

**IMPACT OF CHALLENGES OF IMPEDED PARENTHOOD ON REFORMATION
OF OFFENDERS: A CASE STUDY OF EMBU PRISON, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Criminology and Criminal Justice of Egerton University**

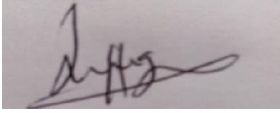
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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my uncle, Mr. Private Gwoswar and his family, my mum, Joyce Akinyi and my fiancée, Hendricah N. Misiko, who have encouraged and supported me throughout my study period despite the challenges.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the challenges of impeded parenthood and its impacts on the reformation of offenders, in Embu Prison, Kenya. It was necessitated by the fact that challenges of impeded (hindered) parenthood cause worries and stress which affect reformation of the imprisoned parents who constitute a significant prison population. However, there is no research on the impact of these parenthood challenges on the reformation of the imprisoned parents. The specific objectives of the study were threefold: to examine the parenthood challenges prisoners face during imprisonment, to analyse how prisoners cope with parenthood challenges, to assess prisoners' coping mechanisms and prison's control strategies of parenthood challenges that impact reformation at Embu prison. This study was guided by the cultural transmission theory, reformative theory and rational choice theory. The study adopted a case study design in which a sample of 132 inmates serving long-term sentences (more than 3 years) and who have children aged below 17 years, and five key informants purposefully identified and selected to participate in the study. Interview schedule and questionnaire were the instruments for data collection. Data analysis was done with the help of STATA. Analysed data was presented in frequency tables and percentages. The findings of this study indicate that prisoners who are parents of children below 17 years face a lot of challenges such as stigma 87.5% from relatives their children live with, lack of visits by their children, lack of parental control over their children and victimization of their children. Analysis of the coping mechanisms of imprisoned parents established that 95.2% of them try to be good parents, they offer counseling their children, and they attend religious gatherings. The study found out that prison challenges resulted in stress and worries among imprisoned parents, which had adverse effects on their reformation. This current study established a number of strategies by the prison administration for controlling parenthood challenges: allowing frequent and regular visits by prisoners' children, more but controlled phone calls by inmates and parenting programmes would facilitate reformation of imprisoned parents. This study, therefore, recommends that more reformation programmes should be introduced at the prison. Also, an environment where reformation would easily be acceptable to the imprisoned parents needs to be created as part of the initiatives of the larger spectrum of reformation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	II
COPYRIGHT	III
DEDICATION	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
ABSTRACT.....	VI
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
LIST OF TABLES	XII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	XIV
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	5
1.3.1 Broad Objective	5
1.3.2 Specific Objectives.....	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Justification of the Study.....	6
1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	7
1.7 Definition of Key Terms	8
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Parenthood Challenges and the Prisoners’ Reformation.....	9
2.3 Prisoners’ Coping Mechanisms and Reformation	14
2.4 Prisoners’ Parenthood Challenges and Reformation	16
2.5 Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges and Reformation	18

2.6 Theoretical Framework	21
2.6.1 Cultural Transmission Theory	21
2.6.2 Reformation Theory of Punishment	22
2.6.3 Rational Choice Theory	23
2.6.4 Synthesis of the three Theories	24
2.7 Conceptual Framework	25
CHAPTER THREE	28
METHODOLOGY.....	28
3.1 Introduction	28
3.2 Research Design	28
3.3 Study Area.....	28
3.4 Target Population.....	30
3.5 Unit Of Analysis	30
3.6 Sampling Procedure And Sample Size	30
3.7 Data Collection Methods	31
3.8 Data Analysis	32
3.9 Ethical Considerations	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	33
4.1 Introduction	33
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	33
4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents	33
4.2.2 Level of Education of the Respondents	33
4.2.3 Age Range of Respondents.....	34
4.3 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners at Embu Prison.....	35
4.3.1 Uncertainty about Children’s Caregivers	35
4.3.2 Challenge of Imprisoned Parents’ Visits by their Children.....	35
4.3.4 Social Stigma towards Prisoners	36
4.3.5 Nature of Prisoners Experienced Stigma	36
4.3.6 Challenge of Control Over their Children	37

