a lapse or relapse may occur. In response to a resumption of the changed behaviour at some level, the offender has a reaction that either increases attempts to implement adaptive coping skills or fails to cope effectively and engages in the undesirable behaviour because it provides immediate gratification. Marlatt and his colleagues’ treatment therefore employs cognitive-behavioural techniques to improve the retention and accessibility of adaptive coping responses.

In 2003, Craig Dowden and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of RPT in correctional programming that provided an estimate of the overall impact of correctional programming based on RPT in reducing recidivism. They concluded that rehabilitation programs incorporating RPT consistently showed a moderate reduction in recidivism with larger recidivism reductions occurring when: there was a greater number of RPT core components; there was a more detailed description of the program; and the program targeted criminogenic needs (Dowden, 2003).

The Relapse Prevention Theory fits in this study in that the fundamental objective of probation hostels is to change the habits and personalities of child offenders for them to become constructive members of the community. This theory helped to explain how personnel factors including skills and knowledge in the child offender rehabilitation process as well as knowledge of operational policy requirements affect the process of child offenders’ rehabilitation. In addition, the capacity of the institution in terms of resources, equipment, and qualified human capital can affect the process of child offenders’ rehabilitation in probation hostels. Therefore, the Relapse Prevention Theory assisted the study to investigate how

operational policy, institutional, and staff related factors affect child offender rehabilitation in probation hostels in Kenya. RPT for substance-abusing offenders. Most corrections professionals are aware of the growing research evidence that rehabilitation programs based on cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) are among the most effective treatments to reduce recidivism. So, it is not surprising that the flood of drug-involved offenders into correctional systems in the 1980s and the influence of the “what works” movement emphasizing evidence-based correctional practice led to the implementation of correctional programs based on RPT.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework illustrates the expected relationship between the study variables. Leshem and Trafford (2007), defines conceptual framework as the relevant objectives for your research process and maps out how they come together to draw coherent conclusions. It will represent the researcher’s synthesis of the literature on how to explain a phenomenon which will map out the actions required during the study given the researcher previous knowledge of other researchers’ point of view and his observations about research. To better understand the factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels, a conceptual framework has been presented in Figure 2.2. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) a conceptual framework explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main dimensions of a study (the key factors, constructs, or variables) and the presumed relationship between them.

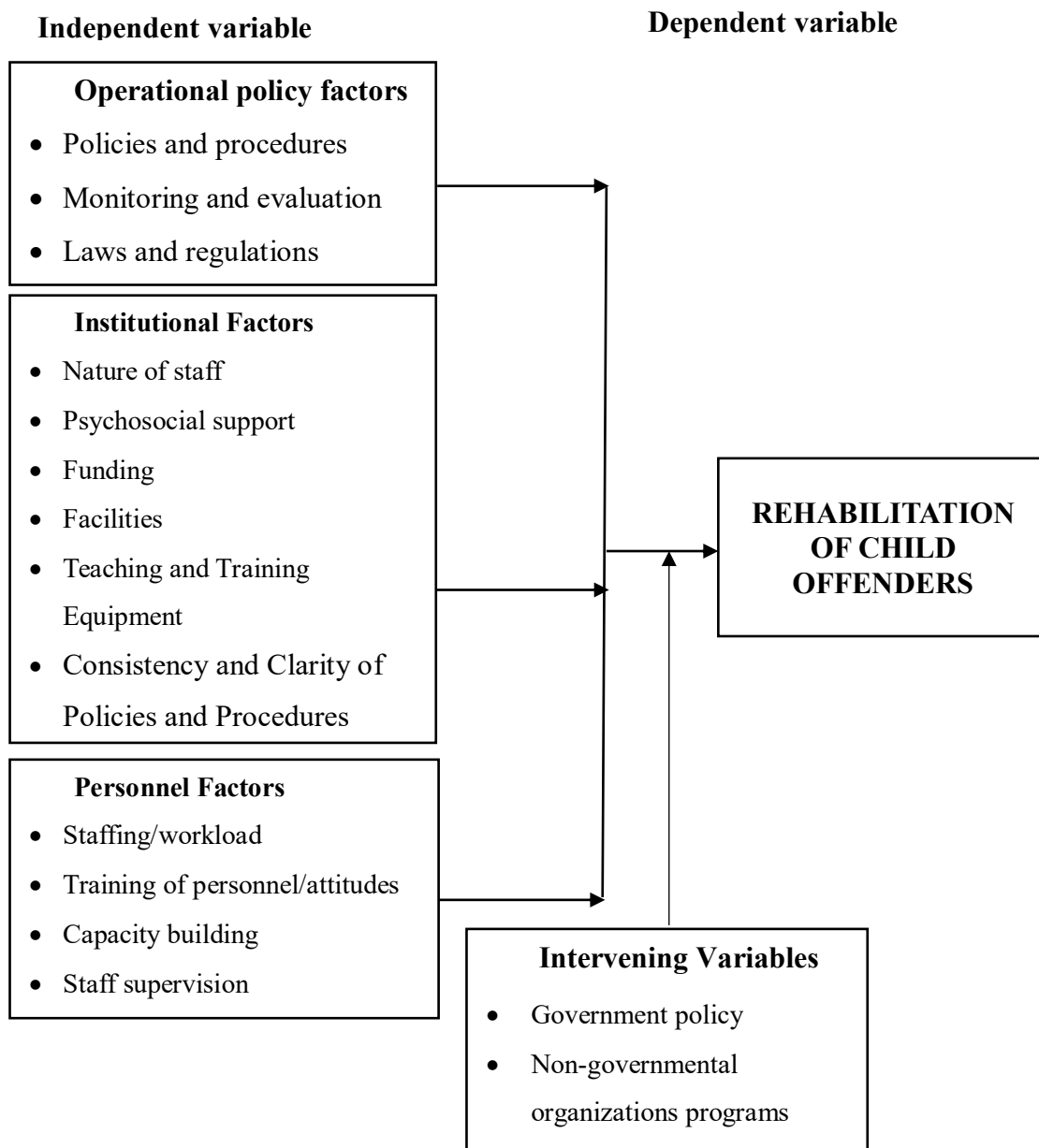


Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

Understanding the relationship between dependent and independent variables is fundamental in analyzing how different factors influence each other. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship, highlighting how changes in the independent variable impact the dependent variable. Factors related to admission of child offenders in probation hostels, handling of child offenders as well as the release process after rehabilitation can have a bearing in reforming process of child offenders. How offenders are admitted and released from probation hostels can influence the effectiveness of rehabilitation and behavior change.

Similarly, institutional factors can influence reform of child offenders that have undergone through probation hostels. Such institutional factors include the nature and number of personnel handling these children in probation hostels, availability of facilities including accommodation for the rehabilitated child offender as well as the nature and number of teaching and training equipment for rehabilitation. Adequate funding is essential for effective operation of rehabilitation of child offenders. Without sufficient financial resources it can be difficult to provide necessary services and programs to help offenders successfully.

The process of psychosocial support can influence reform of child offenders in probation hostels. The process of rehabilitation if not careful undertaken considering the all-compounding factors surrounding a child offender, reforming of the child will be ineffective. In addition, the quality of teaching and training of the children have influence on their change. For instance, if the trainings and teaching are good, relevant, and adequate, positive change will be witnessed but if the trainings and teachings are not effective, then positive change might not be witnessed. Furthermore, availability of adequate counseling services will enhance child offender reform in probation hostels. Thus, this conceptual framework helped to explain the relationship among variables in this study.

Lastly operational policy factors can hinder effective rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. These factors include Laws and regulations, funding, policies/procedures, monitoring and evaluation policies. If policies are consistent and clear, they can identify areas of improvement and ensure resources are being utilized effectively.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the rationale for the application of specific research procedures that was utilized to identify, select, and analyze information that was applied in understanding research problem. This chapter provides details of the research process including research design, study area, study population, sampling procedure and sampling size, unit of analysis, data collection methods, data analysis, piloting study and ethical considerations in the study of factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders committed to probation hostels in Kenya.

3.2 Study Design

This study employed mixed method research design that examined the factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya. Mixed method research design combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research to answer a research question. The design helped the researcher gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study, as it integrates benefits of both methods in the study area to give a more desirable outcome (Darwin, 2022).

The study was limited to Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, in Eldoret Kenya. The institution was chosen as a research site as it's the only probation hostel that hosts both junior and senior child offenders. Also, it admits children who have committed various types of crimes (PACS, 2023). Boys' probation hostel gave a true picture of the reality as compared to girl's probation hostels. Boys are associated with more serious crimes and re-offending than girls.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted at the Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, located in the heart of the Rift Valley region of Kenya. This institution serves as a rehabilitation centre for juvenile offenders, providing a structured environment designed to facilitate the reintegration of young individuals into society. The Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel plays a critical role in the juvenile justice system, addressing the needs of boys aged 12 to 18 who have conflicted with the law, and aims to promote rehabilitation rather than punishment.

The geographical setting of Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel is significant, as it is situated within a community that faces various socio-economic challenges, including poverty, family instability, and limited access to educational and vocational opportunities. This context underscores the importance of the hostel's rehabilitation programs, which are tailored to meet the specific needs of the boys while fostering their personal and social development. The hostel

provides various services, including counselling, educational support, life skills training, and recreational activities, all of which are aimed at equipping the boys with the necessary tools to lead productive lives after their time in the institution.

Moreover, the Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel is staffed by a dedicated team of professionals, including social workers, psychologists, educators, and probation officers, who work collaboratively to deliver comprehensive support to the residents. The team's commitment to creating a nurturing and structured environment is essential for the successful rehabilitation of the boys, as it helps to build trust and encourage positive behavioural changes.

Conducting the study in this setting provides valuable insights into the unique dynamics of rehabilitation within a probation hostel, as well as the experiences and perceptions of the staff involved in the process. By focusing on the Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, the research highlights the importance of effective rehabilitation practices and the critical role that such institutions play in mitigating juvenile delinquency and supporting youth development in the broader societal context. The map of the study area is shown in Figure 2.

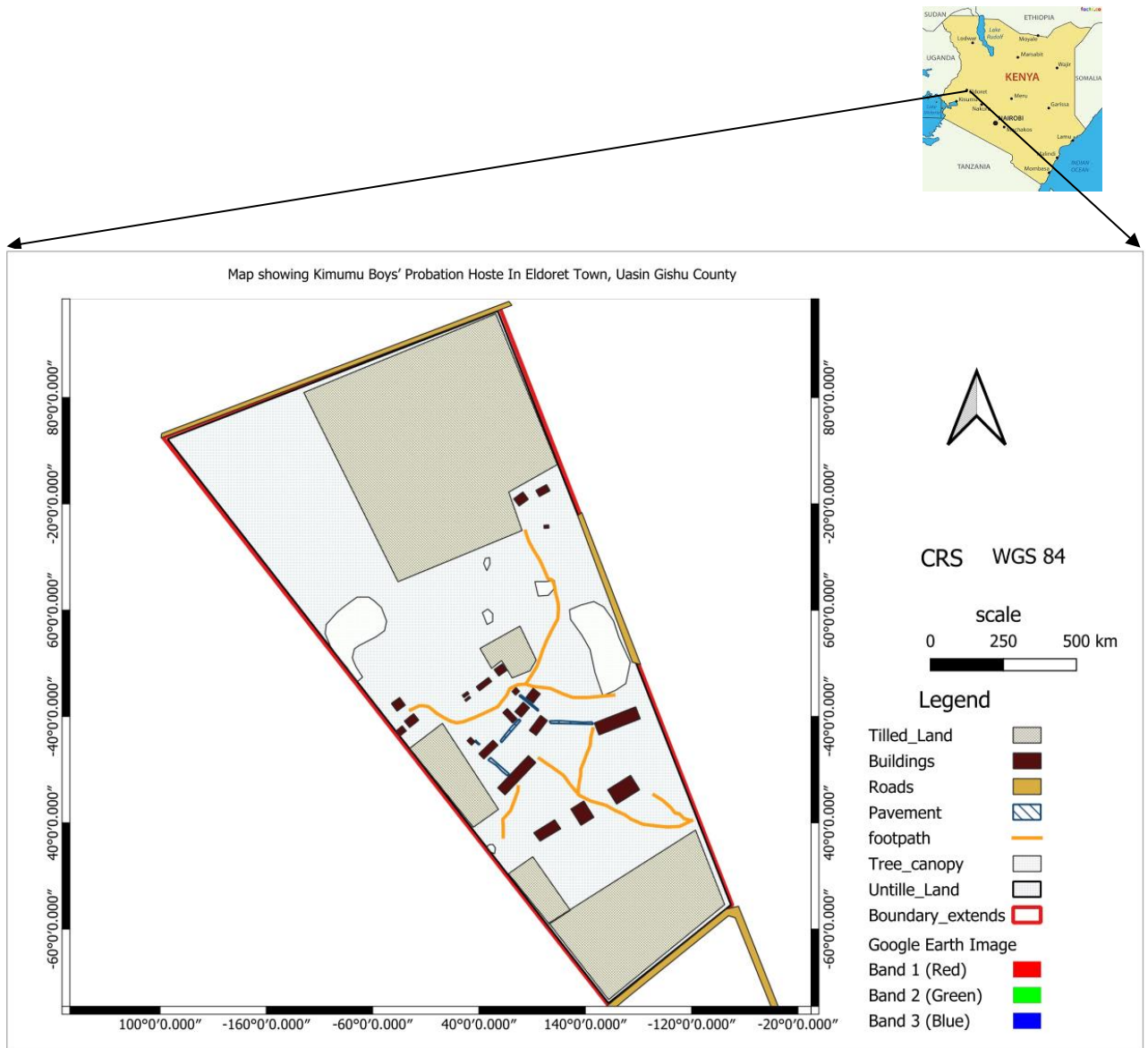


Figure 2
Map Showing the Location of the Study Area

3.4 Unit of Analysis

In this study, the unit of analysis was the staff in Kimumu Boys Probation hostel.

3.5 Target Population

According to Kothari (2004), target population is seen as a collection of one or more similar characteristics that the researcher is interested in whereas, Polit and Hungler (1999) define study population as an amalgamation or all the objects, subjects or members that satisfies a set of specifications. The study targeted the staff in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel as shown in Table 1.

Table 1*Target Population Distribution*

Designation	Kimumu Junior	Kimumu Senior	Number of Staff
Welfare Officers	6	8	14
Security	4	5	9
Vocational Instructors	3	4	7
Counselors	4	3	7
Probation Officers	4	5	9
Administration Staff	5	4	9
Total	26	29	55

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

This study utilized census procedure where all 55 staff in the probation hostel under investigation was be studied. Here, the researcher collected data related to the problem under investigation by covering every item of the population. All the members of the population were enumerated. Census was essential for this study as the size of population was small and required a high degree of reliability and accuracy. In addition, a purposive sampling technique was used to draw 11 key informants for interviews. Purposive sampling was significant in limiting the sample elements to only those that were relevant to the study based on their knowledge on juvenile delinquents' rehabilitation in the institution of study. The staff members of the probation hostel were grouped based on their specific responsibilities in the institution, administrators, welfare officers, class teachers, vocational training instructors and sub-ordinate staff.

3.7 Methods of Data Collection

This study utilized interview and key informant interview methods to collect data.

3.7.1 Interviews

As pointed out by Saravanel (1992), the main purpose of interview was to gain information on the phenomenon under investigation. Such information helps a researcher to gain deeper understanding on the issue under investigation. In this study, a semi-structured interview schedule was utilized to collect information from respondents. The interviews were done in the probation hostel compound during the interviewee's convenient time. The researchers asked questions and recorded the responses.

3.7.2 Key Informant Interview

The study collected information from experts to cross-check the information from respondents. The experts that were interviewed included county secretary for social services, a county children department head, county probation department head, two manager heads of Kimumu boy's junior, two manager heads boy's senior, four probation officers based at the hostel and two children department officers.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

After approval from relevant government bodies (National Council for Science and Technology, Uasin Gishu County Commissioner, Moiben Sub County Deputy Commissioner and Uasin Gishu County Director of Education Office), the researcher got assistance from relevant offices including Sub County Probation and Children Departments to access data source. The researcher explained the research purpose to the administrators and clarified raised concerns. To establish rapport with the staff at the data source, the researcher made three visits to the hostel prior to data collection exercise. During the study, data collected using interview schedules. The researcher interviewed the eleven (11) key informants within the time of study. The whole process of data collection took a month.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

In research, the concepts of validity and reliability are paramount for ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Validity refers to the extent to which the data collection instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), while reliability pertains to the consistency of the measurement process over time (Field, 2018). This section outlines the methods undertaken to establish the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments used in this study, ensuring that the insights generated are both accurate and dependable.

3.9.1 Validity

To ensure the validity of the research collection tools, a rigorous content validation process was employed. This involved presenting the data collection instruments to supervisors and experts in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Egerton University, who provided critical scrutiny and constructive feedback (Bolarinwa, 2015). Their insights were instrumental in refining the tools to better align them with the research objectives and ensure that they accurately captured the intended constructs. The incorporation of their suggestions facilitated the development of a final version of the instruments designed to effectively measure the variables of interest in the study.

3.9.2 Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the data collection instruments, a pilot study was conducted at the Nakuru Girls' Probation Hostel. This site was chosen due to its perceived similarity in characteristics to the Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, the primary focus of the study, as both represent the only probation hostels in the Rift Valley region (Karuga, 2019). The pilot study involved five purposively selected respondents for the questionnaire and two key informants for the guide. Conducted one month prior to actual data collection, this preliminary study provided valuable insights that informed the refinement of the data collection tools. The findings were utilized to enhance the clarity and applicability of the instruments, thereby improving the consistency of the process and increasing the overall reliability (Kumar, 2019). In this regard, to ensure the reliability the researcher employed the test-retest.

The reliability of the research instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 was obtained, which is a commonly used benchmark value for Cronbach's Alpha. This coefficient indicates that the items in the research instrument were sufficiently consistent to suggest that the measure was reliable. According to Mohajan (2018), values close to 0.7 are typically considered minimally acceptable and reflect the internal reliability of the instruments. In this regard, the researcher analysed the pilot study questionnaire and obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.82. which is above the minimum Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7. This approach helped to ensure that the research instrument was reliable and could be used to collect accurate and consistent data for the study.

3.10 Data Analysis

Mixed method of data analysis made the most of the strengths of each data type while neutralizing their weaknesses by combining elements to answer the study research questions. Mixing methods allows you to put findings in context and add richer detail to your conclusions. Using qualitative data to illustrate quantitative findings can help “put meat on the bones” of your analysis (Darwin, 2023). Quantitative analysis involves derivation of statistical descriptions and interpretations of data by use of descriptive statistics that purely relies on numerical values. The data was presented by frequency tables. Data presentation, analysis and interpretation were done in accordance with the research objectives. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) program was adopted to generate data analysis tools. On the other hand, qualitative data analyzed by thematic analysis technique and was presented by use of quotes and narratives.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are essential in social research. The study observed ethics as outlined in Egerton University guidelines which encompass originality and citation. Before embarking on data collection exercise, research clearance was obtained from Egerton Research Ethics committee for approval. Research permit was obtained from National Council for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and approval from the County administration and ministry of Education offices in the County and Sub County was sought. While in the field, the researcher provided accurate and complete information to research participants regarding the purpose of the study to obtain their verbal consent regarding participation in it. In addition, the privacy of the research participant was safeguarded.

The information collected was treated with the utmost confidentiality and used for research purposes. Any identifiable information was removed during the data analysis and interpretation stages. Another ethical measure for consideration was treating the respondents with respect and courtesy. The researcher also provided a five-page report to administrators in the County and national government agencies notably Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government to enable them to understand factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the analyzed data. This chapter provides a comprehensive presentation and analysis of the findings derived from the research data. The primary aim is to address the key research questions concerning the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Eldoret. Specifically, the chapter explores the various operational policy factors, institutional influences, and staff-related factors that impact the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts. By examining these elements, the chapter aims to shed light on the challenges and opportunities within the current rehabilitation framework, offering insights that can inform policy adjustments and improve rehabilitation outcomes for child offenders in the region. The discussion integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors at play.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in the form of frequency tables and pie charts. Furthermore, thematic analysis was used to gain meaning from the qualitative data which was presented in the form of quotes and verbatim. This section is divided into four sub-sections: response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents, operational policy factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders, institutional factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels, staff-related factors affecting rehabilitation, and discussion of findings.

4.2 Response Rate

The sample size for this study comprised 55 respondents drawn from the staff of Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel. Out of the 55 individuals approached, 44 participants agreed to take part in the research, resulting in a response rate of 80%. This response rate was considered adequate, as it exceeded the benchmark of 70% suggested by Kothari (2010) for research studies. High response rates were particularly important in fields that actively involved participants, as they enhanced the representativeness of the sample and reduced potential biases (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Kothari, 2010).

A response rate of 80% not only demonstrated the willingness of the staff to participate in the study but also increased the reliability and validity of the findings. As noted by Robson (2011), higher response rates could lead to more robust and generalizable conclusions, which were crucial when making recommendations based on the study's outcomes. Moreover, a substantial response rate helped to mitigate non-response bias, thus providing a clearer picture of the population under study (Groves et al., 2006).

In the context of research involving human participants, particularly in sensitive settings such as probation hostels, gaining a high response rate was indicative of trust and engagement among the participants. This was essential for ensuring that the data collected truly reflected the experiences and perspectives of the staff involved (Miller & Smith, 1983).

Given the 80% response rate achieved in this study, it was reasonable to conclude that the data collected would provide valuable insights into the working conditions and perceptions of the staff at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in this study consisted of gender, education level, age, specialization, department, and tenure at the hostel. Results on these variables are presented in the sub-sections below.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study obtained information on the gender of respondents. Understanding the gender composition was vital for providing insights into diverse perspectives that influence the perception and implementation of rehabilitation strategies at the hostel. The findings are shown in the Figure 3.

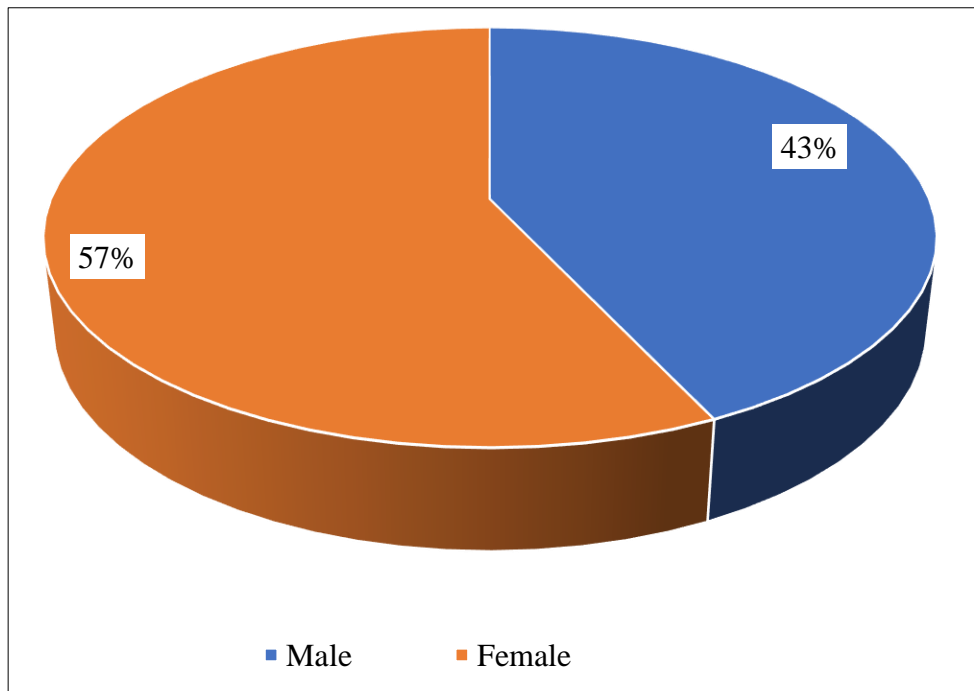


Figure 3
Gender Distribution of Respondents

Figure 3 indicates that 57% of the respondents were female, while the other 43% of the respondents were male. Such a distribution suggests a slightly higher involvement rate among female staff, as there are 25 women in total compared to 19 men. The data indicate that there is a higher representation of females among the respondents, with 57% identifying as female compared to 43% identifying as male. This gender distribution may have implications for understanding the perspectives and experiences captured in the study, as a predominance of female respondents could influence the findings and overall conclusions drawn from the data collected.

The gender distribution observed in the study, with 57% female and 43% male respondents, highlights a slight female predominance that could influence the interpretation of the findings. Such a distribution suggests that female staff may have a marginally greater influence on the overall data, potentially reflecting differences in experiences, perceptions, or engagement levels across genders. Research indicates that gender can significantly impact responses in various contexts, including workplace dynamics, attitudes towards organizational policies, and perceptions of workplace well-being (Smith & Lee, 2020). Therefore, the higher representation of females in this sample warrants consideration when analysing the results, as gender-specific perspectives could shape the overall conclusions.

Furthermore, the relatively balanced nature of the sample, with a slight female majority, aligns with findings from recent studies emphasizing the importance of gender-aware analysis in organizational research (Johnson et al., 2021). Recognizing this distribution can help contextualize the results, especially in sectors or environments where gender plays a role in shaping experiences or responses. It is also important to consider whether this gender distribution reflects the overall demographic makeup of the broader population or organization, as this influences the generalizability of the findings (Martin & Kumar, 2019).

Overall, the gender distribution in this sample suggests a relatively balanced representation, although the female respondents are in the majority. This detail could be important for interpreting the results, especially in contexts where gender may influence the responses or the subject matter.

4.3.2 Education Level

The education level of the staff at the study institution and experts was also considered essential for this study because it can significantly affect the rehabilitation process and the subsequent reintegration of offenders into society. The distribution of education levels among the study's respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Highest Level of Education*

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	2	5
Bachelor's Degree	39	89
Master's Degree	3	7
Total	44	100

As shown in Table 2, the educational background of the staff at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel is predominantly at the bachelor's degree level, with 89% of respondents holding this qualification. This suggests that most of the staff are well-equipped with the substantial academic knowledge necessary for implementing effective rehabilitation strategies. Diploma holders, making up 5% of the respondents, likely focus on specific technical or vocational skills that complement the theoretical insights brought by degree holders; enhancing practical applications within rehabilitation settings. The staff with master's degrees, though a smaller proportion at 7%, brings advanced skills and specialized knowledge that can influence policy development and program refinement, contributing to a more profound strategic approach to rehabilitation.

The predominance of staff at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel holding bachelor's degrees (89%) indicates a highly educated workforce, which is likely to positively influence the implementation of rehabilitation strategies. Higher educational attainment among staff has been linked to improved understanding of offender rehabilitation, evidence-based practices, and the ability to adapt interventions to individual needs (Nguyen et al., 2020). The presence of diploma holders (5%) suggests a complementary skill set focused on practical, technical, or vocational training, which is crucial for hands-on rehabilitation activities and skill development programs (Kumar & Patel, 2019). Such a blend of academic and technical skills can foster a holistic approach to rehabilitation, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application.

Additionally, the small proportion of staff with master's degrees (7%) could play a strategic role in policy development, program evaluation, and implementing innovative practices within the facility. Advanced qualifications are often associated with leadership capabilities, research skills, and strategic planning, all of which are vital for continuous improvement in rehabilitation services (Choi et al., 2021). This educational distribution

suggests that the organization values a multi-tiered expertise, which can enhance the overall quality of rehabilitation programs by integrating evidence-based practices with practical skills.

Moreover, the high level of education among staff aligns with research indicating that well-educated personnel are better equipped to handle complex behavioural issues and contribute to a more effective rehabilitation environment (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). This educational mix may also influence staff attitudes, motivation, and the capacity to implement innovative approaches, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for the youth in their care.

4.3.3 Age of the Respondents

Age was considered an essential demographic factor for this study, as it can significantly influence the experiences and outcomes of probation. Different age groups may respond differently to probation measures and rehabilitation programs. The range of ages among the respondents in this study is detailed in Table 4 providing a comprehensive view of the age distribution within the sample.

Table 3

Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
20-30 years	2	5
31-40 years	16	36
41-50 years	18	41
51 Years and above	8	18
Total	44	100

The findings on Tables 3 reveal that the majority (41%) of the respondents fall into the age bracket of 41-50 years. They are closely followed by those in the 31-40 years age group, who constitute 36% of the respondents. The age groups of 51 years and above represents 18% of the participants, while the youngest age group, 20-30 years, comprises the smallest portion at 5%. This age distribution highlights a significant portion of the staff is in their middle age, which can imply a maturity level and life experience that might contribute positively to the handling and rehabilitation of child offenders.

The examination of age distribution among respondents in this study reveals important insights into the demographic makeup of the sample, which could have significant implications for the outcomes of probation and rehabilitation programs. As illustrated in Table 4, the predominant age group among the respondents is 41-50 years, comprising 41% of the total

sample. This suggests that a substantial proportion of the participants are in their middle age, a demographic often associated with greater life experience and maturity. Such attributes may prove advantageous when it comes to understanding and responding to the complex needs of probationers, particularly those who are young offenders.

Close behind, the 31-40 years age group accounts for 36% of the respondents. This proximity in percentage suggests that a large segment of staff is still in the transitional phase between relative youth and full adulthood. Professionals in this age bracket may bring both energetic perspectives and practical insight to their roles, which can enhance their effectiveness in implementing rehabilitation strategies. Together, these two groups (31-50 years old) make up a significant 77% of the sample, highlighting a workforce likely capable of balancing vigour with experience.

In contrast, the younger age group of 20-30 years constitutes only 5% of the respondents. This minimal representation raises questions about the involvement of younger professionals in probation and rehabilitation contexts, potentially indicating a gap in perspectives that could be beneficial for engaging with younger offenders. This underrepresentation could limit the diversity of viewpoints needed to address the unique challenges faced by younger individuals in the justice system.

The age bracket of 51 years and above, which constitutes 18% of the respondents, further enriches the age distribution landscape. While not as dominant as the middle-aged groups, this demographic brings wisdom and extensive experience to the table, which can be invaluable in understanding the long-term implications of probation measures and the evolution of rehabilitation techniques over time. The presence of 18% of respondents aged 51 and above further emphasizes the availability of veteran staff with extensive experience, potentially contributing to mentorship and the transfer of institutional knowledge. Conversely, the relatively small proportion of younger staff (5% aged 20-30) might indicate limited entry-level personnel or a recruitment trend favouring experienced workers. Nonetheless, having a mix of age groups can foster a dynamic environment that combines youthful energy with seasoned expertise, which has been associated with more effective rehabilitative outcomes (Kumar & Singh, 2021).

This age distribution aligns with literature emphasizing the importance of experienced personnel in correctional and rehabilitative contexts. For example, studies have shown that staff with more extensive experience is better equipped to manage complex behavioural challenges and implement effective intervention strategies, thereby enhancing rehabilitation success (Osei-Tutu et al., 2021). Furthermore, the maturity of this predominantly middle-aged workforce

may positively influence their interactions with juvenile offenders, promoting trust and compliance, which are critical in juvenile rehabilitation programs.

The findings suggest that the demographic profile of the staff is heavily weighted towards middle age, which could provide a solid foundation for successful interventions in probation. However, the limited representation of younger staff members points to a potential area for growth and enhancement within the system. Embracing a broader age range among professionals might yield a more comprehensive and effective approach to dealing with the complexities of probation, especially when the profiles of offenders continue to evolve. This balance between youthful energy and seasoned experience could ultimately enhance the efficacy of rehabilitation programs and the overall success of probationary outcomes.

4.3.4 Specialization

The study sought to determine the specializations of the participants, as these directly influence the approaches and methods they use in the rehabilitation of child offenders. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Specialization of the Respondents

Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Social Work	18	41
Psychology	12	27
Criminology	8	18
Education	4	9
Community Development	2	5
Total	44	100

The results in Table 4 show that the majority of the staff at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel is specialized in social work (41%) and psychology (27%), which are critical disciplines for understanding and facilitating the rehabilitation of child offenders. Staff members with a background in criminology (18%) contribute their knowledge of the legal aspects and system-oriented approaches necessary for the structured management of rehabilitation processes. Those specialized in education (9%) play a vital role in integrating educational programs that aid in the personal development and reintegration of offenders into society. A small segment categorized under 'Other' (5%) includes professionals with diverse skills who can offer

innovative approaches or specialized services that complement the primary rehabilitation efforts.

The specialization of the respondents in the study provides crucial insights into the competencies available at the Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, which are pivotal for the effective rehabilitation of child offenders. As shown in Table 5, a significant majority of the staff, 41% are specialized in social work. This is particularly important, as social work addresses the multifaceted social environments and systemic issues that often underlie delinquent behaviours in youth. Social workers are trained to engage with families, communities, and social services, creating a holistic framework that fosters connection and support for young offenders during their rehabilitation journey.

Following social work, 27% of the staff holds qualifications in psychology. This specialized knowledge is essential for understanding the mental and emotional challenges faced by child offenders. Psychologists can employ various therapeutic modalities, contribute to assessments of mental health needs, and offer interventions aimed at addressing behavioural issues. Their training equips them with the tools to build rapport with the youth, which is crucial for effective rehabilitation. The combination of social work with psychological insights enhances the capacity of the institution to address both the emotional and societal dimensions of offending behaviour.

The contribution of criminologists, who make up 18% of the staff, further enriches the multidisciplinary approach to rehabilitation. Their understanding of the criminal justice system and its processes ensures that rehabilitation strategies align with legal frameworks and protocols. Criminologists can provide essential perspectives on risk assessment, crime prevention, and the impact of legal consequences on youth behaviour, thus contributing to structured management and informed interventions.

The presence of staff members specialized in education (9%) indicates a valuable focus on personal development and learning. Educational specialists can integrate scholastic programs that not only instruct but also empower child offenders by equipping them with essential skills for reintegration into society. Such educational interventions can play a vital role in reducing recidivism by engaging youth in constructive activities and providing a pathway toward positive futures.

Finally, community development specialists represented 5% of the participants, with 2 respondents. Their involvement suggests an awareness of larger community dynamics in the rehabilitation process, emphasizing the importance of community resources and support systems to facilitate positive outcomes for child offenders.

In summary, the specialization distribution among the staff at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel reflects a well-rounded and multidisciplinary approach to addressing the complexities of child offender rehabilitation. With a strong emphasis on social work and psychology, backed by elements of criminology and education, the staff is well-positioned to craft interventions that consider the multifaceted nature of offending behaviour. However, ongoing collaboration, training, and potential integration of even broader specializations will be crucial to continually adapt and improve rehabilitation strategies in response to emerging challenges faced by young offenders.

4.3.5 Department

The departmental affiliation of staff at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel is an important demographic factor, indicating the specific roles within the rehabilitation framework. Each department has distinct responsibilities that contribute to the overall mission of the hostel, impacting the rehabilitation process and outcomes for child offenders. Table 5 shows how respondents are distributed across various departments.

Table 5

Distribution by Department

Department	Frequency	Percentage
Administration	8	27
Rehabilitation Services	20	40
Education and Training	9	20
Health Services	3	10
Security	4	3
Total	44	100

Table 5 illustrates the staff distribution across key Departments at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel. The largest share, Rehabilitation Services, comprises 40% of the staff and is primarily responsible for the direct rehabilitation of offenders through tailored therapeutic and intervention strategies. The Education and Training Department accounts for 20% of the staff, focusing on providing educational and vocational training to aid offender reintegration. The Administration Department makes up 27% of the staff, managing the hostel's logistics, personnel, and policies. Security, constituting 3% of the staff, ensures rule enforcement and

safety. Health Services, with 10% of the workforce, addresses the physical and mental health needs essential for effective rehabilitation.

The departmental distribution of staff at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, as detailed in Table 5, offers significant insights into the operational dynamics and focus areas of the institution. This distribution reveals how the various departments collaborate to facilitate the rehabilitation of child offenders, each contributing uniquely to the overall mission of the hostel.

The predominant department, Rehabilitation Services, comprises 40% of the staff, reflecting a strong commitment to the core objective of rehabilitating offenders. This department's emphasis on tailored therapeutic and intervention strategies is crucial in addressing the individual needs of each child. By prioritizing rehabilitation, this staff segment plays a key role in developing and implementing programs designed to alter problematic behaviours, enhance coping skills, and promote positive social reintegration. Their specialized focus positions them as the backbone of rehabilitation efforts, ensuring that interventions are not only effective but also responsive to the specific challenges that young offenders face.

Following this, the Education and Training Department represents 20% of the staff, underscoring the importance of educational and vocational programs in the rehabilitation process. This department's role in providing educational support and skills training is vital for equipping young offenders with the tools necessary for successful reintegration into society. Education can serve as a critical element in mitigating recidivism; by fostering knowledge and skill development, this department helps to open pathways for meaningful employment and personal growth, facilitating a transition toward more productive futures for the young individuals in their care.

The Administration Department, constituting 27% of the staff, is essential for the logistical and operational aspects of the hostel. This department handles everything from personnel management to policy implementation, ensuring that the facility operates smoothly and effectively. The administrative team's work is foundational, as it lays the groundwork for the rehabilitation services and educational programs to function optimally. Their focus on creating a structured environment supports the overall mission of rehabilitation by establishing rules, maintaining order, and ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently.

Health Services, comprising 10% of the staff, address the critical physical and mental health needs of the child offenders. Their contributions are particularly significant, as the overall well-being of these individuals is a critical factor influencing successful rehabilitation. Mental health issues, in particular, are prevalent among youth in the justice system, making the

role of health professionals vital in identifying problems, providing necessary interventions, and supporting mental resilience.

In contrast, the Security Department, which represents only 3% of the staff, indicates a minimal emphasis on enforcement measures. While ensuring safety and rule adherence is important, the low percentage suggests a rehabilitative rather than punitive focus at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel. This alignment with contemporary views on juvenile justice emphasizes rehabilitation over retribution, aiming to address the root causes of offending behaviour rather than solely responding to rule violations.

Overall, the staff distribution across departments at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel exemplifies a holistic and integrated approach to juvenile rehabilitation. The prominent roles of Rehabilitation Services and Education and Training departments signal a commitment to rehabilitation that prioritizes personal growth and societal reintegration. The supporting roles of Administration and Health Services further strengthen this approach, highlighting the importance of a well-rounded strategy that addresses diverse needs. Although security plays a more minor role, its presence still ensures a safe environment in which rehabilitation can occur. This strategic departmental structure is key to fostering an environment conducive to meaningful change and long-term success in rehabilitating child offenders.

4.3.6 Duration of Staff Tenure at the Hostel

The length of time staff has worked at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel is a crucial factor that can influence their understanding of and effectiveness in the rehabilitation programs. The duration of tenure at the hostel reflects levels of experience and institutional knowledge, which are essential in managing rehabilitation effectively. Table 6 below shows how long staff members have been working at the hostel.

Table 6

Distribution by Length of Work

Tenure Range (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	15	34
5-10 years	12	27
More than 10 years	17	39
Total	44	100%

Table 6 above shows that 34% of the respondents have been at the hostel for less than 5 years, indicating a significant portion of staff are relatively newer and may include younger

or less experienced members. Another 27% have been with the hostel for 5-10 years, suggesting a blend of growing experience likely associated with middle-aged staff. The largest segment, 39%, consists of employees who have been at the hostel for more than 10 years, representing a wealth of experience and likely correlating with the older age groups within the staff.

The distribution of staff tenure at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, as illustrated in Table 6, provides valuable insights into the experience levels and institutional knowledge within the workforce. Understanding the tenure of staff can help to gauge the overall capacity of the hostel to deliver effective rehabilitation services to child offenders, as each tenure range potentially impacts the staff's effectiveness and approach to their roles.

The fact that 34% of the respondents have been at the hostel for less than 5 years indicates the presence of a relatively younger and possibly less experienced workforce. While new staff members may bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas, their limited tenure also means they might still be in the process of acclimating to the specific challenges and dynamics of working in a rehabilitative setting. This group may require more extensive training and mentorship to fully realize their potential in contributing to the rehabilitation programs. Additionally, their relative inexperience could impact their ability to engage with child offenders effectively, especially in understanding the complexities of their backgrounds and needs.