4.3.7 Prisoner's Opinion on Improving the Situation	37
4.3.8 Effect of Parental Absence from Home on their Children	38
4.3.9 Children's Stigma.....	38
4.3.10 Children's Reaction to Stigmatization.....	39
4.3.11 Child's/Children's Victimization	39
4.3.12 Nature of Victimization	40
4.3.13 Effect of Imprisonment on Parent-Child Relationship	41
4.3.14 Proportion of Children's Delinquent Activities	41
4.4 Challenges Faced by Parent Prisoners and their Reformation	42
4.4.1 Children's Absence and Reformation	42
4.4.2 Effects of Child's/Children's Absence and Reformation	43
4.4.3 Prisoners' Regular Communication with Children and Reformation	44
4.4.4 Lack of Regular Communication with Child/Children	44
4.4.5 Prisoner's Parental Control on their Children and Reformation.....	45
4.5 Coping Mechanisms with Parenthood Challenges and Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation.....	46
4.5.1 Trying to be Good Parents while in the Prison	46
4.5.2 Ways of Practicing Good Parenting	46
4.5.3 Prisoners' Involvement in their Child/Children's Lives and Affairs	47
4.5.4 Ways of Prisoners' Involvement in their Child/Children's Lives and Affairs.	47
4.5.5 Friendliness to Child/Children.....	48
4.5.6 Prisoner's Manner of Friendliness to their Children.....	48
4.5.7 Prisoner's Religiosity	49
4.5.8 Effects of Prisoners' Religiosity	49
4.5.9 Changing the Prisoner Identity to a Good Parent Identity.....	50
4.5.10 Changing Prisoner Identity to a Good Parent Identity	50
4.5.11 Self-blame	51
4.5.12 Prisoners' Opinion of Re-jail	52
4.5.13 Regular Visits by the Prisoner's Children and Reformation	52
4.5.14 Importance of Children's Frequent Visits their Imprisoned Parents.....	53
4.5.15 Importance of Parent-child Communication.....	53
4.5.16 Parenting Programs in the Prison	54

4.6 Discussion	55
4.6.1 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners that Affect Reformation.....	55
4.6.2 Parenting Prisoners’ Challenges Faced and Reformation.....	57
4.6.3 Prisoners’ Coping Mechanisms and Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation	57
CHAPTER FIVE.....	60
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Summary of Findings.....	60
5.2.1 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners at Embu Prison	60
5.2.2 Impacts of the Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners on Reformation.....	61
5.2.3 Prisoners’ Coping Mechanisms and Strategies by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation	62
5.3 Conclusions	63
5.3.1 Theoretical Conclusions	63
5.3.2 Empirical Conclusions.....	63
5.4 Recommendations.....	64
5.4.1 Policy Recommendations	64
5.4.2 Areas for Further Research	64
REFERENCES.....	66
APPENDICES.....	73
Appendix I: Questionnaire for Imprisoned Parents.....	73
Appendix II: Interview Guide for Key Informants	82
Appendix III: Research Authorisation Letter by KPS.....	85
Appendix IV: Research Authorisation Letter by NACOSTI.....	86
Appendix V: Research Permits	87
Appendix VI: Published Papers Abstract	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework	27
Figure 3. 1: Map of Kenya Locating Embu County and the Study Area	29