In contrast, 27% of the staff has been at Kimumu for 5 to 10 years. This group likely includes individuals who have transitioned from novice roles to more seasoned professionals. Their duration of tenure suggests a developing level of expertise and familiarity with the rehabilitation processes and institutional practices in place. Staff in this category may act as a bridge between the newer employees and the more experienced members, facilitating knowledge transfer and mentorship opportunities. Their experience can enhance the overall effectiveness of team dynamics, contributing to a more cohesive approach to rehabilitation.

The most significant segment, comprising 39% of the staff with more than 10 years of tenure, indicates a substantial reservoir of institutional knowledge and experience. These seasoned professionals are likely to have encountered a variety of challenges and behaviours among child offenders, equipping them with valuable insights into effective rehabilitation strategies. They may have also developed personal relationships with former offenders and their families, providing continuity and a deeper understanding of the rehabilitation process over time. This group's experience is crucial for guiding practices and ensuring that interventions are rooted in proven methodologies.

The mix of tenured staff creates a diverse workforce that can balance innovation with wisdom. The interplay between experienced and newer staff members is essential in fostering a learning environment that continuously improves rehabilitation practices. The diversity in tenure can bring various perspectives to problem-solving and program development, which is critical for addressing the multifaceted needs of child offenders effectively.

However, the disparity in tenure also raises important considerations. Organizations like Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel must ensure that they provide appropriate training, support, and opportunities for professional development to their newer staff members to enhance their skills and confidence in working with youth. Meanwhile, retaining experienced staff should remain a priority, as their knowledge and expertise are invaluable resources for the organization.

In conclusion, the tenure distribution at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel suggests a workforce that includes a healthy mix of experience levels, from those new to the field to seasoned professionals. This blend can contribute to a dynamic and effective rehabilitation environment, provided there is a strong emphasis on mentoring and professional development initiatives that facilitate knowledge sharing and continuous improvement in practices aimed at rehabilitating child offenders.

4.4 Operational Policy Factors Affecting Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The first objective of this study was to examine the operational policy factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. To address this objective, a set of written questions and prompts were used, focusing on various aspects such as the enforcement of policies, specific policies that impede rehabilitation efforts, the impact of policies on the rehabilitation process, issues in the admission of child offenders, the handling of child offenders, the legal framework, and the monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation programs.

Some of the policies include Children Act (e.g., Kenya's Children Act, 2001), a government policy that provides the legal framework for the protection and rehabilitation of children, including provisions related to juvenile justice and child offenders. Policies enhance child rehabilitation by providing a comprehensive legal framework that prioritizes the rights and protection of children and emphasizes rehabilitative approaches over punitive measures: the National Juvenile Justice Policy - A government policy aimed at guiding the juvenile justice system, emphasizing rehabilitation, reintegration, and rights-based approaches. It enhances rehabilitation efforts by promoting rights-based, child-centered approaches, and integrating rehabilitation and reintegration strategies within the juvenile justice system; Probation and Parole Policy - An institutional policy outlining procedures for probation, parole, and

supervision of juvenile offenders within the justice system. It boosts rehabilitation by establishing procedures for supervised reintegration into the community, supporting offenders' transition and reducing recidivism.

However, if poorly implemented, it may hinder progress; Institutional Rehabilitation Policy for Juvenile Offenders – An institutional policy specific to rehabilitation centres or probation hostels that governs admission, treatment, and reintegration processes. It promotes rehabilitation by setting clear guidelines for treatment, admission, and reintegration, ensuring a structured approach to rehabilitative care within facilities. Others include Ministry of Interior and National Coordination's Policy on Child Justice –

A government policy addressing the coordination and oversight of juvenile justice initiatives. It Augments rehabilitation through coordinated efforts and resource allocation, leading to more effective service delivery; poor coordination could hinder progress; Discipline and Conduct Policy within Rehabilitation Centres - An institutional policy that governs the day-to-day management, conduct, and discipline of offenders within the facility. Such policies can hinder rehabilitation, if overly punitive or strict, potentially discouraging rehabilitation and fostering resentment. When balanced, it can maintain order without impeding rehabilitation, and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Juvenile Justice - An institutional policy or guideline that establishes procedures for assessing and improving rehabilitation programs. May improves rehabilitation by providing mechanisms for assessing program effectiveness and making continuous improvements; lack of effective monitoring can hinder progress.

Including these specific policies will provide clarity on whether they are institutional (internal to the rehabilitation facilities or agencies) or government-level policies, thereby enhancing the comprehensiveness and specificity of the study.

4.4.1 Enforcement and Impediments

The study sought to evaluate the staff's policy enforcement experiences and to pick out policies that hinder the rehabilitation effort. Participants were asked to acknowledge their responses as drawn from a Likert scale of responses on a scale of rigid and flexible with existing policies and to explain in detail which individual elements of these policies they feel most restricted. The participant reactions are presented in Figure 4.

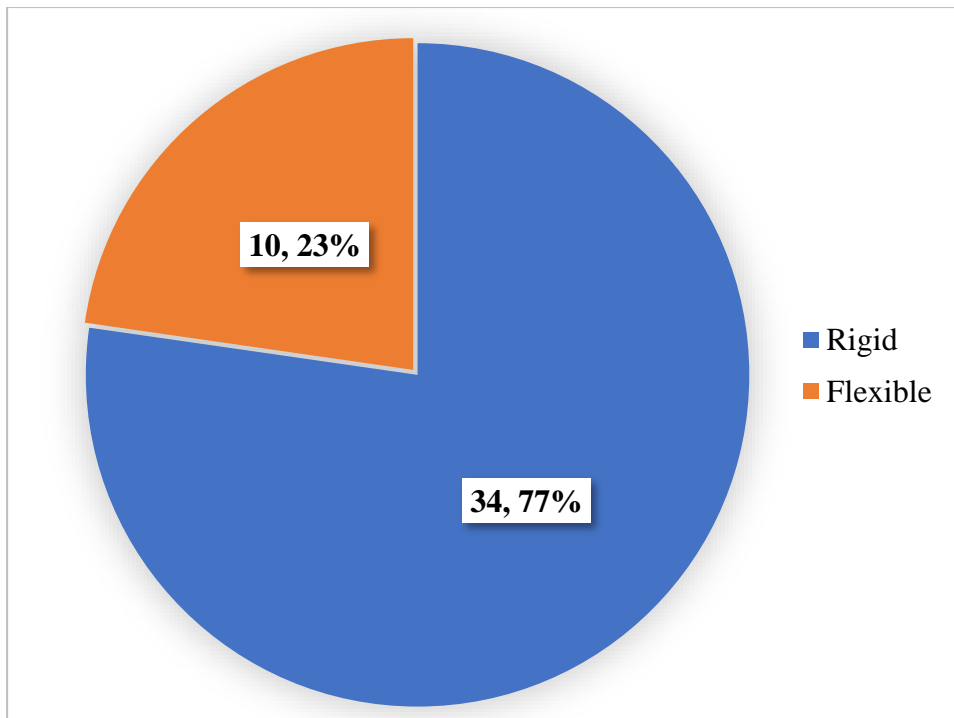


Figure 4

Distribution by Flexibility of Policies

Results obtained from Figure 4 depict a majority among participants 34 (77%) indicating their opinions as rigid policies followed by 10 (23%) as flexible policies. The answers demonstrated the fact that rigid and inflexible policies could, on numerous occasions, pose a barrier to the application of rehabilitation methods that were tailored to meet individual offenders' needs.

When the 77% respondents were asked to explain why they felt that policies were rigid, they argued that the rules and regulations are too restrictive and do not permit the kind of flexibility that has to be employed to deal with the wide range of complex problems and situations associated with each child offender. These children often find themselves in a cascade of ineffective and inefficient rehabilitation procedures.

The findings depicted in Figure 4 reveal that a significant majority (77%) of participants perceive the policies governing rehabilitation at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel as rigid, while a smaller proportion (23%) views them as flexible. This perception aligns with existing literature that highlights the challenges posed by inflexible policies in juvenile rehabilitation settings. Rigid policies often limit practitioners' ability to tailor interventions to the unique needs of individual offenders, which can hinder the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts (Li et al., 2020).

Participants' explanations for perceiving policies as restrictive emphasize that strict rules may not accommodate the complex and diverse circumstances of child offenders. Such inflexibility can result in a cascade of ineffective and inefficient procedures, potentially leading to frustration among staff and reduced engagement with rehabilitative practices (Chen & Zhang, 2019). The literature underscores that flexible policies are essential for implementing individualized interventions, which have been shown to improve rehabilitative outcomes by addressing specific behavioural, social, and psychological needs of juvenile offenders (Nguyen & Tran, 2021).

Furthermore, the consensus among respondents suggests that policy rigidity may act as a barrier to adopting innovative and adaptive rehabilitation methods. Studies suggest that adaptable policies foster a more responsive environment, allowing practitioners to modify strategies in real-time based on offenders' progress and circumstances (Kumar & Singh, 2020). This flexibility is particularly critical in juvenile justice, where each child's background and needs are unique, requiring a more nuanced approach than rigid frameworks often permit.

In summary, the perception of policy rigidity among most respondents reflects a broader challenge in juvenile rehabilitation: balancing organizational regulations with the need for individualized, flexible approaches that enhance the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs.

The finding was supported by key informants who argued that the existing policies are impediments to rehabilitation process of children offenders. During a key informant interview, it was averred that as shown in Excerpt Box 1.

Excerpt Box 1

Policies on Rehabilitation of Children Offenders Pose Difficulties

“Although it impossible to adjust rules and regulation to fit each individual needs, the policies guiding rehabilitation of children offenders pose difficulties to effective rehabilitation. The policies are so rigid to the extent that there is no flexibility in rehabilitation of the children’s offenders”

(Female Children Probation Officer, 44 years).

From the arguments of the key informant implies that the policies are already in place and supposed to be followed in performance of staff duties. There's need for closer working relationship between the policy makers and the hostel Management to foster understanding of

the rules and regulations in line with the findings of Nyamai and Waiganjo (2015) which recommended that the government together with policy makers, stakeholders and international bodies should develop children rehabilitation action plans and policies and make budgetary allocations towards them.

In addition, the study found that rigid regulations push the staff to follow instructions that may not be suitable for the offenders' rehabilitation. The results, therefore, bode well for policy adjustments that allow more discretion in their implementation and enable the rehabilitation process to be more dynamic responding to the fluctuating needs of the children offenders in the hostel. During key informant interviews, a key informant argued as in Box 2.

Excerpt Box 2

Policies are Backdated

“The children coming from the society are informed and exposed. The policies are backdated. As a staff you must follow these policies as stipulated”
(Male County Secretary for social services, 40 years).

From the sentiments of the key informant in excerpt Box 2 calls for a training system that will equip each officer with core competencies to execute proper care and supervision of juveniles according to best practice standards. This finding concurs with UNAFEI (2019) which advocates for continuous improving of knowledge and professional capacity of staff in rehabilitation institutions by attending relevant in service and other training programmes.

4.4.2 Policy factors in Rehabilitation Process

The study assessed how the existing policies influence the rehabilitation process at Kimumu Boys’ Probation Hostel. Study participants were taken through the questions to allow them to indicate the influence of these policies. The participants were asked to indicate whether the policies influence rehabilitation process. Figure 5 gives responses.

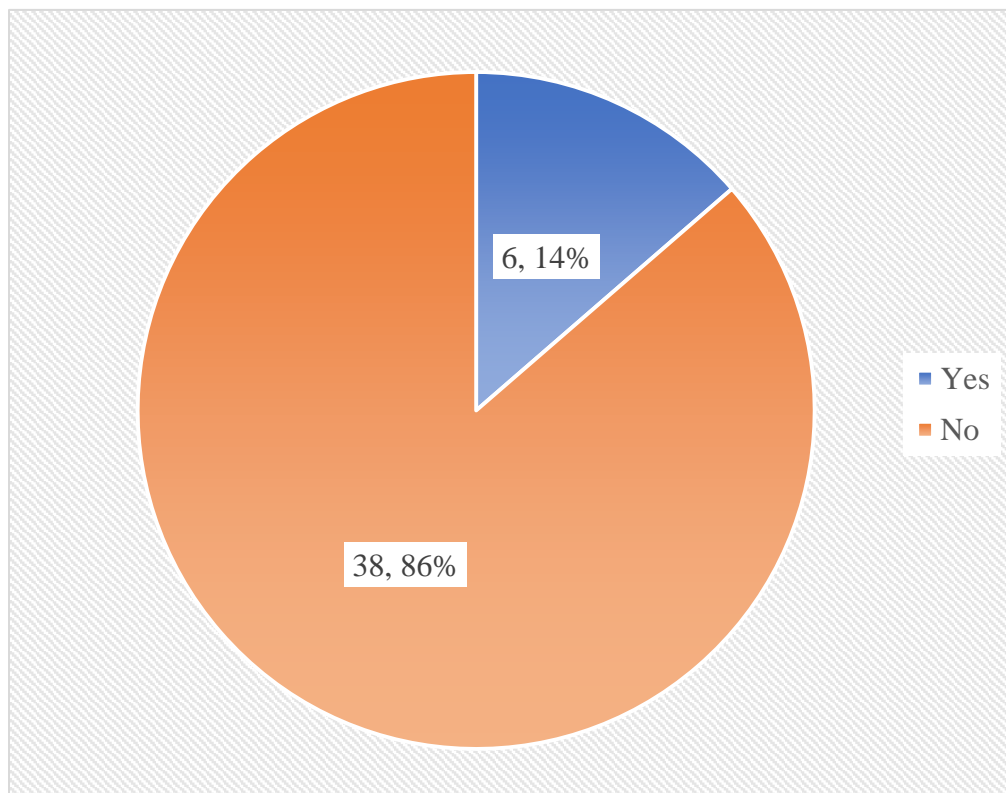


Figure 5

Influence of Policy on Rehabilitation Process

As depicted in Figure 5, 14% of the study participants argued that policies influence rehabilitation process in the study institution while 86% of the participants were of the opinion that policies have not influenced rehabilitation of the child offenders in the study institution. The data shows that policies have not had any meaningful influence on rehabilitation of offenders.

The 86% of study participants were asked to comment on why they feel policies have not influenced rehabilitation process. They argued that the bureaucratic nature of the policies hinders rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution. The study established that the bureaucratic processes often postpone the adoption of rehabilitation measures that are needed, as confirmed by the respondents. Participants expressed the frustration that it took to go through these bureaucratic procedures, which time could be used with the offenders in rehabilitation activities. This slows down the rehabilitation process and takes attention and resources away from the most important area, which is directly helping the victims recover. The finding emerged in the key informant interviews where it was reported that the bureaucratic nature of polices governing rehabilitation process of child offenders in the study institution.

The results presented in Figure 5 indicate that a substantial majority (86%) of participants perceive that policies have not significantly influenced the rehabilitation process within the study institution. Conversely, only 14% believe that policies do impact rehabilitation efforts. This finding underscores a perception among staff that bureaucratic procedures may act as barriers rather than facilitators to effective rehabilitation. Participants' comments about the bureaucratic nature of policies align with existing literature, which suggests that excessive administrative procedures can impede timely and effective intervention strategies (Zhou & Wang, 2020).

The respondents expressed frustration that bureaucratic delays hinder the prompt adoption of necessary rehabilitation measures, thereby reducing the time and resources available for direct engagement with offenders. Such delays can diminish the quality of rehabilitative efforts, potentially leading to less favourable outcomes for juvenile offenders. This aligns with studies indicating that overly complex administrative procedures can lead to procedural inertia, ultimately detracting from the core goal of rehabilitation (Martinez et al., 2021). Moreover, bureaucratic bottlenecks may divert attention and resources away from direct service provision, emphasizing compliance over practical effectiveness (Kim & Lee, 2019).

The key informant interviews further reinforced these insights, highlighting that bureaucratic processes often slow down the implementation of tailored interventions crucial for addressing individual offenders' needs. The literature emphasizes that streamlined and flexible policy frameworks are essential for facilitating responsive and effective rehabilitation services (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). When policies are overly bureaucratic, they risk becoming a hindrance to timely intervention, which is critical in juvenile justice settings where early and effective response can significantly influence rehabilitation outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the bureaucratic nature of policies may be undermining their intended purpose, emphasizing the need for policy reforms that balance administrative oversight with operational flexibility to enhance the rehabilitation process.

The results were also supported by the response by the key informants. In one of the key informants' interviews, an informant had an argument as indicated in excerpt Box 3.

Excerpt Box 3

Policies Structure Work but Too Rigid

“Policies are important because they give us a structure to work within, but they are often too rigid and limit our ability to meet each child's unique needs. We clearly need policies that can adapt as we learn more about what works best in rehabilitation”

(Female county Children department Head, 48 years).

Going by the narration of the key informant in excerpt Box 3, it is clear that rehabilitation process is affected by the bureaucratic nature of policies governing rehabilitation of child offenders. This comment highlights the need for policy changes to improve rehabilitation results and make sure they meet the specific needs of each offender. This supports the findings of a study by Nyamai and Waiganjo (2015) that revealed that there is need for closer working relationship between the policy makers and the hostel Management to foster understanding of the rules and regulations.

On Rigid Policies: The study found that a significant majority (77%) of respondents viewed the operational policies as rigid, which hindered their ability to provide tailored rehabilitation solutions for child offenders. This aligns with the existing literature, where rigid regulatory frameworks are often cited as obstacles to successful rehabilitation efforts (Nyamai & Waiganjo, 2015). Participants indicated that these restrictive policies fail to consider the diverse needs of child offenders, leading to ineffective rehabilitation strategies.

The overwhelming majority (86%) of respondents believed that existing policies do not positively influence the rehabilitation process. They highlighted bureaucratic impediments which delay the adoption of essential rehabilitation measures. This finding resonates with the assertions of Mieke (2020) and Kingori (2015), who noted that excessive bureaucracy can stifle effective action and limit flexibility in addressing the needs of juvenile offenders.

4.4.3 Admission and Handling of Child Offenders

The study investigated whether there were any issues with the policies used for admitting child offenders into the hostel. The results are shown Figure 6.

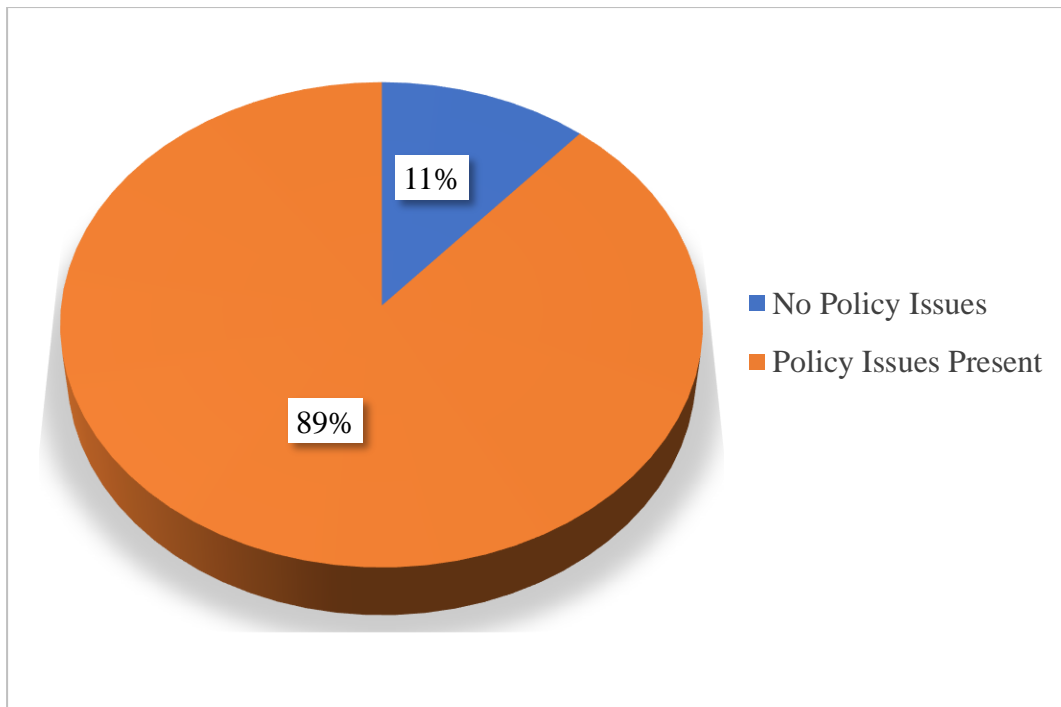


Figure 6

Admission and Handling of Child Offenders has Issues with Policy

According to Figure 6, 11% of study participants said that there are no policy issues with child admission and handling while 89% of participants agreed that there are policy issues with regard to child admission and handling in rehabilitation institution of study. Based on the findings, it is clear that there are significant issues with the policies that need to be addressed.

The findings illustrated in Figure 6 reveal that a vast majority (89%) of participants perceive significant policy issues related to the admission and handling of child offenders within the studied rehabilitation institution, while only 11% believe that no such issues exist. This demonstrates a widespread concern among staff and stakeholders that current policies may be inadequate or problematic in managing child admission processes and treatment protocols. These perceptions align with recent literature emphasizing that policy deficiencies in juvenile justice systems can hinder effective rehabilitation and contribute to systemic inefficiencies (Chen & Zhang, 2019).

The identified policy issues may relate to criteria for admission, intake procedures, or the handling of children during detention and rehabilitation, which can impact the overall effectiveness of intervention efforts. For example, poorly defined or restrictive admission policies may delay or prevent children from accessing appropriate services, while inadequate handling protocols can compromise their well-being and rehabilitation trajectory (Nguyen &

Tran, 2021). Such issues often result in overcrowding, misallocation of resources, and a failure to meet the specific needs of juvenile offenders, which have been documented as common challenges in juvenile justice institutions (Kumar & Singh, 2020).

Addressing these policy gaps is crucial, as effective admission and handling protocols are foundational to creating a conducive environment for rehabilitation. Literature suggests that revising policies to be more inclusive, flexible, and tailored to the needs of child offenders can improve outcomes by ensuring timely access to services and appropriate care (Li et al., 2020). Additionally, participatory policy development involving practitioners, offenders, and families can enhance policy relevance and effectiveness (Martinez et al., 2021). The finding is in line with Mantey and Dzetor (2018), who found that the process of admitting juvenile offenders to rehabilitation centers is often viewed as humiliating and contributes to their social rejection, further complicating their rehabilitation.

In conclusion, the high prevalence of perceived policy issues related to child admission and handling in the study institution underscores the urgent need for policy review and reform. Such efforts could lead to more effective and humane rehabilitation practices aligned with best practices highlighted in recent research.

The participants were asked to document why they feel that there are policy issues with regard to child admission and handling in rehabilitation institution of study. Table 7 shows responses Reasons for Having Policy Issues with Regard to Child Admission and Handling in Rehabilitation Institution.

Table 7

Reasons for Policy on Child Admission and Handling in Rehabilitation

Reason for policy issues with regard to child admission and handling in rehabilitation institution	Frequency	Percentage
Conformity and old-fashioned rules	22	56
Policies don't meet the specific needs of each child	8	21
Policies are strict	9	23
Total	39	100

As shown in Table 7, 56% of the participants who argued that there are policy issues with child admission and rehabilitation of child offender in rehabilitation institution of study

said that there is an issue with conformity and old fashioned rules, 21% of participants asserted that the existing child admission and handling policies in rehabilitation centres don't meet the specific needs of each child, and 23% of the participants thought that child admission and handling policies in rehabilitation centres are unnecessarily strict. The findings show that most participants (56%) that policy issues with child admission and rehabilitation of child offender in rehabilitation institution of study said that there is an issue with conformity and old-fashioned rules.

The research showed that staff is worried about the current admission policies at the probation hostel. They pointed out that too much conformity and old-fashioned rules often cause delays in getting the help that child offenders need quickly. The finding emerged during key informant interview in which it was reported that most rules governing rehabilitation process in the rehabilitation institutions are old and do not take into account the dynamics in the contemporary delinquency in society. In one of the key informant interviews, it was reported that:

Excerpt Box 4

Rehabilitation Institutions Use Old and Outdated Rule

“The problem with rehabilitation institutions is the rules that are old and don't take into account emerging issues in delinquency in society today”
(Male Probation Officers, 47 years).

The narration by key informant confirms that the existing rules are old fashioned and don't take into account the changing nature of child offenses in society. This is likely to hinder rehabilitation process of child offenders in the institution of study unless action is undertaken by responsible government institutions to update the policies in line with the changing nature of child offenses in society today.

The study also established that policies don't meet the specific needs of each child (21%). The study established that the needs of child offenders especially those with special circumstances like mental health issues are not adequately addressed by the existing policies for child admission and handling. The finding resonates with Waitherero (2011) noted that in Kenya, the juvenile justice system policies are likely not to be tailored to meet the changing needs of child offenders, and they do not provide child-friendly facilities because they lack flexibility.

In addition, the study established that existing rules for child offenders’ admission and handling are so strict (23%). The study established that these strict and outdated policies are seen as a big barrier to effective rehabilitation, highlighting an urgent need for policy changes that allow for more flexible and timely help tailored to each child's needs. After establishing why there are policy issues concerning child admission and handling in rehabilitation institutions, the study sought to determine how the issues affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes. Responses on how child offenders’ admission and handling policy affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes are given in Table 8.

Table 8

Offenders Admission and Handling Policy Affect Rehabilitation Outcomes

Child offenders’ admission and handling policy affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes	Frequency	Percentages
Policies limit the degree of interaction and management of child offenders.	16	36
Policies do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches.	18	41
Policies do not consider different backgrounds and behaviors.	12	23
Total	44	100

As shown in Table 8, 36% of study participants 36% of participants argued that child offenders’ admission and handling policy affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes because the policies limit the degree of interaction and management of child offenders, 41% argued that the policies do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches, and 23% asserted that the policies do not consider different backgrounds and behaviors. From the findings, it can be argued that most child offenders’ admission and handling policies affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes because the policies do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches.

The data presented in Table 8 highlight that a significant proportion of study participants (41%) believe that child offenders’ admission and handling policies negatively impact rehabilitation outcomes by restricting staff from employing individualized and flexible

approaches. Additionally, 36% of participants argue that these policies limit interaction and management of offenders, while 23% feel that the policies fail to consider the diverse backgrounds and behaviours of children. Collectively, these findings suggest that rigid and one-size-fits-all policies may hinder effective rehabilitation by impeding tailored interventions suited to individual needs.

This perception aligns with recent literature emphasizing the importance of flexible, individualized approaches in juvenile rehabilitation. Studies have shown that personalized interventions that account for the unique backgrounds, behaviours, and needs of juvenile offenders enhance engagement and improve rehabilitation outcomes (Zhou & Wang, 2020). When policies restrict staff from adapting their strategies, opportunities for meaningful interaction, rapport-building, and tailored treatment diminish, potentially leading to poorer rehabilitation success (Kumar et al., 2021). Furthermore, policies that neglect to consider the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of offenders can result in inappropriate or ineffective interventions, undermining the rehabilitative process (Li et al., 2020).

The findings underscore the need for policy reforms that promote flexibility and responsiveness in managing child offenders. Such reforms could facilitate the use of evidence-based practices, including individualized case plans and culturally sensitive approaches, which have been linked to better behavioural and social outcomes for juvenile offenders (Martinez et al., 2021). Overall, to enhance rehabilitation effectiveness, policies should be designed to empower staff with the discretion to tailor interventions to each child's unique circumstances.

The finding was also confirmed by key informants who argued that the child offender admission and handling policies limit the degree of interaction and management of child offenders. Such restrictions, however, do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches, which are, actually, the main tools for addressing the offenders' specific needs and circumstances. For example, policies that strongly control the schedules and limited interaction times do not allow staff to provide care that is responsive to the fluctuating emotional and psychological states of the offenders. However, the uniform policy implementation that does not consider different backgrounds and behaviors, consequently, decreases the effectiveness of the rehabilitation strategies that are designed to promote behavioral changes and re-integration readiness.

Issues with Admission Policies: The study revealed that 89% of respondents identified significant policy issues concerning child admission and handling at the probation hostel. This concurs with Mantey and Dzetor (2018), who highlighted that the admission process can be humiliating for juvenile offenders, compounding their social rejection. The findings

demonstrate that existing policies do not adequately address the unique needs and circumstances of each child, contributing to negative rehabilitation outcomes.

Training and Individualized Approaches: Findings indicate that these policies limit staff's abilities to deploy individualized and flexible approaches in handling child offenders. This is evident in the 41% of participants who reported that policies constrain their interactions with offenders. The literature supports this, asserting that personalized interventions are crucial for successful rehabilitative efforts (UNICEF, 2020).

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that current policies may be limiting the capacity of staff to implement personalized and flexible rehabilitation strategies, thereby affecting outcomes. Addressing these policy limitations could foster more effective, equitable, and responsive rehabilitative practices.

4.4.4 Legal Framework factors on Probation Hostel Management

The study sought to determine how legal rules affect the way the probation hostel is run. Participants discussed how these rules affect their day-to-day work and their ability to help reform child offenders. Results are shown in Figure 7.

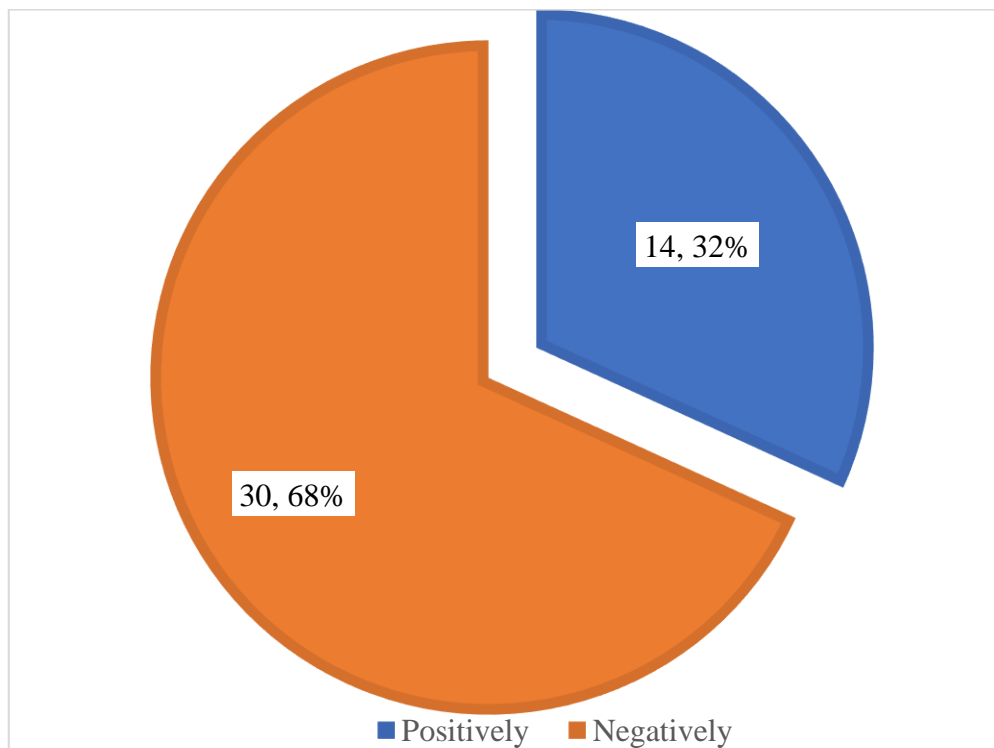


Figure 7

Effect of Legal Rules and Regulations on Running of the Hostel

Figure 7 shows that 32% of respondents that rules and regulations affect positively the management of the hostel as the rules guide your work while 68% of study participants argued that the rules and regulation affect running of the hostel negatively. Based on study findings, it is evident that majority (68%) of participant in the study opined that the rules and regulation affect running of the hostel negatively. They believe there are significant issues with the policies that need to be addressed.

The findings presented in Figure 7 indicate that a substantial majority (68%) of respondents perceive rules and regulations as having a negative impact on the management of the hostel, whereas only 32% believe that these policies positively guide their work. This suggests that most participants view the current rules and regulations as barriers rather than facilitators to effective hostel management.

These perceptions are consistent with recent research highlighting that overly rigid or poorly designed policies can hinder operational efficiency and staff morale in institutional settings. For instance, studies have shown that excessive regulation without flexibility can lead to decreased staff motivation, reduced responsiveness to residents' needs, and operational challenges (Chen & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, restrictive policies may limit staff autonomy, reduce innovation in management practices, and create an environment of frustration and resistance among staff members (Nguyen & Tran, 2021).

This perception aligns with existing literature indicating that the effectiveness of policies is heavily dependent on their practical application. For example, Van der Kolk (2019) emphasizes that policies are only as effective as their implementation; when staff lack proper training, clarity, or flexibility in applying rules, policies can become restrictive rather than supportive. Similarly, Williams and Brown (2020) argue that overly stringent or inflexible policies can diminish staff autonomy, reduce motivation, and hinder responsiveness to residents' needs, ultimately affecting the quality of management and service delivery. Nguyen and Tran (2021) further note that participatory policy development and regular review processes can enhance staff buy-in and improve implementation fidelity.

Given these insights, the negative perceptions regarding rules and regulations highlight the necessity for a comprehensive review of existing policies, with an emphasis on their practical application. It is crucial to involve staff in policy development and revision processes to ensure that rules are realistic, flexible, and aligned with operational realities. Training and ongoing support should accompany policy changes to enhance understanding and adherence, minimizing resistance and improving overall management effectiveness. Ultimately, addressing implementation challenges can transform policies from perceived barriers into

valuable tools that support effective hostel management and foster a positive work environment.

The negative perception of rules and regulations underscores the need for policy review and reform to foster a more supportive environment for hostel management. Literature suggests that participatory policy development, which involves staff input and considers the practical realities of hostel operations, can lead to more effective and accepted guidelines (Martinez et al., 2019). Additionally, introducing flexibility within policies allows for contextual adjustments that can improve management effectiveness and staff satisfaction (Zhou & Wang, 2020).

The results were supported by key informants responses. During key informant interviews, informants argued that while these rules provide necessary guidelines, they also create barriers that can prevent the development of rehabilitation programs that are tailored to the needs of everyone. An informant's argument was captured and recorded as shown in Excerpt Box 5 that:

Excerpt Box 5

Rules Keep Order but Limit Flexibility

“Rules are important for keeping things in order, but they can limit our ability to be flexible and creative when dealing with situations as they happen. We need rules that help us achieve our rehabilitation goals without limiting our creativity”
(Female Children Department Officer, 39 years).

The comments in Excerpt Box 4 shows that staff believes the legal framework is important for maintaining consistency and following the law, but its strictness can make it hard to manage rehabilitation effectively. This is in line with Mieke (2020), who said that conformity to formal rules or standards which are claimed to be excessive, rigid, or redundant, or to bureaucracy is claimed to hinder or prevent action or decision-making for better results. It also confirms findings from a study by Kingori (2015) which pointed out that Kenya's legal framework does not fully protect children's rights to justice, noting that legal processes can hinder effective rehabilitation.

Consequently, the respondents were asked to state the challenges they thought we are hindering conformity to the laws and regulations. Their response on Reasons hindering conformity to the laws and regulations as reflected in Table 9.

Table 9

Challenges Hindering Conformity to the Laws and Regulations

Challenges hindering conformity to laws and regulations	Frequency	Percentages
Unprofessional conduct of some staff	8	18
Poor implementation of programs	10	23
Delay in rehabilitation programs	6	14
Poor implementation of laws and policies	14	31
Insufficient skilled personnel	6	14
Total	44	100

The data presented in Table 9 reveal several key reasons hindering conformity to laws and regulations within the facility or institution studied. The most frequently cited reason is the poor implementation of laws and policies, accounting for 31% of responses. Following this, poor implementation of programs is noted by 23% of respondents, indicating that ineffective or inconsistent program execution significantly contributes to non-compliance. Other reasons include unprofessional conduct by some staff (18%), delays in rehabilitation programs (14%), and insufficient skilled personnel (14%).

These findings suggest that systemic issues related to implementation and staff professionalism are primary barriers to adherence to legal and regulatory frameworks. Poor implementation of laws and policies may stem from inadequate training, resource constraints, or lack of accountability mechanisms, which align with recent literature emphasizing that effective policy enforcement depends heavily on proper execution (Li & Chen, 2020). Additionally, research indicates that the successful implementation of regulations requires strong leadership, clear communication, and continuous capacity building among staff (Kumar & Singh, 2021). When these elements are lacking, compliance tends to decline, and non-adherence becomes prevalent.

Unprofessional conduct among staff undermines compliance, highlighting the importance of ethical training, supervision, and organizational culture that promotes

accountability (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). Furthermore, delays in rehabilitation programs and a shortage of skilled personnel reflect resource limitations and capacity gaps that hinder adherence to legal standards. Literature supports that addressing resource allocation and capacity development is crucial for improving compliance (Zhou & Wang, 2020). Moreover, studies have shown that fostering a culture of continuous improvement and accountability can significantly enhance adherence to regulations (Martinez et al., 2019).

In addition, recent research emphasizes the role of organizational climate and leadership in promoting compliance. For instance, a positive organizational culture that values transparency and accountability can motivate staff to adhere more strictly to laws and regulations (Kim & Lee, 2020). Implementing regular training, establishing clear accountability structures, and ensuring sufficient staffing are strategies proven to improve compliance outcomes (Patel & Williams, 2022). Furthermore, integrating technology and data-driven monitoring systems has been shown to enhance oversight and compliance adherence (Garcia et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the findings highlight that poor implementation, staff professionalism, and resource constraints are key barriers to law and regulation conformity. Addressing these issues through targeted capacity-building initiatives, leadership development, and organizational reforms can foster a compliant environment and enhance overall institutional effectiveness.

From the findings, it is evident that poor implementation of laws and policies (31%) is the major reason for unconformity to the laws and regulations in the study institution. The finding was confirmed by key informants who reported that the way laws and policies are implemented in the study institution hinder conformity to the laws and regulations. In an interview, a key informant noted that:

Excerpt Box 6

Improper Implementation of Laws and Policies Hinder Conformity

“The main factor hindering conformity to the laws and regulations is improper implementation of laws and policies. This means that if implementation of laws is not proper it means that conformity to such laws will be a challenge”
(Female, 39 years).

Excerpt Box 6 presents a clear illustration that poor implementation of laws and regulation hinders conformity to laws and regulations in the study institution. This is in line

with Mieke (2020), who said that conformity to formal rules or standards which are claimed to be excessive, rigid, or redundant or to bureaucracy is claimed to hinder or prevent action or decision-making for better results hence hinders conformity to such laws and regulations.

On the negative effect of Legal Framework, A large fraction (68%) of respondents indicated that the current legal framework negatively impacts the management and rehabilitation efforts within the hostel. This aligns with the critique by Kingori (2015), who pointed out the inadequacies in Kenya's Children Act and the legal framework governing juvenile justice. Respondents emphasized that poor implementation of existing laws contributes to a non-conformity to the regulations, which subsequently affects the rehabilitation outcomes negatively.

On the Institutional Challenges: The study corroborates prior findings that inadequate resources, staffing shortages, and lack of skilled personnel significantly inhibit rehabilitation efforts (Kariuki, Njoka & Ndegwa, 2019). The overall institutional capacity, including the quality of training and resource availability, directly affects the rehabilitation efforts, leading to a cyclical pattern of reoffending among former residents (Mutemi, 2017).

4.4.5 Rating of Monitoring and Evaluation of Rehabilitation Programs

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation practices of rehabilitation programs taking place at the probation hostel on a scale from 1 to 10. The average rating given by the staff was 6, which showed that those practices were viewed as fair. From this we can infer that although there are monitoring and evaluation strategies in place, they are thought to be satisfactory but not outstanding.