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents	33
Table 4.2: Level of Education of the Respondents	34
Table 4.3: Age Range of Respondents	34
Table 4.4: Children’s Caregivers	35
Table 4.5: Frequency of Prison Visits	36
Table 4.6: Stigma Experience	36
Table 4.7: Nature of Stigma Experienced	37
Table 4.8: Prisoners Control Over Child/Children	37
Table 4.9: Prisoners’ Opinion on Improving the Situation	38
Table 4.10: Effect of Parental Absence on their Child/Children.	38
Table 4.11: Child Stigmatization	39
Table 4.12: Children’s Reaction to Stigmatization	39
Table 4.13: Whether prisoners’ Child/Children /have Been Victimized	40
Table 4.14: Nature of Victimization	40
Table 4.15: Effect of Imprisonment and Parent-Child Relationship	41
Table 4.16: Percentage of Children in Delinquent Activities	42
Table 4.17: Effect of Lack of Regular Contact on Reformation	42
Table 4.18: Effects of Child’s/Children’s Absence and Reformation	44
Table 4.19: Negative Impacts of Lack of Regular Communication with Child/Children and Reformation	44
Table 4.20: Effects of Lack of Regular Communication on Prisoners	45
Table 4.21: Prisoner’ Lack of Control on their Children and Reformation	45
Table 4.22: Response on Being a Good Parents while in the Prison	46
Table 4.23: Ways of Practicing Good Parenting	47
Table 4.24: Prisoners’ Involvement in their Child/Children’s Lives and Affairs	47
Table 4.25: Ways of Prisoners’ Involvement in their Child/Children’s Lives and Affairs.....	48
Table 4.26: Friendliness to Child/Children	48
Table 4.27: Prisoner’s Manner of Friendliness to their Children	49
Table 4.28: Prisoners’ Religious Meetings Attendance	49
Table 4.29: Effects of Prisoners’ Religiosity.....	50
Table 4.30: Willingness to Change	50
Table 4.31: Prisoners’ Identity Change to a Good Parent Identity	51
Table 4.32: Self-blame for Imprisonment	51

Table 4.33: Prisoners' Opinion of Re-jail	52
Table 4.34: Controlling Parenthood Challenges in Prison	53
Table 4.35: Importance of Children's Frequent Visits.....	53
Table 4.36: How Phone Calls Control Parenting Challenges.....	54
Table 4.37: Importance of Parenting Programs in the Prison.....	55

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Prisons
GK	Government of Kenya
KPS	Kenya Prison Service
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations
PRI	Penal Reform International
RCT	Rational Choice Theory
SCCYP	Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People
SPSS	Statistical Packages for Social Sciences
US	United States
VACRO	Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Punishment for those who defy the norms in the society has changed from bad in the ancient times when it was guided by an ‘eye for an eye’ philosophy to worse in the modern times in which harsher penalties are handed down to offenders. In most countries today, the worst sentence like the death penalty, is being commuted and replaced with a life sentence (Mushanga, 1976). Before this, death sentence and other harsh forms of punishments like corporal punishment were used as a penalty meted out on offenders and this continues even today by some countries. However, the feeling of humanness has made a lot of impact on how offenders all over the world are treated by the correctional systems today. More emphasis is being put on rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners. Despite that, East (1947) noted that the prison cannot be considered as the start and end of treatment of the offender. It needs to be taken as a hospital in the correctional system in which, through an understanding of the problems involved, a model, and model alone, of reformation may be initiated for the usage of the agencies of community for supervision after release from prison.

Norway is one of the countries that have improved prisons conditions through reforms which have resulted in low recidivism rate compared to many developed countries (Dreisinger, 2017; Mallinder, 2015). In Norway, for instance, there is no life sentence or death sentence. The maximum sentence is 21 years except in cases of preventative detention. Their philosophy is to reform a neighbour. So, Norwegian prisons are where prisoners are treated with utmost care the way one would treat a good neighbour (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2019). This is one example among many that have informed reform efforts in the prison where the welfare of prisoners is increasingly being taken into consideration. This, in the long run, enhances the individual dignity of the inmates, a factor which is crucial in their personal reformation processes. This humanness in the context of facilitating parenting among the prisoners at Embu prison is the gap that this study is seeking to fill. In a bid to reform the prisoners at Embu prison, a lot of efforts have been put. One such effort is vocational training at the institution which would go a long way in equipping the prisoners with skills that would enable them to eke a living thereby not recidivating to earn a living.