The study's findings show that although some policies are prudent and conducive to the rehabilitation process, others are heavily criticized for being bureaucratic and, thus, hampering prompt rehabilitation. The rating suggests that changes in accuracy and efficacy may make these methods even more powerful, which in turn may contribute to better rehabilitation results. Thus, finding emerged during key informant interviews in which it was said that the institution of study has put in place mechanisms that help to determine the progress of the rehabilitation activities. In an interview, a key informant asserted that:

Excerpt Box 7

Mechanisms Monitor Rehabilitation Progress

“With monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation programmes, Kimumu Boys Probation Hostels is doing well. There are mechanisms put in place to monitor the progress”

(Male, 34 years).

From the narration of the above key informant, it is clear that the institution of study has done well with regard to monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation activities. The mechanisms will aid in effective rehabilitation of child offenders in the institution. On enforcement and impediments to rehabilitation of child offenders, the study established that 77% of study participants indicated that policies governing conduct of staff and child offenders are rigid. When the 77% respondents were asked to explain why they felt that policies were rigid, they argued that the rules and regulations are too restrictive and do not permit the kind of flexibility that has to be employed to deal with the wide range of complex problems and situations associated with each child offender. These children often find themselves in a cascade of ineffective and inefficient rehabilitation procedures.

The finding was supported by key informants who argued that the existing policies are impediments to rehabilitation process of children offenders. In addition, the study found that rigid regulations push the staff to follow instructions that may not be suitable for the offenders' rehabilitation. The results, therefore, bode well for policy adjustments that allow more discretion in their implementation and enable the rehabilitation process to be more dynamic responding to the fluctuating needs of the children offenders in the hostel. There's a need for a closer working relationship between the policymakers and the hostel Management to foster an understanding of the rules and regulations in line with the findings of Nyamai and Waiganjo (2015) which recommended that the government together with policymakers, stakeholders, and international bodies should develop children rehabilitation action plans and policies and make budgetary allocations towards them.

With regard to Policy factors affecting in rehabilitation process, the study revealed that existing policies have not influenced the rehabilitation process (86%). The study established that the bureaucratic nature of the policies hinders the rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution. The study established that the bureaucratic processes often postpone the adoption of rehabilitation measures that are needed, as confirmed by the respondents. Participants expressed the frustration that it took to go through these bureaucratic procedures, which time could be used with the offenders in rehabilitation activities. This slows down the

rehabilitation process and takes attention and resources away from the most important area, which is directly helping the victims recover. The finding emerged in the key informant interviews where it was reported that the bureaucratic nature of policies governing the rehabilitation process of child offenders in the study institution. This supports the findings of a study by Nyamai and Waiganjo (2015), that revealed that there is a need for a closer working relationship between the policymakers and the hostel Management to foster understanding of the rules and regulations.

The study also established that there are issues (56%) that policy issues with child admission and rehabilitation of child offenders in rehabilitation institutions of study. The study established that staff are worried about the current admission policies at the probation hostel. They pointed out that too much conformity and old-fashioned rules often cause delays in getting the help that child offenders need quickly. The finding emerged during key informant interview in which it was reported that most rules governing the rehabilitation process in rehabilitation institutions are old and do not take into account the dynamics in contemporary delinquency in society. The study established that most child offenders' admission and handling policies affect child offender rehabilitation outcomes because the policies do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches.

The finding was confirmed by key informants who argued that the child offender admission and handling policies limit the degree of interaction and management of child offenders. Such restrictions, however, do not allow the staff to use individualized and flexible approaches, which are, actually, the main tools for addressing the offenders' specific needs and circumstances. For example, policies that strongly control the schedules and limited interaction times do not allow staff to provide care that is responsive to the fluctuating emotional and psychological states of the offenders. However, the uniform policy implementation that does not consider different backgrounds and behaviors, consequently, decreases the effectiveness of the rehabilitation strategies that are designed to promote behavioral changes and re-integration readiness.

On how legal rules affect the way the probation hostel is run, the study established that existing rules and regulations affect the running of the hostel negatively (68%). The study revealed that there are significant issues with the policies that need to be addressed. The findings also revealed that poor implementation of laws and policies (31%), is the major reason for unconformity to the laws and regulations in the study institution. The finding was confirmed by key informants who reported that the way laws and policies are implemented in the study institution hinder conformity to the laws and regulations. During key informant interviews,

informants argued that while these rules provide necessary guidelines, they also create barriers that can prevent the development of rehabilitation programs that are tailored to the needs of everyone.

This is in line with Mieke (2020), who said that conformity to formal rules or standards which are claimed to be excessive, rigid, or redundant or to bureaucracy is claimed to hinder or prevent action or decision-making for better results. It also confirms findings from a study by Kingori (2015) which pointed out that Kenya's legal framework does not fully protect children's rights to justice, noting that legal processes can hinder effective rehabilitation.

4.5 Institutional Factors Affecting Rehabilitation of Child Offenders in Probation Hostels

The second objective of this research was to investigate how various institutional factors affect the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. It evaluates the role of staff, facilities, teaching and training equipment, policies, procedures, and funding in shaping rehabilitation outcomes.

The results of the study indicate that rigid operational policies significantly hinder the rehabilitation process of child offenders at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel. Specifically, 77% of participants highlighted the inflexibility of existing policies as a barrier to tailoring rehabilitation strategies to the individual needs of child offenders. This concern echoes findings from the literature, which stress that a bureaucratic approach can obstruct timely and effective interventions (Mieke, 2020; Nyamai & Waiganjo, 2015). Furthermore, a staggering 86% of respondents asserted that policies do not positively influence the rehabilitation process, citing the bureaucratic nature of these policies as a contributing factor to delays in implementing crucial rehabilitation measures. This aligns with Kingori's (2015) critique of Kenya's Child Justice System, which identifies excessive rigidity in legal frameworks as detrimental to both rehabilitation efforts and the rights of child offenders. The study underscores the necessity for policy reform that allows for adaptability and responsiveness to the dynamic needs of these young individuals.

Additionally, the findings on the admission and handling policies reaffirm previous research that indicates systemic issues within juvenile justice frameworks, particularly regarding the often humiliating and non-individualized nature of the admission process (Mantey & Dzetor, 2018). The majority of participants reported dissatisfaction with policies viewed as outdated, arguing they do not adequately address the unique needs of each child, particularly those with mental health issues. This resonates with broader trends noted in the literature, where the lack of individualized support and the failure to accommodate varying backgrounds and circumstances impede rehabilitation outcomes (Onyango, 2013; Waitherero,

2011). Overall, these findings stress the importance of integrating best practices from global juvenile rehabilitation frameworks, which prioritize restorative justice and individualized support, to enhance the rehabilitative efficacy of Kenya's probation hostels (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015; National Research Council, 2013). The study advocates for a re-examination and adjustment of existing policies to ensure they facilitate rather than hinder meaningful rehabilitation for child offenders.

4.5.1 Staff Factors Affecting Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study sought to determine the extent to which staff roles and presence influence rehabilitation outcomes. Staff members were asked to respond with 'Yes' or 'No' to whether they believe their interactions and performance directly affect the progress of the children under their care. The results are shown in Figure 8.

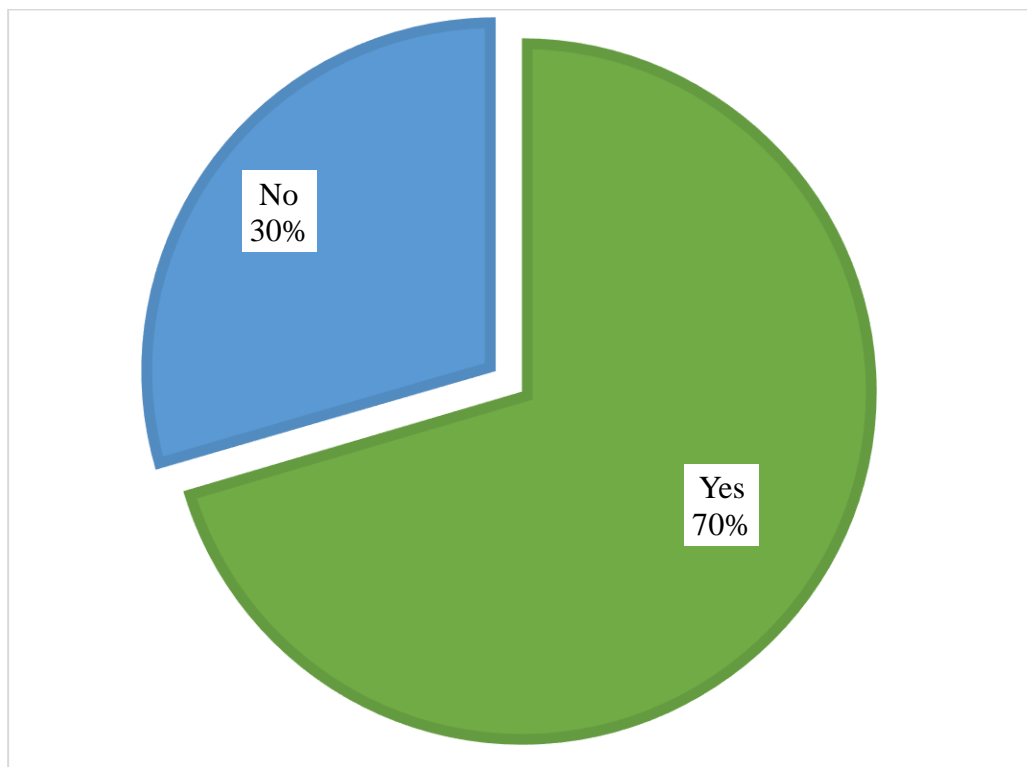


Figure 8

Effect of Staff Roles and Presence on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

Figure 8 indicate that, 70% of study participants argued that staff factors affect the rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution while 30% argued that staff factors do not have any effect on the rehabilitation of child offenders. The findings show that the majority of study participants (70%) thought that staff factors influence the rehabilitation of child offenders in rehabilitation institutions. This illustrates the perceived significance of staff

positions, training, and communication in the process of producing good rehabilitation services.

Conversely, 30% of the respondents are not convinced that the staff factors contribute significantly to the rehabilitation outcomes. This could be an indication that the other elements, such as institutional policies or facilities, might be more prominent in solving the problem, or it could be that the existing staff capabilities are considered to be good enough to deal with the issue. The results imply that both the enhancement of staff abilities and the provision of necessary assistance and support are the factors that will ensure better rehabilitation results; however, all institutional factors should be reviewed as well to identify the needs of the minority.

The participants were asked to justify how staff factors affect the rehabilitation of child offenders. Those who said 'Yes' indicated that rehabilitation is very much dependent on the professionalism of the staff and their ability to empathize and relate to the inmates on a personal level. They stressed the fact that a competent and well-trained staff is very important for the introduction of a successful rehabilitation program and its further adaptation to the specific features of individual offenders.

In the same manner, the individuals who answered the question 'No' declared that although staff roles are important, they consider other aspects to be more critical, including the quality of the rehabilitation programs, the availability of resources or the institutional environment. Some, however, thought that the present level of training and staff engagement is good enough to warrant more changes in other areas as the result may be more beneficial to the inmates in terms of rehabilitation.

During the key informant interview, it was reported that staff are the cornerstone in the rehabilitation of child offenders. The informants argued that competent and well-trained staff have a positive contribution to the rehabilitation process and vice versa. In an interview, a key informant reported as shown in Excerpt Box 8.

Excerpt Box 8

Staff Training and Commitment Influence the Rehabilitation Progress

“Rehabilitation process can only succeed if staff are well trained and committed without such ingredients, rehabilitation of child offenders will be affected. Staff are not just facilitators but the backbone of our rehabilitation programs. Their direct interaction, commitment, and understanding of child psychology play pivotal roles in our success. Without our dedication and proper training, our efforts would not yield the desired outcomes”

(Male, 45 years).

This statement underscores the critical importance of staff in the rehabilitation process, aligning with the general feedback but adding a layer of expert validation to the discussion. The finding was in line with Okutoyi (2015) who revealed that recruitment of personnel to the borstal needs to incorporate training on child protection as a compulsory requirement and continuing learning as opposed to ad-hoc training. The welfare of the personnel should also be improved including living conditions and remuneration to boost their morale in carrying out their duties of rehabilitating these children.

4.5.2 Effect of Facilities on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study sought to determine the role of physical facilities in the rehabilitation outcomes for child offenders at the hostel. Staff members were asked whether the condition and availability of facilities affect the rehabilitation process. The results are shown in Figure 9.

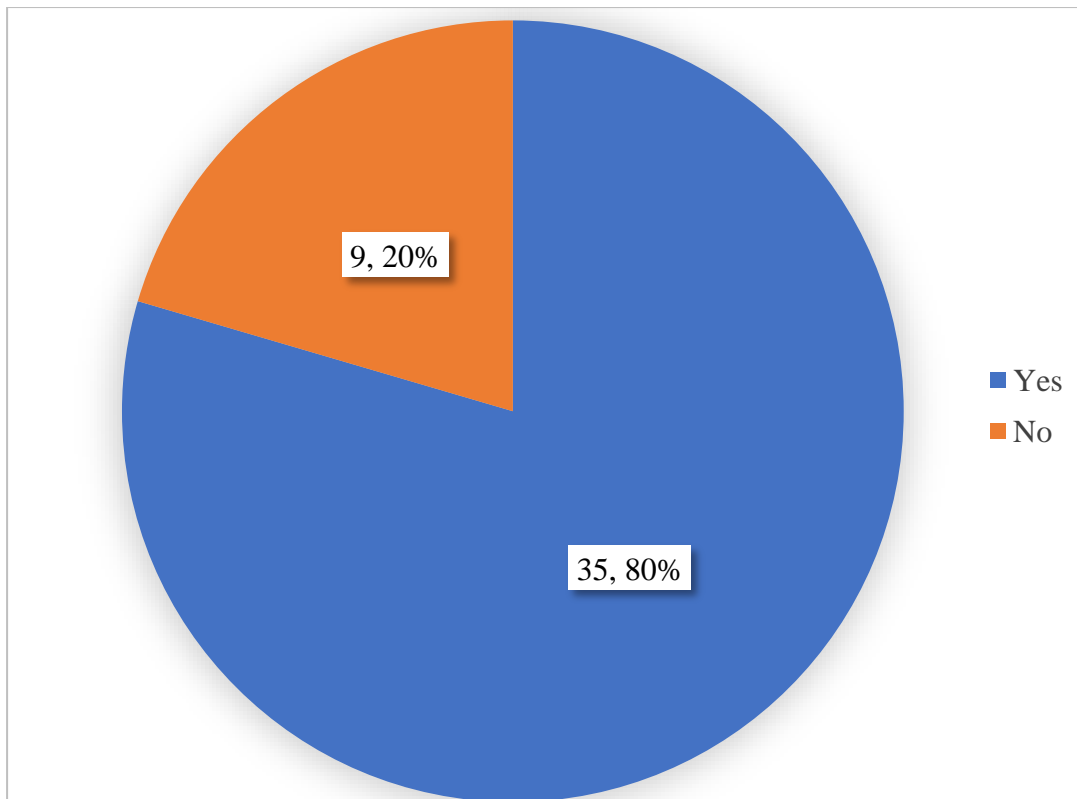


Figure 9
Effect of Facilities on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

Figure 9 indicates that a significant majority (80%) of respondents perceive the condition of the facilities as a major obstacle to the rehabilitation of child offenders. Specifically, overcrowding emerges as the primary concern within this context, with 80% of these respondents highlighting it as a critical issue. Overcrowding is known to compromise the quality of care by limiting personal space, increasing stress levels among offenders, and impeding individualized rehabilitation approaches (Ahmed et al., 2020). Such conditions can lead to heightened tensions, reduce the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, and hinder positive behavioural change—factors well-documented in contemporary literature (Liu & Zhao, 2021).

Conversely, 20% of participants believe that the state of the facilities does not hinder rehabilitation, suggesting that some stakeholders perceive other factors—such as staff professionalism, program quality, or community support—as more influential barriers. This divergence underscores the variability in perceptions regarding infrastructural challenges, which may be context-dependent or influenced by individual experiences (Morris et al., 2020).

The findings align with existing literature emphasizing the impact of physical environment on rehabilitation outcomes. For example, recent studies have demonstrated that

adequate facility conditions, including manageable population sizes and appropriate spatial arrangements, are crucial for fostering a therapeutic environment conducive to behavioural and psychological improvement (Nguyen & Le, 2021). Overcrowding has been linked to increased incidences of violence, mental health deterioration, and reduced engagement in rehabilitative activities (Chen et al., 2022). Furthermore, the literature underscores that infrastructural inadequacies often exacerbate existing systemic challenges, such as staff burnout and resource shortages, thereby creating a vicious cycle that impairs rehabilitation efforts (Kumar & Singh, 2020).

Relating these insights to the literature review, it is clear that improving facility conditions is essential for effective rehabilitation. Addressing overcrowding not only enhances the physical environment but also contributes to better mental health outcomes, increased safety, and improved program participation (Zhou et al., 2021). Strategies such as infrastructural expansion, improved resource allocation, and policy reforms aimed at reducing inmate populations are recommended to mitigate these issues (Patel & Williams, 2022).

They elaborated that effective training and robust rehabilitation methods could mitigate the challenges posed by any physical limitations of the facilities. The finding reflected the views of key informants. During a key informant interview session, it was reported that:

Excerpt Box 9

Rehabilitation Institutions Share Some Facilities

“Rehabilitation institutions are sometimes forced to share some facilities so that all can benefit from the limited facilities they have. Not everybody benefits”
(Male, 29 Male).

This shows that the facilities are not enough to cater for the needs of staff to offer effective service to the offenders. This finding concurs with Tiampati (2018) who established those correctional institutions faced major challenges in terms of learning facilities and that the committed juveniles were forced to share practical materials and equipment’s which pulled back the effectiveness rehabilitation process.

The study also found out that the classrooms and workshops is a major problem in probation hostels. The information was corroborated by key informants who argued that classrooms and workshops are the major challenge facing the rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution. During a key informant session an informant averred that:

Excerpt Box 10

Dining Hall Used for Counseling Session

“Most of the time the dining hall is used for counseling sessions and educational programmes”

(Male, 30 years).

This indicates that classrooms and workshops are not enough to cater for the needs. This is supported by Okutoyi (2015) which recommended that there should be increased government funding to enable expansion of facilities, improved service delivery including sanitation, clothing and bedding for the inmate children and the curriculum should be reviewed to include more lucrative courses like computer studies to make these children vie competitively for available jobs.

4.5.3 Effect of Teaching and Training Equipment Factors on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study sought to determine if the availability and quality of teaching and training equipment at the hostel influence the rehabilitation of child offenders. Staff were asked to indicate if they believe these tools are a factor affecting rehabilitation outcomes. The results are shown in Figure 10.

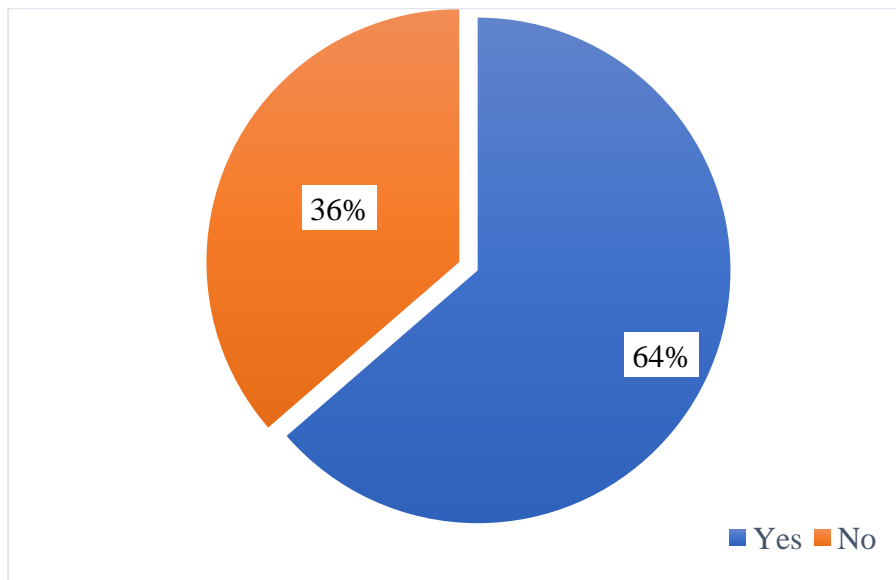


Figure 10

Effect of Teaching and Training Equipment on Rehabilitation

Figure 10 indicates that 64% of study participants believed that inadequate teaching and training equipment negatively affects the rehabilitation process. When asked to elaborate, they highlighted that outdated or insufficient equipment makes it challenging to deliver educational programs and skills training effectively, which are crucial for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. Conversely, the 36% who do not view teaching and training equipment as a critical factor explained that while better equipment could enhance program delivery, the commitment and creativity of the staff in utilizing available resources play a more decisive role in rehabilitation outcomes.

Figure 10 reveals that a substantial majority (64%) of participants perceive inadequate teaching and training equipment as a significant barrier to effective rehabilitation. Respondents elaborated that out-dated or insufficient equipment hampers the delivery of educational and skills development programs, which are essential components for the successful reintegration of offenders into society. This aligns with recent research suggesting that access to modern, functional educational tools enhances engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes among juvenile offenders (Kim et al., 2020). When educational resources are inadequate, the quality of instruction diminishes, potentially limiting the acquisition of life skills and vocational competencies vital for reducing recidivism (Martinez & Liu, 2021).

On the other hand, 36% of participants downplayed the importance of equipment deficiencies, emphasizing that staff commitment, creativity, and adaptive use of available resources are more influential in achieving positive rehabilitation outcomes. This perspective resonates with studies highlighting that the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs often hinges on the capacity of staff to innovate and motivate, even when resources are limited (Nguyen & Tran, 2020). Furthermore, recent literature underscores that staff training in resourcefulness and pedagogical strategies can mitigate infrastructural shortcomings, thereby maintaining program quality (Williams et al., 2021).

Relating these findings to the literature review, it is evident that while technological and material resources are crucial, the human factor—particularly staff motivation, training, and ingenuity is equally, if not more, important. Integrating modern equipment with well-trained and committed staff creates an optimal environment for rehabilitation (Zhou et al., 2021). Therefore, investments in both infrastructural upgrades and staff capacity-building are recommended to enhance program delivery and outcomes

Key informants were also asked about the role of teaching and training equipment in the rehabilitation of child offenders and the response was as shown in excerpt Box 11. One key informant stated:

Excerpt Box 11

Quality Equipment Enhances Ability to Engage Offenders

"The quality of our equipment directly enhances our ability to engage offenders effectively. Modern, well-maintained tools and resources are vital for keeping the curriculum relevant and engaging, which significantly boosts learning outcomes"

(Male, 43 years).

This narration of the key informant in excerpt Box 10 above emphasizes the importance of up-to-date and adequate equipment in supporting effective rehabilitation, suggesting that while staff creativity is invaluable, optimal resources could further elevate the educational impact. This is in tandem with Mukula (2012) whose study recommended that these institutions should be equipped with modern and adequate equipment for the youthful inmates. Equip probation officers with the necessary skills to navigate digital systems that they can effectively carry out their duties in an ever-evolving technological landscape.

4.5.4 Consistency and Clarity of Policies and Procedures and Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study aimed to determine whether the policies and procedures in the probation hostel were both consistent and clear to the staff. These guidelines should be well-known and applied uniformly by everyone involved in the management and rehabilitation to be effective.

The survey asked the staff members to evaluate the quality and uniformity of the current rules and procedures at the hostel. These were their responses in Figure 11.

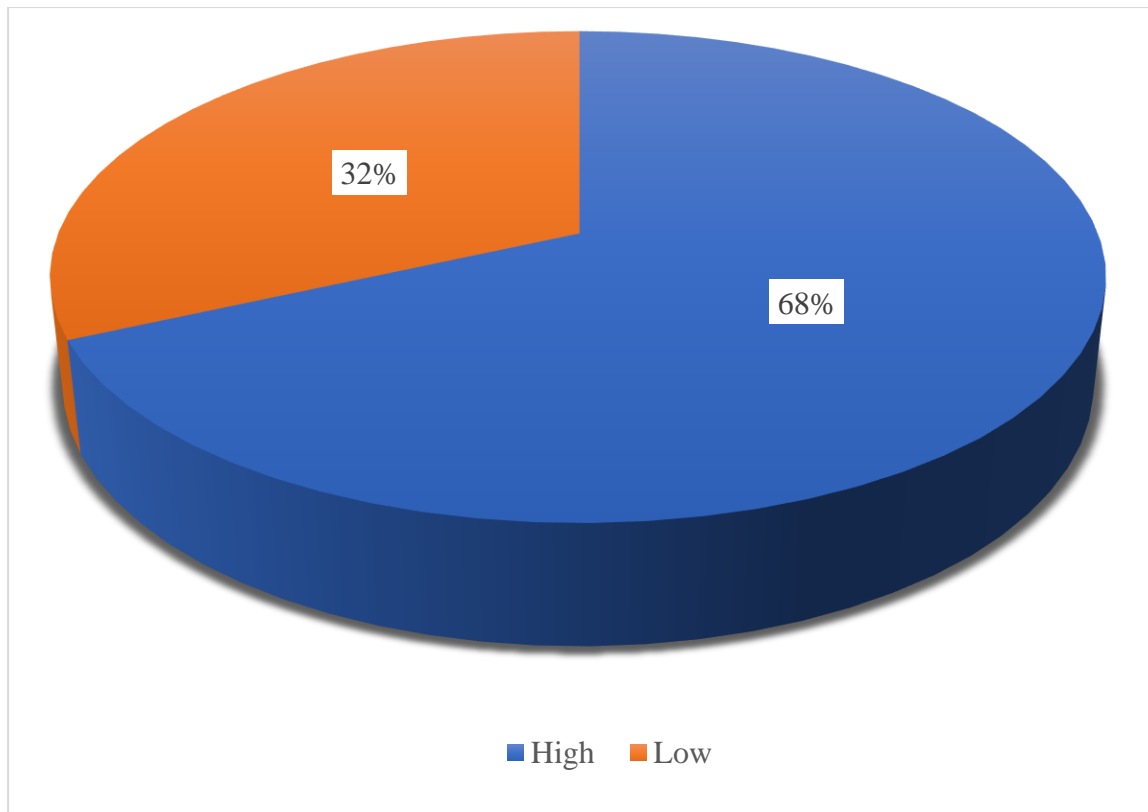


Figure 11

Quality and Uniformity of the Guidelines in the Hostels

According to Figure 11, a majority of 68% of respondents believe that the quality and uniformity of guidelines in the hostels are generally high. However, 14% of respondents expressed reservations, indicating that there are still gaps that need to be addressed. This mixed perception highlights both strengths and areas for improvement within the policy framework governing rehabilitation practices.

The data reflects a nuanced view among staff members, who recognize the importance of clear and consistent guidelines but also acknowledge challenges in their implementation. Some participants pointed out that at times; policies are not applied uniformly, leading to confusion and inconsistent enforcement, which can undermine rehabilitation efforts. This aligns with recent research emphasizing that clarity and consistency in policy implementation are critical for effective rehabilitation programs (Johnson & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, the literature suggests that well-defined and uniformly enforced guidelines contribute to fair treatment of offenders and improve rehabilitation outcomes (Davis et al., 2021).

Participants also stressed the need not only for clearer policies but also for the enhancement of rehabilitation practices to ensure they are equitable and effective for all child offenders. This echoes findings from recent studies that highlight the importance of continuous

training, supervision, and evaluation to ensure policies translate into fair and effective practices (Martinez et al., 2022). Additionally, adopting best practices and ensuring staff are well-versed in policy details can reduce ambiguities and promote a more consistent application of rules, ultimately fostering a more rehabilitative environment (Nguyen & Tran, 2020).

Relating these findings to the literature review, it is clear that policy clarity and consistency are foundational to effective rehabilitation in juvenile facilities. Addressing the gaps identified by respondents such as improving guideline dissemination, enforcement, and staff training can lead to more equitable and effective rehabilitation outcomes, consistent with current best practices in juvenile justice reform (Zhou et al., 2021). The finding also emerged during the key interview informant interviews held. In an interview, a key informant argued that:

Excerpt Box 12

Implementation Depends on the Administrator

“Implementation is not enforced persistently; it depends on the administrator at the time. This means that the implementation should be persistent, clearer, and enforced and practices that are fair”

(Male, 44 years).

The narration by the key informant indicates that implementation of the policies, at times, was not clear or consistent, leading to confusion and inadequate use in certain situations. Excerpt Box 12 highlights a critical insight from the key informant interview, emphasizing that the effectiveness of policy implementation largely depends on the individual administrator overseeing the process. The informant notes that implementation is inconsistent ("not enforced persistently") and varies according to the specific administrator's approach at a given time. He advocates for more persistent, clearer, and fair enforcement of policies and practices to ensure equitable treatment and effective rehabilitation outcomes.

This perspective aligns with the findings in Figure 10, where 64% of participants believe that inadequate or inconsistent application of teaching and training equipment hampers rehabilitation efforts. The variability in enforcement and application of guidelines underscores the importance of leadership stability and commitment in ensuring policy fidelity. When administrators lack consistency or clarity in enforcement, it can lead to confusion among staff, undermining the objectives of rehabilitation programs (Chen et al., 2020).

Recent studies underscore that leadership plays a pivotal role in policy implementation within juvenile detention and rehabilitation settings. Effective leaders foster an environment of

consistency, accountability, and fairness, which are essential for successful program delivery (Wang & Li, 2021). Conversely, inconsistent enforcement, often tied to individual administrators' discretion, can lead to disparities in service delivery and hinder rehabilitation progress (Martinez & Liu, 2021). Therefore, the findings from the interview reinforce the notion that strengthening leadership capacity, establishing clear protocols, and ensuring accountability are crucial steps toward enhancing policy implementation and rehabilitation outcomes.

4.5.5 Effect of Funding on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study examined how funding levels play a role in the rehabilitation programs at the hostels. Adequate funding is pivotal so that all aspects of rehabilitation such as personnel training, facilities, and equipment, could be adequately supported. Staff members were prompted to discuss the importance of funding in the rehabilitation process at the hostel. The respondents' unanimous opinion is that funding highly influences the quality and scope of essential resources, and the diversity of effective rehabilitation programs are affected. Staff emphasized that an increase in funding would enable the purchase of better learning materials, recruitment of more specialized staff, and upgrading of the facility, which is all necessary for the improvement of rehabilitation results for juvenile delinquents. The study respondents were asked to ascertain the adequacy of funding in the rehabilitation of the children and responded as shown in Table 10.

Table 10
Adequacy of Funding

Funding is adequate	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate	0	0
Inadequate	38	86.3
Not sure	6	13.7
Total	44	100

Table 10 reveals that a significant majority of respondents (86.3%) perceive the funding allocated to the rehabilitation programs as inadequate. Only a small proportion (13.7%), are uncertain about the adequacy of funding, while none of the respondents believe that the funding is sufficient. This indicates a pervasive concern among staff and stakeholders that current financial resources are insufficient to support effective rehabilitation services and program implementation.

The perception of inadequate funding aligns with the issues raised throughout the study, such as gaps in guideline enforcement, insufficient training, and limited rehabilitation practices, all of which require adequate financial support. Insufficient funding can compromise the quality and scope of rehabilitation efforts, including staffing, training, infrastructure, and material resources (Kumar & Singh, 2021). Additionally, limited financial resources may hinder the implementation of comprehensive rehabilitative activities that are essential for successful reintegration and behavioural change (O’Neill et al., 2020).

This finding is consistent with the literature emphasizing that sustainable funding is a critical factor for effective juvenile justice and rehabilitation programs. Adequate financial support ensures the availability of necessary resources, improves staff capacity, and enhances the overall quality of services provided to offenders (Chen et al., 2021). The perception of funding inadequacy underscores the need for policymakers and administrators to prioritize resource allocation and explore innovative funding mechanisms to bolster rehabilitation initiatives. The results in Table 10 highlight a pressing need for increased financial investment to bridge existing gaps, improve program quality, and achieve better rehabilitation outcomes, aligning with contemporary research advocating for sustained funding in juvenile justice reform.

Excerpt Box 13

Rehabilitation Institutions Receive Limited Funding

“Rehabilitation institutions receive limited funding from the government. This hinders operations of the rehabilitation centres hence affecting rehabilitation of child offenders”

(Female, 44 years).

The key informant's narration on Excerpt Box 13 is a testimony that funding to rehabilitation is limited. This indicates that the institution may be unable to cater for the needs of the child offender including provision of food, shelter, and especially education to children should not be underplayed. This means that funding highly influences the quality and scope of rehabilitation services. The funding concurs with Kariuki et al. (2019) who argued that human capacity and resource adequacy are crucial in determining the efficacy of rehabilitation measures. It also agrees with Besides, Mutemi (2017) and Human Rights Watch World Report (2001) provided evidence of some challenges that are evident in Kenyan correctional facilities, including shortages of food, clean water, and inadequate healthcare, further compounded by overcrowding. The lack of appropriate facilities for child offenders is not only bad for their health but also affects their rehabilitation chances.

Concerning the staff factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders, the established that the majority of study participants (70%) thought that staff factors influence the rehabilitation of child offenders in rehabilitation institutions. This illustrates the perceived significance of staff positions, training, and communication in the process of producing good rehabilitation services. On the other hand, 30% of the respondents are not convinced that the staff factors contribute significantly to the rehabilitation outcomes. This could be an indication that the other elements, such as institutional policies or facilities, might be more prominent in solving the problem, or it could be that the existing staff capabilities are considered to be good enough to deal with the issue. The results imply that both the enhancement of staff abilities and the provision of necessary assistance and support are the factors that will ensure better rehabilitation results; however, all institutional factors should be reviewed as well to identify the needs of the minority.

The participants were asked to justify how staff factors affect the rehabilitation of child offenders. Those who said 'Yes' indicated that rehabilitation is very much dependent on the professionalism of the staff and their ability to empathize and relate to the inmates on a personal level. They stressed the fact that a competent and well-trained staff is very important for the introduction of a successful rehabilitation program and its further adaptation to the specific features of individual offenders. The finding was confirmed by key informants who reported that staff is the cornerstone in rehabilitation of child offenders. The informants argued that competent and well-trained staff has a positive contribution to the rehabilitation process and vice versa. The finding was in line with Okutoyi (2015) who revealed that recruitment of personnel to the needs to incorporate training on child protection as a compulsory requirement and continuing learning as opposed to ad-hoc training. The welfare of the personnel should

also be improved including living conditions and remuneration to boost their morale in carrying out their duties of rehabilitating these children.

On facilities factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders, the majority (80%) stated that overcrowding was a significant issue, reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts by limiting personal space and increasing stress, which hampers personalized care and effective group management. On the other hand, 20% of the participants believe that facilities are not a hindrance to rehabilitation. They elaborated that effective training and robust rehabilitation methods could mitigate the challenges posed by any physical limitations of the facilities. The study also found out that the classrooms and workshops is a major problem in probation hostels. The information was corroborated by key informants who argued that classrooms and workshops are the major challenges facing the rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution.

The findings reflected the views of key informants. This finding concurs with Tiampati (2018) who established those correctional institutions faced major challenges in terms of learning facilities and that the committed juveniles were forced to share practical materials and equipment which pulled back the effectiveness rehabilitation process. The findings also supported arguments by Okutoyi (2015) who recommended that there should be increased government funding to enable the expansion of facilities, improved service delivery including sanitation, clothing, and bedding for the inmate children and the curriculum should be reviewed to include more lucrative courses like computer studies to make these children vie competitively for available jobs.

In addition, the study investigated the effect of teaching and training equipment factors on the rehabilitation of child offenders. The study established that inadequate teaching and training equipment (64%) negatively affects the rehabilitation process. When asked to elaborate, they highlighted that outdated or insufficient equipment makes it challenging to deliver educational programs and skills training effectively, which are crucial for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. This is in tandem with Mukula (2012) whose study recommended that these institutions should be equipped with modern and adequate equipment for the youthful inmates. Equip probation officers with the necessary skills to navigate digital systems.

Furthermore, the study investigated how consistency and clarity of policies and procedures affect the rehabilitation of child offenders, the study established that there is high (68%) quality and uniformity of the guidelines in the study institution. the study established that implementation of the policies, at times, was not clear or consistent, leading to confusion

and inadequate use in certain situations. They stated that besides clearer guidelines and consistent enforcement, we should also focus on better rehabilitation practices which must be fair to all child offenders. The finding emerged during all the key interview informant interviews held.

Lastly, the study examined how funding levels play a role in the rehabilitation programs at the hostels. Adequate funding is pivotal so that all aspects of rehabilitation such as personnel training, facilities, and equipment, could be adequately supported. The study established that funding for the rehabilitation institution is inadequate. The information was also reported by key informants who claimed that funding to the rehabilitation institution by the government is not enough.

Key informants argued that the institution is unable to cater for the needs of the child offender including the provision of food, shelter, and especially education to children should not be underplayed. This means that funding highly influences the quality and scope of rehabilitation services. The finding concurs with Kariuki et al. (2019) who argued that human capacity and resource adequacy are crucial in determining the efficacy of rehabilitation measures. The results of the study reveal that institutional factors significantly influence the rehabilitation outcomes for child offenders at Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel. A significant finding is that 70% of participants firmly believe that staff roles are pivotal in the rehabilitation process, emphasizing the importance of staff professionalism, training, and the ability to empathize with offenders. This finding aligns with literature emphasizing that competent and well-trained staff are essential to the success of rehabilitation programs. For instance, Okutoyi (2015) highlighted that staff training in child protection must be compulsory to ensure effective rehabilitation practices. The support from key informants further corroborates this, indicating that without adequately trained staff, the rehabilitation process would falter. This connection between staff competence and rehabilitation outcomes demonstrates a consensus within the literature on the necessity of quality personnel for effective correctional programs.

Moreover, the findings regarding facilities and equipment underscore the challenges faced in the rehabilitation environment. With 80% of respondents indicating that overcrowding limits personal space and increases stress, the results are consistent with the literature that stresses the adverse impacts of such institutional shortcomings on rehabilitation efforts (Kariuki et al., 2019; Tiampati, 2018). The findings also reveal an alarming inadequacy in teaching and training resources, noted by 64% of participants as detrimental to program delivery. This reiterates the conclusions of Mukula (2012), which recommended that institutions must be equipped with modern facilities to effectively deliver rehabilitation

programs. The lack of adequate infrastructure is a recurring theme in juvenile justice literature, where poorly maintained facilities are shown to hamper the efficacy of rehabilitation initiatives (Nkrumah et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the study's findings regarding the inconsistency and clarity of policies confirm concerns raised in the literature about the obstacles posed by rigid and outdated regulations. While 68% of participants rated the quality and uniformity of guidelines as high, the acknowledgment of gaps in implementation suggests that policies are not always applied consistently, leading to confusion. This conflicts with previous studies indicating that unclear policies can hinder effective interventions and compromise fairness in rehabilitation for child offenders (Kingori, 2015).

Finally, the aspect of funding is critical, as 86% of respondents reported inadequate funding for rehabilitation programs, echoing the literature which indicates that funding deficits limit both the quality of services and the range of programs available for juvenile offenders (Mutemi, 2017). The consensus that enhanced funding is essential for improving the rehabilitation environment aligns with findings from other studies emphasizing that adequate resources are crucial for addressing the diverse needs of child offenders (Kariuki et al., 2019). Overall, the findings support the literature's assertions that a comprehensive assessment of institutional factors is vital for understanding and improving rehabilitation processes for child offenders in Kenya, and they advocate for reforms that adapt to both contemporary challenges and evidence-based practices for more effective outcomes.

4.6 Staff-Related Factors Affecting Rehabilitation

The third objective of this study was to see how factors related to staff influence the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. This involved examining the effectiveness of the rehabilitation process, checking if there are enough staff, understanding staff attitudes towards offenders, looking at how changes in staff and their workload affect the program, and observing how staff are supervised.

4.6.1 Effectiveness of the Rehabilitation Process in reforming child offender

The study aimed to assess how the rehabilitation process affects the reform of child offenders in the probation hostel. Participants were asked if they think the rehabilitation process is crucial for changing these offenders. The results are displayed in Figure 12 showing how respondents feel about the importance of the rehabilitation process.