The prison performs the role of deterring offenders from committing more crimes in the society. They punish the offenders by curtailing some of their rights; incapacitate them by

separating them from the public where they are free and reform them through counseling and training. However, experiences have shown that imprisonment as a punishment has provided environments where the prisoners perfect their criminality rather than being reformed (Gendreau et al., 1999; Kagendo, 2003). This fact justifies a closer look at some of the probable causes of this situation. A factor like 'impeded parenthood' may also exacerbate this situation. Most of the offenders in the prison are parents who have children and other dependents they fended for in their families prior to imprisonment. Upon their imprisonment, a lot of challenges start in the family that more often affect the reformation processes of the parenting offenders both within the prison and outside the prison. Although prisons world over have been enabling and on the other hand controlling parenting among inmates, parenthood among prisoners is still dogged with many challenges (Jensen & DuDeck-Biondo, 2005). One such parenthood challenge is impeded parenthood at the prison of which many inmates have become victims.

Family connections are important since they give people a sense of belonging, safety, identity, and comfort. This is also true for the prisoners since family relationships can influence the reformation process of the prisoners by providing a safe reentry from prison through aiding the ex-convicts monetarily and helping them to get jobs. It is only through strong family ties between the parent prisoners and their families that their children are taken care of, and given security which may give peace to the affected prisoners hence impacting their reformation positively. Research has shown that a significant amount of distress midst imprisoned women is an effect of separation from family and children. These imprisoned mothers have reported feelings of anxiety, sadness, anger, shame, depression, guilt, reduced self-image and a sense of loss as a result of separation from their children (Keaveny & Zauszniewski, 1999; Pennix, 1999; Young & Smith, 2000). However, no study has been done on the possible effects of these challenges on the reformation of imprisoned parents. Again, most of these studies on parenting among the prisoners have focused more on mothers than fathers. This shows a need for an all-inclusive study that will factor in fathers. This is a gap that this research sought to fill.

Studies have shown that prisoners who have been visited are less likely to re-offend a year after release (May et al., 2008). Moreover, sustained relationships between the family and the inmate help to diffuse the tensions in the relationships, lower the risk of disruption and ensure prisoner's effective reentry into the family and society. In this situation, parenthood is crucial in that it may create an important status of personality that substitutes offender status (Meek, 2011). Parenthood, then turns into an important reason which accounts for what motivated the

offenders and why they have reformed.

Most often, the social impact of imprisonment can be too damaging, especially on children and on its role in propagating inequity (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2011). Shame and stigma associated with the imprisonment of a parent or any other member of the family have always caused such families to hide their predicament. Furthermore, ex-convicts are mostly rejected socially with very few people ready to help or associate with them. According to Fritsch and Burkhead (1981), children of the imprisoned parents rarely receive sympathy from the society unlike children facing other different forms of separation from their parents like death, divorce, separation or hospitalization. In this situation, the imprisoned parents may get overwhelmed by worries about the hardships that their children face as a result of their own sins and turn to drug abuse as a coping mechanism while still in prison; thus, hindering their reformation process.

On the contrary, the social identity that parenthood imparts to offenders with children gives them a resilient commitment to shared objectives and optimism about the future. They hence tend to have reduced recidivism tendencies (Maruna, 2001). This situation can only be attributed to imprisoned parents at the correctional institutions where there are effective parenting-oriented programmes which lack in many prisons. According to Shamaï and Kochal (2008), some incarcerated mothers derive their hope for continued existence from their parenthood, which helps them to lessen the negative effects of being inmates on parenthood and children. This shows why the lack of contact or inadequate contact between imprisoned parents and their children can have such a negative impact on the reformation of such prisoners.