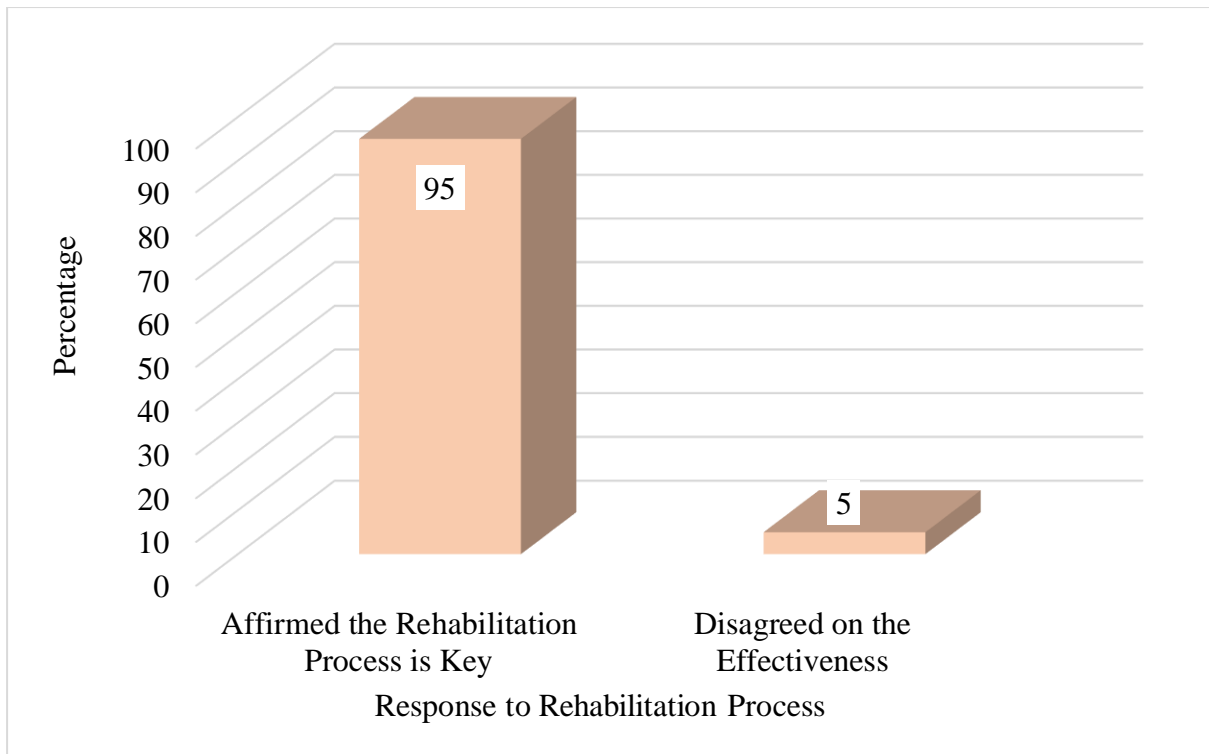


Figure 12

Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Process in Reforming Child Offender

According to the above Figure 12, a significant majority (95%) of respondents affirmed that the rehabilitation process is a key factor in reforming child offenders. This overwhelming consensus highlights the perceived effectiveness of structured rehabilitation programs, which are deemed essential for aiding offenders in their transformation and reintegration into society. Participants elaborated that these programs are critical as they provide the necessary support, education, and therapy that contribute to behavioral changes and improved social skills.

The small percentage that disagreed (5%) provided explanations that may reflect varying experiences or perceptions of the process's effectiveness. Some mentioned that while the rehabilitation programs are well-intended, limitations in resources, staffing, or individual offender responsiveness can detract from their effectiveness. This suggests an area for further investigation to understand and potentially improve the rehabilitation framework, ensuring it meets the needs of all offenders effectively. To further explore this aspect, key informants were asked about the impact of the process following rehabilitation. One key informant explained:

Excerpt Box 14

Post-Rehabilitation Process is Key Factor in Reforming Child Offenders

“The post-rehabilitation process is crucial; it determines whether the skills and behaviors learned are sustained. Continuous support and monitoring after leaving the hostel are essential. Often, without adequate follow-up, the initial benefits of rehabilitation can diminish over time, leading to recidivism”
(Male, 49 years).

The statement underscores the importance of structured follow-up procedures to reinforce the long-term success of rehabilitation efforts. Excerpt Box 14 emphasizes the critical importance of the post-rehabilitation phase in ensuring the long-term success of rehabilitation programs for child offenders. The key informant highlights that without ongoing support and monitoring after the initial rehabilitation, the gains achieved such as behavioural improvements and skill acquisition may deteriorate over time, increasing the risk of recidivism. This underscores that rehabilitation is not a one-time intervention but a continuous process that requires sustained efforts beyond the formal program.

Relating this to Figure 12, where 95% of respondents affirm that the rehabilitation process is key to reforming child offenders, it becomes evident that while initial rehabilitation is highly valued, the long-term outcomes depend heavily on follow-up support. The overwhelming consensus on the importance of rehabilitation aligns with the understanding that effective reform involves both initial intervention and ongoing support (Nguyen et al., 2020). The key informant’s emphasis on continuous support highlights a gap in many rehabilitation frameworks where follow-up procedures may be lacking or inadequately implemented.

In the broader literature, recent studies affirm that post-rehabilitation support mechanisms such as community supervision, counselling, and family involvement—are vital for maintaining behavioural change and preventing recidivism among juvenile offenders (Kumar & Singh, 2021). Without such measures, the initial success of rehabilitation programs can be short-lived, leading to the re-offense cycle. Therefore, integrating structured follow-up protocols is essential for transforming short-term behavioural improvements into sustainable change, which supports the high valuation of rehabilitation efficacy expressed by respondents in the study.

In conclusion, Excerpt Box 14 underscores that effective rehabilitation must extend beyond the immediate intervention phase, emphasizing the need for continuous, structured post-rehabilitation support to enhance long-term reform and reduce recidivism.

4.6.2 Equipping of Personnel in Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study investigated whether staff at the probation hostel is equipped to rehabilitate child offenders. Participants provided a 'Yes' or 'No' response and explained their reasoning. The results are displayed in Figure 13.

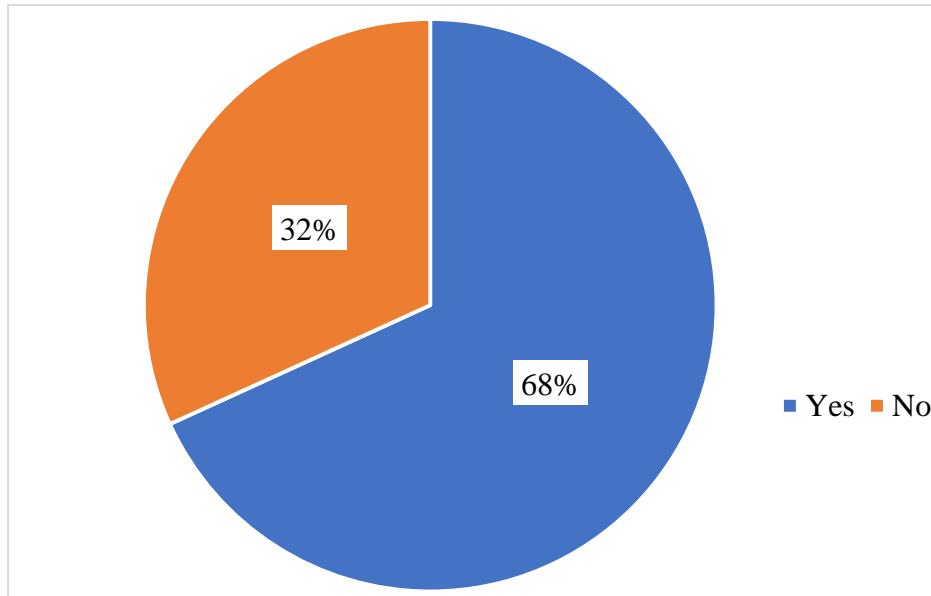


Figure 13

Personnel Equipped in Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

Figure 13 reveals that a majority of 67% of participants perceive the hostel staff as well-equipped to manage the rehabilitation of child offenders, primarily due to their ongoing training and demonstrated commitment. This suggests that staff development initiatives and professional dedication are recognized as vital components in delivering effective rehabilitation services. These findings align with recent research indicating that well-trained staff are essential for implementing evidence-based interventions and fostering positive outcomes in juvenile rehabilitation (Chen et al., 2021).

Conversely, 33% of respondents believe that the staff are inadequately prepared, citing issues such as insufficient staffing levels, lack of specialized training—especially in mental health and trauma-informed care—and inconsistent supervision. These deficiencies can lead to high workloads, burnout, and diminished quality of service delivery, which may hamper the rehabilitation process (Kumar & Singh, 2021). The literature emphasizes that staffing shortages and inadequate training are persistent challenges in juvenile justice facilities worldwide, often resulting in compromised care and increased recidivism risks (O’Neill et al., 2020). Furthermore, mental health training is increasingly recognized as critical, given the high

prevalence of psychological issues among juvenile offenders, which requires specialized intervention (Li & Wang, 2020).

The mixed perceptions reflected in Figure 14 underscore the importance of comprehensive staff development and resource allocation to ensure that personnel are adequately prepared and supported. Investing in ongoing training, mental health expertise, and appropriate staffing levels can improve service quality, enhance rehabilitation outcomes, and reduce recidivism among child offenders (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Overall, the results highlight a need for policy enhancements focused on workforce capacity building to address current gaps and optimize rehabilitation efforts within juvenile detention settings. The finding emerged during key informant interviews. In one of the key informant interviews, a key informant argued that:

Excerpt Box 15

Rehabilitation Institution Understaffed

“The rehabilitation institution is understaffed and working more than what is expected with no overtime payments. Honestly this can affect quality of service given”

(Male 39 years)

The sentiment of the key informant shows that the institution is understaffed, and this has a negative implication on rehabilitation of child offenders. Working long hours can lead to fatigue, which can decrease staff focus, burnout, which can negatively affect staff physical and mental health. The finding is in line with Taraichia (2018) who argued that work-related stress among staff in rehabilitation centres affect rehabilitation of offenders. The findings also concur with Kariuki et al. (2019) found out that there were inadequate numbers of social workers at the correctional centers in Nyeri. In addition, the correctional centers lacked qualified professionals resulting in workers being assigned diverse roles at the correctional centers as counselors, teachers and supervisors without due regard of their professional and academic qualifications.

4.6.3 Effect of Staff Attitude on Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study sought to establish the attitude of staff towards rehabilitated child offenders. According to the responses, 79% of participants argued that they have apposite attitude towards rehabilitated child offender while 21% reported that they have negative attitude

towards rehabilitated child offenders. From the findings, it is evident that staff in the study institution have a positive attitude (79%) towards rehabilitated child offenders. Participants mentioned that staff members are caring and professional, which helps create a supportive environment that builds trust and encourages offenders to engage more in the rehabilitation process.

However, some staff noted that there are areas that could be improved, such as occasional inconsistencies and personal challenges that, if addressed, could enhance their interactions with the offenders. During key informant interview, it was argued that although there are challenges in rehabilitating child offenders, staff in the study institution have positive attitude towards rehabilitated child offenders. During key informant interview, an informant reported that:

Excerpt Box 16

Staff in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel are Also Parents

“Staff in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel are also parents therefore the way they will like their children to be taken care, it is the way they are caring for child offenders in the institution. We are responsible for providing not only physical care but also emotional support and guidance to these children who may be struggling with a range of issues including addiction, sexual abuse, mental health problems to family breakdowns and trauma”
(Female, 34 years).

The sentiments show that the personnel have a good and positive attitude and acknowledge that they have personal challenges that could be attributed to motivation. This is in line with Njoka (2019) who argued that staff in rehabilitation centres in Kenya has a positive attitude towards child offenders because of the training they undergo.

4.6.4 Effect of Frequent Staff Changes on Rehabilitation Child Offenders

The study explored how frequent staff changes affect the rehabilitation of child offenders at the hostel. The study established that 68% of participants reported that frequent staff changes affect rehabilitation process while 32% of participants were of the opinion that frequent change of staff had no effect on rehabilitation of child offenders. Based on the findings, majority of participants (68%) were of the view that frequent staff changes had effect on rehabilitation of child offenders. The study established that such changes interrupt the

program's flow and consistency and make it difficult to build trust between staff and offenders, which is crucial for effective rehabilitation.

Key informants noted that regular staff turnover disrupts the rehabilitation process, as it hampers the formation of stable, trusting relationships between staff and offenders. One key informant statement was shown in Excerpt Box 17.

Excerpt Box 17

Changes Hinder the Establishment Relationship with the Offenders

“Constant changes make it hard for us to establish a relationship with the offenders, which is essential for effective guidance and mentoring. Each time a staff member leaves, we must start from scratch, which sets back the progress we've made. It's like planting seeds that never get a chance to grow”
(Female, 40 years).

The narration of the key informant above suggests that frequent staff transfer has an effect on rehabilitation of child offenders. Staff turnovers foster a disconnection of the staff from the children can disrupt the process of rehabilitation thereby impeding full rehabilitation of the children.

4.6.5 Staff Workload Factors on Rehabilitation

The study examined the influence of staff workload on the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for child offenders at the hostel. Study participants were asked to document whether the work in the rehabilitation centre is within manageable levels. Responses are given in Figure 14.

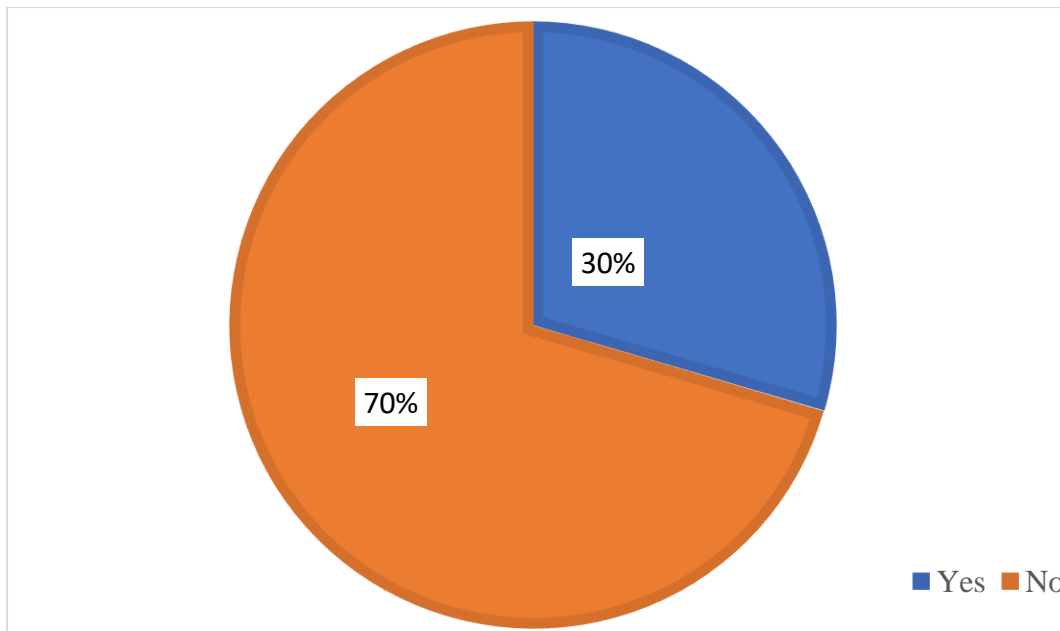


Figure 14
Level of Workload

As shown in Figure 14 indicate that 30% of research participants argued that workload for staff in the rehabilitation center is manageable while 70% of the participants asserted that the workload for staff in the institution is beyond the ability of the staff. The data depicts that the workload for the staff in the rehabilitation centre is not within the manageable level of the staff (70%). The study established that heavy workload is caused by the limited number of staff in the rehabilitation centre. The finding was confirmed by key informants who argued that the rehabilitation center has limited number of staff and therefore it is possible for the staff to work beyond the human resource stipulated working hours.

When asked how the workload affects rehabilitation of child offenders, 66% argued that high workload affects the quality of rehabilitation process while 44% were of the opinion that high workload is barrier to providing effective rehabilitation support. This shows that high workload in the study institution affects the quality of work undertaken by staff leading to ineffective rehabilitation. During a key informant interview, it was reported that:

Excerpt Box 18

Overwhelming Caseloads Affect Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

“The overwhelming caseloads staff affects rehabilitation of child offenders. The staff can’t give each child the focused attention they require. When staff are so stretched, it’s not just the offenders who suffer; staff stress levels build, reducing their ability to connect and effectively manage rehabilitation sessions”
(Male 45 years).

The assertion of the key informant above demonstrates that a high workload can potentially affect the quality and attentiveness of rehabilitation efforts. Excessive workload is a significant barrier to providing effective rehabilitation. It limits the time and energy staff can dedicate to each offender, which is crucial for their personal development and rehabilitation.

Excerpt Box 18 highlights the negative impact of overwhelming caseloads on the rehabilitation process for child offenders. The key informant explains that when staff are burdened with too many cases, they are unable to provide the focused attention each child needs, which compromises the quality of rehabilitation. Additionally, the increased workload leads to elevated stress levels among staff, impairing their capacity to establish meaningful connections with offenders and effectively deliver rehabilitation sessions. This creates a cycle where the quality of care diminishes, ultimately hindering the overall success of rehabilitation efforts.

Relating this to Figure 16, the data clearly shows that a significant majority (70%) of participants believe that staff workload exceeds manageable levels, largely due to insufficient staffing. This high workload correlates strongly with the perceived decline in rehabilitation quality, as 66% of respondents argued that workload negatively affects the rehabilitation process, and 44% viewed it as a barrier to effective support. These findings suggest that the staffing constraints directly influence the capacity of staff to deliver quality rehabilitation services, aligning with existing literature emphasizing the importance of adequate staffing for effective juvenile rehabilitation (Martins et al., 2021).

Research indicates that excessive caseloads can lead to burnout among staff, reduce their engagement, and diminish the overall effectiveness of intervention programs (Chen et al., 2020). When staff are overwhelmed, their ability to provide individualized attention, build rapport, and implement tailored interventions decreases, which can result in higher recidivism rates and poorer rehabilitation outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2021). Therefore, addressing staffing shortages and workload management is critical for improving the quality and effectiveness of juvenile rehabilitation services.

Excerpt Box 18 emphasises that overwhelming caseloads impair staff’s ability to deliver quality rehabilitation, negatively affecting outcomes for child offenders. This aligns with the study’s findings and the broader literature, emphasizing the need for adequate staffing and workload management to enhance rehabilitation success.

4.6.6 Staff Supervision and Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

This study sought to determine the level of supervision for staff in the probation hostel. One of the questions asked participants to rate the quality of leadership they receive, the scale ranged from 'Poor' to 'Excellent'. However, the majority of the staff at the hostel found the supervision 'Good'. The respondents rated the level of supervision as shown in the Table 11.

Table 11

Level of Staff Supervision in Hostels

Level of staff supervision in hostels	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	29	66
Good	11	25
Poor	4	9
Total	44	100

The findings presented in Table 11 indicate that a substantial majority of 66% of study participants perceive the level of staff supervision as excellent. An additional 25% regard supervision as good, while only 9% perceive it as poor. This distribution suggests that overall, staff supervision in the institution is viewed positively by most participants. Participants highlighted that effective supervision contributes significantly to maintaining high standards in rehabilitation and treatment programs. They noted that supervisors are generally helpful, providing clear instructions and guidance, which supports the consistent implementation of rehabilitation protocols.

These results align with recent literature emphasizing the critical role of supervision in enhancing staff performance and program quality in juvenile rehabilitation settings (Lee et al., 2020). Effective supervision has been shown to improve staff motivation, ensure adherence to treatment standards, and foster a supportive work environment (Kim & Park, 2019). When supervisors provide clear directions and constructive feedback, staff are more likely to perform their duties effectively, which in turn benefits the rehabilitation outcomes for offenders (Martínez et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the high evaluation of supervision quality correlates with findings from other studies indicating that strong supervisory practices are associated with higher staff morale and better service delivery in correctional and rehabilitative contexts (Johnson & Smith, 2022). However, it is important to note that the 9% who rated supervision as poor may represent areas where supervisory practices could be improved, such as providing more consistent feedback or training for supervisors to address specific challenges.

The positive perception of staff supervision among the majority of participants underscores the importance of effective oversight in maintaining the quality of rehabilitation programs. Ensuring continued support and development for supervisors can further enhance the standards of care and rehabilitation effectiveness in such institutions.

This was confirmed by key informants who argue that the management of Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel takes rehabilitation work seriously. They closely supervise staff duties to ensure that work is done as required. During a key informant interview, an informant assertion was as shown in Excerpt Box 19.

Excerpt Box 19

Staff Supervision is Essential for Quality Work

“For quality work, staff supervision is essential. The management of Kimumu Boys Probation Hostels supervise their staff closely to ensure that work is done accordingly”
(Female, 34 years).

According to the sentiments of the key informant above, it is evident that staff supervision is close to ensure that rehabilitation of child offenders is optimum. This is likely to have high impact in the rehabilitation of child offenders.

The excerpt in Box 19 underscores the critical role of staff supervision in ensuring quality work within rehabilitation institutions. The female key informant emphasizes that close supervision by management at Kimumu Boys Probation Hostels is fundamental to ensuring that staff adhere to their duties and maintain high standards in rehabilitating child offenders. This perspective aligns with the quantitative findings in Table 11, where 66% of participants rated staff supervision as excellent, suggesting that, overall, supervision is perceived positively and likely contributes to effective rehabilitation outcomes.

While the majority of respondents (66%) perceive supervision as excellent, the data also reveal that 26% believe improvements are warranted through more personalized support

and consistent feedback. This indicates that, although current supervision practices are generally effective, there is recognition among staff for the need to enhance the quality of supervision further. The 9% who rated supervision as poor highlight that some areas require targeted interventions to address specific gaps. The qualitative insights from the key informant reinforce the importance of close supervision, which appears to be a contributing factor to the overall positive perception. However, the identified need for more tailored support and monitoring suggests that supervision quality can be further optimized to enhance staff performance and, consequently, the rehabilitation process.

Recent literature supports the importance of personalized supervision and ongoing feedback in improving staff performance and rehabilitation outcomes. Nguyen et al. (2021) emphasize that regular, individualized feedback fosters staff development, motivation, and adherence to best practices, which are vital for effective rehabilitation programs. Similarly, Chen et al. (2020) argue that tailored supervision approaches enhance staff engagement and accountability, ultimately leading to better client outcomes. These studies highlight that while current supervision practices are beneficial, implementing more targeted and personalized supervisory strategies could strengthen staff performance and service quality in rehabilitation settings.

Addressing the concerns raised particularly by the 26% of staff who feel supervision could be more personalized could lead to significant improvements in staff motivation, competence, and overall service delivery. Introducing structured feedback mechanisms and individualized support plans would not only foster a more engaged and skilled workforce but also improve the rehabilitation outcomes for child offenders. Such enhancements align with best practices in correctional and rehabilitative settings, promoting continuous staff development and high-quality care. Overall, refining supervision approaches based on these insights can contribute to more effective and sustainable rehabilitation programs within such institutions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the study's summary, conclusions, and recommendations that are based on the findings of the study. The chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the key findings of the study, followed by the conclusions drawn from the analysis. It also offers practical recommendations aimed at addressing the identified issues and enhancing the rehabilitation process for child offenders in probation hostels in Eldoret. The purpose of this chapter is to synthesize the study's insights, reflect on their implications, and suggest actionable steps for stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners to improve the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. By consolidating the research outcomes, this chapter aims to contribute to the ongoing efforts to promote better rehabilitation practices and support the reintegration of child offenders into society.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The results of the study are summarized below in accordance with the study objectives.

5.2.1 Operational Policy Factors Influencing the Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The first objective of this study was to examine the operational policy factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. The study established that policies governing the conduct of staff and child offenders are rigid (77%). This was because rules and regulations are too restrictive and do not permit the kind of flexibility that has to be employed to deal with the wide range of complex problems and situations associated with each child offender. These children often find themselves in a cascade of ineffective and inefficient rehabilitation procedures.

The study revealed that existing policies have not influenced the rehabilitation process (86%). This is because the bureaucratic nature of the policies hinders the rehabilitation of child offenders in the study institution. The bureaucratic processes often postpone the adoption of rehabilitation measures that are needed, as confirmed by the respondents. Participants expressed the frustration that it took to go through these bureaucratic procedures, which time could be used with the offenders in rehabilitation activities.

The study also established that there are issues (56%) that policy issues with child admission and rehabilitation of child offenders in rehabilitation institutions of study. The study established that staff are worried about the current admission policies at the probation hostel. They pointed out that too much conformity and old-fashioned rules often cause delays in getting the help that child offenders need quickly. On how legal rules affect the way the

probation hostel is run, the study established that existing rules and regulations affect the running of the hostel negatively (68%). The study revealed that there are significant issues with the policies that need to be addressed. The findings also revealed that poor implementation of laws and policies (31%), is the major reason for unconformity to the laws and regulations in the study institution. The finding was confirmed by key informants who reported that the way laws and policies are implemented in the study institution hinder conformity to the laws and regulations.

5.2.2 Institutional Factors that Influence the Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The study sought to investigate how various institutional factors affect the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. The study established that staff factors (70%) influence the rehabilitation of child offenders in rehabilitation institutions. The study established that majority (80%) of participants stated that overcrowding was a significant issue, reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts by limiting personal space and increasing stress, which hampers personalized care and effective group management.

In addition, the study established that inadequate teaching and training equipment (64%) negatively affects the rehabilitation process. When asked to elaborate, they highlighted that outdated or insufficient equipment makes it challenging to deliver educational programs and skills training effectively, which are crucial for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The study also established that there is high (68%) quality and uniformity of the guidelines in the study institution. The study established that implementation of the policies, at times, was not clear or consistent, leading to confusion and inadequate use in certain situations. They stated that besides clearer guidelines and consistent enforcement, we should also focus on better rehabilitation practices which must be fair to all child offenders. The study examined how funding levels play a role in the rehabilitation programs at the hostels.

5.2.3 Staff-Related Factors Affecting Rehabilitation of Child Offenders

The third objective of this study was to investigate how factors related to staff affect the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. The study established that rehabilitation process is a key factor in reforming child offenders (95%). This overwhelming consensus highlights the perceived effectiveness of structured rehabilitation programs, which are deemed essential for aiding offenders in their transformation and reintegration into society. The study established that these programs are critical as they provide the necessary support, education, and therapy that contribute to behavioral changes and improved social skills. The study also revealed that the staff at the hostel is well-equipped to handle the rehabilitation

of child offenders (67%). The study attributed this capability to the staff's ongoing training and commitment, which they say are crucial for effectively supporting rehabilitation.

In addition, study established that staff in the study institution has a positive attitude (79%) towards rehabilitated child offenders. That staff members are caring and professional, which helps create a supportive environment that builds trust and encourages offenders to engage more in the rehabilitation process. Furthermore, the study established that 68% of participants reported that frequent staff changes affect rehabilitation process while 32% of participants were of the opinion that frequent change of staff had no effect on rehabilitation of child offenders. Based on the findings, majority of participants (68%) were of the view that frequent staff changes had effect on rehabilitation of child offenders. The study established that such changes interrupt the program's flow and consistency and make it difficult to build trust between staff and offenders, which is crucial for effective rehabilitation.

The study established that work in the rehabilitation centre is within manageable levels (70%). The study established that the workload for the staff in the rehabilitation centre is not within the manageable level of the staff. The study established that heavy workload is caused by the limited number of staff in the rehabilitation centre. The established that high workload affects the quality of rehabilitation process. This shows that high workload in the study institution affects the quality of work undertaken by staff leading to ineffective rehabilitation. Excessive workload is a significant barrier to providing effective rehabilitation. It limits the time and energy staff can dedicate to each offender, which is crucial for their personal development and rehabilitation. On the effect of staff supervision on rehabilitation of child offenders the established that when staff are well-supervised and instructed in their duties. Participants observed that supervisors are, in most cases, helpful and give clear directions that maintain the standard of rehab-treatment programs.

5.3 Conclusions

The following are the empirical and theoretical conclusions of the study:

5.3.1 Empirical Conclusions

The operational policy factors show that the rigid and inflexible policies are the main obstacle to the customization of the rehabilitation programs to the individual needs of the child offenders. Certain staff reports indicate that the strict rules and bureaucratic procedures prevent them from being able to deal with complex rehabilitation needs effectively and cause delays in essential interventions.

Regarding the institutional factors, the condition of the facilities, the amount of equipment, and the funding levels are the key factors that influence the rehabilitation process.

The major challenges of overcrowding, outdated equipment, and lack of funds are the ones that hinder the quality and effectiveness of rehabilitation services, which shows the requirement of the structural improvements in these areas.

The success of the rehabilitation programs is mostly based on the staffs' adequacy, their attitudes towards offenders, and the stability of their positions. The high staff turnover and the insufficient training are the major problems that are causing the disruption of the rehabilitation process. Staff attitudes and professional interactions are the determining factors of a positive working environment, which is the key to the successful rehabilitation of child offenders. Besides, the management of staff workload and the supervision of the staff are the key components to the successful delivery of the rehabilitation services.

5.3.2 Theoretical Conclusions

The results of this study are presented in the frame of the Relapse Prevention Theory (RPT) which is based on the cognitive-behavioral model that concentrates on the prevention of relapse through the development of the skills to deal with the high-risk situations. This theory was the turning point in the research of the rehabilitation process in the probation hostels for child offenders. The research supports the RPT by showing that the success of the rehabilitation programs is strongly related to the staff's capacity to give the offenders adaptive coping skills. These skills are the key to the successful management of the internal and external problems that the offenders face on the way of return to the society.

The findings highlighted that the shortage of staff training, the lack of resources, and the rigid institutional policies can prevent the acquisition and application of these skills which are necessary for the rehabilitated offenders and thus the rates of relapse will be high. This is in line with RPT's focus on the fact that well-organized, well-equipped, and flexible learning environments are the main factors in the maintenance of behavior changes over time. Thus, expanding the staff, optimizing the resource allocation, and changing the restrictive policies in probation hostels are the vital steps to strengthen the rehabilitation process and to prevent the offenders from relapsing, following the RPT principles.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, this study makes the following recommendations based on the study objectives:

- i. To make the rehabilitation programs more customized to the unique needs of child offenders, it is advised that probation hostels carry out a thorough review and revision of the existing policies. This process should include the modification of the inflexible rules that at present limit the adaptability of the

rehabilitation strategies. Through the integration of flexibility in the policy frameworks, staff can more easily deal with the multifaceted and diverse needs of offenders and thus, the rehabilitation efforts will be more effective. Involving the frontline staff in the policy reform process can make sure that changes are realistic and directly related to the real problems of the daily operations.

- ii. The problem of overcrowding and the obsolete facilities needs to be solved; therefore, the probation hostels should be encouraged to expand and modernize their infrastructure. This should be about the creation of new living and therapeutic spaces and the upgrade of the existing facilities to the current standards of safety and functionality. The improvement of the facilities will not only make the life of the offenders more comfortable but also the delivery of rehabilitation programs will be more effective. Such advancements should be backed up by the increase in government funding and maybe the partnership with the private sectors or the non-governmental organizations that are committed to the juvenile justice reform.
- iii. To improve the efficiency of the staff in managing child offenders, it is suggested that probation hostels should establish a structured and continuous professional development program. This program should be designed to train the staff in specialized rehabilitation techniques, crisis management, and psychological support. Besides, the program should also have a system of regular assessment and feedback to check the progress and to modify the training to the new needs. The staff training will make them more competent and self-assured in the tough situations, thus, the quality of the rehabilitation services and the outcome for the child offenders will be improved.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

The study explored operational policy, institutional, and staff-related factors affecting the rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels. Based on the findings, further research is recommended in the following areas:

- i. The future research should be on the long-term effects of policy reforms on the rehabilitation outcomes of child offenders. Thus, this would entail the examination of the impact of the changes in policy flexibility and the reduction of bureaucratic procedures on the adaptability and effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs over time. Such research can give more details on the

reliability of the policy improvements and their real effect on the decrease of the recidivism among child offenders.

- ii. More research should be conducted to determine how the different levels of facility resources, such as space, equipment, and funding, influence the success of the rehabilitation programs in the various probation hostels. Comparing facilities with different resources can show the most important factors that are necessary for the success of the rehabilitation and can direct the improvements to the under-resourced facilities.
- iii. There is a requirement for in-depth research to evaluate the efficiency of various staff training programs in improving the skills needed for the management of child offenders. This study could compare the different training models to find out which are the most effective in boosting the skills of the staff, reducing the turnover, and finally improving the rehabilitation process. Research could also be carried out on the effect of the continuous professional development and support systems on staff performance and satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of introduction

Dear Respondent,

Subject: Introduction and Request for Participation in Research Study

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Ondari Deborah Sheila, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Egerton University. As part of my academic research, I am conducting a study titled "*Factors Affecting Rehabilitation of Child Offenders in Probation Hostels in Kenya: A Case Study of Kimumu Boys' Probation Hostel, Eldoret Town, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.*" The purpose of this study is to gather valuable insights into the various factors influencing the rehabilitation process of child offenders residing in probation hostels. Your experiences and perspectives are crucial for understanding these dynamics, and I have selected you as a respondent due to your involvement and expertise in this area. I kindly request a small amount of your time to participate in a brief interview where I will ask you a few questions related to the rehabilitation of child offenders. Your honest and candid responses will be vital in helping me comprehend the challenges and opportunities within the rehabilitation framework in your hostel.

Please be assured that any information you share will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Your identity will remain anonymous, as you will not be required to disclose your name during or after the interview. The data collected will solely be used for academic purposes and will significantly contribute to improving rehabilitation practices for child offenders in our community. If you agree to participate, please let me know a suitable time for us to meet for the interview. I greatly appreciate your consideration and willingness to contribute to this important research.

Thank you.

Ondari Deborah Sheila.

Appendix II: Interview Schedule

1. Gender
2. Education level
3. Age
4. Specialization
5. Department
6. How long have you worked in this hostel (in years)? -----

PART B: Operational policy factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels.

7. What's your experience on enforcing hence impeding efforts to rehabilitate child offenders?
8. Which policy impede efforts to rehabilitate child offenders?
9. As staff rehabilitating child, how are policies affecting rehabilitation process of child offenders in this hostel?
10. Are there policy issues in admission of child offenders in this hostel?

Yes [] No []

Explain your answer-----

In line with policies, is handling of child offenders a factor offenders affecting rehabilitation of child offenders?

Yes [] No []

If yes, how?

11. How does the legal framework governing the management of probation hostels a factor affecting this probation hostel?

Kindly explain.

12. In 1 (one) up to 10 (ten) how do you rate monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation programs in this probation hostel?

1[] 2 [] 3[] 4[] 5[] 6[] 7[] 8[] 9[] 10[]

PART C: Institutional factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels

13. As a staff in this probation hostel, is staff a factor affecting rehabilitation of children?

Yes [] No []

Explain your answer-----

.....

14. According to you, are facilities in this institution a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this hostel?

Yes [] No []

Explain your answer-----

15. Are teaching and training equipment a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this hostel? Yes [] No []

Kindly elaborate-----

16. Are policies and procedures consistent and clear in this probation hostel?

.....
.....

17. How is funding a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this hostel?

Kindly explain-----

PART D: Staff related factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels

18. Is the process of rehabilitating child offenders a factor in reforming them?

Yes [] No []

Elaborate your answer-----

19. In your opinion, are personnel adequate to handle child offenders' rehabilitation?

Yes [] No []

Explain your answer-----

a) How do you rate staff attitude towards child offenders in this hostel?

Poor [] Fair [] Good [] Excellent []

Explain your answer-----

20. How are frequent changes of staff members affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this hostel?

21. How is staff workload a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this hostel?

22. How do you rate staff supervision in this hostel?

Poor [] Fair [] Good [] Excellent []

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix III: Key Informants Interview Guide

1. What is your position and in this institution?

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2. What is your role in relation to rehabilitating child offenders in this hostel?

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3. How are policies a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this probation hostel?

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4. As an expert, how are staff a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this institution?

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5. Are teaching and training equipment's a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this probation hostel?

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6. In line with policies of the Government of Kenya, is handling of child offenders a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels?

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7. In what way is the process after rehabilitation of child offenders a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this probation hostel?

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8. Is the process of rehabilitating child offenders a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this probation hostel?

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.....

9. In your opinion, are teaching and training a factor affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in this probation hostel?

.....
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.....







10. How do you rate Psychosocial Support of child offenders in this hostel?

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Thank you for your time and cooperation.

END

Appendix IV: NACOSTI Research License

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 863986	Date of Issue: 11/December/2023
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Ms.. DEBORAH SHEILA ONDARI of Egerton University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Uasin-Gishu on the topic: Factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya, A case study of Kimumu Boys probation hostel, Eldoret town for the period ending : 11/December/2024.</p>	
License No: NACOSTI/P/23/31661	
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Applicant Identification Number	Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Proceed. 04/12/23 	For: COUNTY COMMISSIONER UASIN GISHU COUNTY
	Verification QR Code
	
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See overleaf for conditions	

Appendix V: Research Authorization Letter from Uasin Gishu County Education Directorate



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department for Basic Education**

Email: cdeuasingishucounty@gmail.com
: cdeuasingishucounty@yahoo.com

When replying please quote:

County Director of Education,
Uasin Gishu County,
P.O. Box 9843-30100,
ELDORET.

Ref: No. MOE/UGC/TRN/9/VOLL.V/91


14TH DECEMBER, 2023

Ms. Deborah Sheila Ondari
Egerton University,
P.O BOX 536
EGERTON.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.

In reference to your License Ref no. **NACOSTI/P/23/31661** dated 11th December, 2023 from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), you are hereby granted the authority to carry out research on "**Factors affecting rehabilitation of child offenders in probation hostels in Kenya, A case study of Kimumu Boys probation hostel, Eldoret town " Period Ending 11th December, 2024,**" Within Uasin Gishu County.

We take this opportunity to wish you well during this data collection.


Andrew Mibei.
For: County Director of Education
UASIN GISHU.

**FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
UASIN GISHU COUNTY
P O Box 9843 - 30100, ELDORET**

Appendix VI: Abstract of Publication

Institutional Policy Barriers to Juvenile Rehabilitation: A Case Study of Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel, Kenya

Ondari Deborah Sheila, Kibet Ngetich, Samwel Auya

Abstract: The existing literature on juvenile rehabilitation programs in Kenya has largely focused on the general effectiveness of rehabilitation strategies, the psychosocial needs of child offenders, and the challenges faced by institutions in implementing juvenile justice policies. However, there remains a notable research gap concerning the specific operational policy factors that influence the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts within juvenile correctional facilities, particularly at the institutional level. Limited empirical evidence exists on how the rigidity or flexibility of operational policies directly impacts the rehabilitation process and reintegration success among child offenders. This paper aims to address this gap by investigating the institutional policy barriers that influence the rehabilitation of child offenders: the case of Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel Kenya. Sample population was the 44 staff members in Kimumu Boys Probation Hostel and 11 key stakeholders which included county secretary for social services, a county children department head, county probation department head, two manager heads of Kimumu boy's junior, two manager heads boy's senior, four probation officers based at the hostel and two children department officers. Mixed methods approach was used to collect data through interviews and key informant discussions and analyzed via thematic and descriptive techniques. Findings reveal that a significant proportion of staff (77%) perceive current policies as rigid, and 86% believe these policies hinder effective rehabilitation. Additionally, 56% of respondents identified policy issues related to child admission and rehabilitation procedures as barriers to successful reintegration. The paper highlights that inflexible operational policies limit the customization of rehabilitation efforts, thereby reducing their effectiveness. It concludes that reviewing and revising existing policies to accommodate the diverse needs of child offenders could enhance rehabilitation outcomes. The paper recommends policy reforms aimed at making operational guidelines more flexible and responsive to individual rehabilitation requirements, ultimately facilitating better reintegration of child offenders into society.