In the United States, an alarming statistic from the Department of Justice in 2005 showed that the ratio of the prisoners to those not imprisoned was 1 to 136 (Harrison & Beck, 2006). With the growth of the prison populations, more children are continually condemned to grappling with and suffering the unintended consequences of their parents' sins and parental imprisonment. Some of the challenges that children face due to parents' imprisonment include difficulties in school, stress and behavioral hitches (Reed & Reed, 1997). For such children, the situation increases their chances of later coming into contact with the criminal justice system (Will et al., 2005). The knowledge of the children's suffering outside the prison also affects their imprisoned parents. As a result, this situation, in the long run, may affect the reformation of these inmates. However, no research has gone beyond the effects of parental

imprisonment on children to how these effects affect the reformation of imprisoned parents.

In another study in the US, the number of children whose parents were serving imprisonment sentences in the period between 2011 and 2012 alone were 5.1 million (Cassey Foundation, 2016). In cases where a mother is imprisoned, her removal from the family and from the life of her child always seriously disturbs the life of the imprisoned mother so much because of the role of motherhood and the societal expectation of women according to how they should behave in the society, unlike the paternal removal from the family where in most times fathers do not live with their children prior to the imprisonment or leave their wives behind to care for the children. Due to hindered motherhood, the distress about the welfare of their children are compounded. To enable effective reformation, mothers may need more contact with their children while in prison which would, in the long run, help the prison itself in its reformation agenda.

A study on children who saw their parents arrested and consequently imprisoned in South Africa revealed that these children exhibited general abhorrence to security authorities, aggressive behaviors, insecure feelings, and sleeplessness (Skinner & Swartz, 1989). This situation is further complicated by lack of proper parenting programmes in place in the prisons to aid parents whose parenthood has been restricted within the prison walls to reach out to their children since most times contacts between the children and parents are limited. The problem with this scenario is also the psychological impact that such arrest may have on the affected parents in prisons as this may add to more stress and worry. Consequently, it may hinder their reformation due to impeded parenthood.

The core role of the criminal justice system is to control crime and to punish the offenders. In so doing the Kenyan criminal justice system has been sending many offenders to prison in an effort to promote justice in different communities and the country at large. According to statistics from the Kenya Prisons Service, the prison population has consistently increased.

By 2016, the prison population had grown by almost 17,000 inmates, bringing this number to 57,000, with a significant proportion of the prisoners being parents (World Prison Brief, 2016). In spite of this reality, the Kenyan criminal justice system seems to ignore the effects impeded parenthood may have on the reformation efforts of parenting adult offenders. Embu prison is one of the prisons in Kenya where most prisoners are parents who leave their children behind

on incarceration. Just as any imprisoned loving parent may worry about their children's welfare, these parents at Embu prison also face a similar situation which can hinder their reformation processes? This informs a study on such a situation. Thus, this study sought to establish the possible effects of impeded parenthood on the reformation of offenders in Embu prison.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the basic objectives of imprisonment is reformation of the prisoners. It is hoped that when prisoners have been imprisoned, they are trained in all important skills that would enable them to earn a living after release from prison without recidivating and even live crime-free life within the prison. However, the consequent harm of parental imprisonment to children and its rebound impacts on the reformation of such parents is often overlooked by the correctional institutions. Moreover, the hidden price of the present castigatory criminal sentencing rules ignores the needs of children and impose obstacles to sustaining strong parent-child bonds. These people have gone to prison for the purposes of reformation but the fact that they have other challenges on parenting this may not be achieved. The fact that most of the inmates at Embu prison are parents with parental obligations to fulfill makes it hard for these inmates to adjust due to the worries about their children, a factor that may greatly affect their reformation process. This is because active parenting and parental responsibility have been known to prevent individuals in the society from engaging in criminal activities as it would bring them into conflict with the criminal justice system and eventually land them in jail. Moreover, parents who have invested in their children would not want to lose their children by engaging in risky actions that would land them in prison. Thus, reformation effort on inmates who are parents without attempts to improve their parenting abilities and contact with their children may affect their reformation as is the case at Embu prison, Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by broad and specific objectives.

1.3.1 Broad Objective

The broad objective of the study was to establish the challenges of impeded parenthood and its impacts on reformation of offenders at Embu prison, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To examine parenthood challenges faced by prisoners at Embu prison.
- ii. To analyse the effects of the parenthood challenges faced by prisoners on their reformation at Embu prison.
- iii. To assess prisoners' coping mechanisms and prison's control strategies of parenthood challenges that impact reformation at Embu prison.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What parenthood challenges do prisoners face that impact reformation at Embu prison?
- ii. What are the effects of the parenthood challenges on prisoners' reformation at Embu prison?
- iii. How do prisoners cope with the challenges and prison authorities control parenthood related problems affect reformation at Embu prison?

1.5 Justification of the Study

The study is important in that many parents face extreme conditions more so due to the feelings of the sufferings of their children at home. Since prisons are corrective institutions, incarcerated parents should reform and be rehabilitated yet some of them resort to even more anti-social behavior like drug abuse simply to dispel stressful thoughts about their children. This may affect their willingness and readiness to change their unwanted behavior. This study is, therefore, important in informing policy on reformation of prisoners and guiding practice in the judicial and justice systems in three different ways. Firstly, it brings to light the impacts of the challenges of impeded parenthood on the reformation of inmates and make the recommendation on programmes and policies for addressing them. This is beneficial to the Kenyan government and specifically the criminal justice system. Secondly, it is hoped that the study findings do provide the officers in the criminal justice system with the knowledge necessary for proactive crime prevention by mitigating negative effects of imprisonment on parents. This is because negative impacts of imprisonment on prisoners automatically results into negative attitudes of prisoners towards reformation efforts. As such, the study provides them with knowledge on how to improve their reformation efforts. Lastly, the study provides vast information to policymakers on reformation of parent offenders in the correctional institutions in Kenya. This is due to the fact that the research brings on board a new paradigm on reformation of offenders.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study explored the effects challenges of the impeded parenthood on reformation of offenders at Embu prison. The perception of the prisoners with long-term (3 years and above) sentences who are parents of children aged 17 and below and that of the key informants was sought to shed light on the topic. The data obtained was largely dependent on the truthfulness of the inmates' understudy in giving information. Because of this, additional data from the key informants was used to test the consistency of the information obtained from the inmates. These two categories of respondents were involved since they are the victims and enforcement machinery of the corrective processes in Embu prison respectively.

The prison institution is a high-security area, so getting permission was hard since Embu prison administration was reluctant to allow the researcher's interaction with the inmates. This was overcome by getting permission from the Kenya Prisons department administration at the head office and then serving a copy of the permit to the Embu prison's administration. This was also vital for the adequate assignment of prison officers to the researcher during the data collection processes. Some prisoners were also unwilling to give correct details which could help in making valid inferences. This was mitigated by assuring them that whatever is recorded would be used for the academic purposes only and would never be given to any third party including the prison wardens. Most of prisoners were semi-illiterate and could not understand simple English. This was overcome by researcher employing an interpreter who helped the respondents to understand the questions during the data collection.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In this study, the following terms have the indicated meanings:

Children: Inmates' offspring who are at home and are 17 years of age and below.

Impeded Parenthood: Hindered parenting of prisoners due to imprisonment.

Offenders: Convicted prisoners serving sentences at Embu prisons who have left their children in the community.

Social Capital: The daily fabric of social relations between persons and the unspoken cooperation that such relations entails.

Parental Imprisonment: Imprisonment of convicts who are parents.

Recidivism: Reconviction of an offender who had been jailed for crime and released previously.

Reformation: Refers to changing the character and personality of a convicted prisoner into law-abiding individuals.

Rehabilitation: The process of making the reformed offenders fit back into the society through acquisition of skills and other techniques.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature on parenthood challenges as well as the study's theoretical and conceptual framework. First is the discussion of existing literature about the parenthood challenges prisoners face during incarceration and their reformation. Secondly, coping mechanisms of prisoners with parenthood challenges are presented. The third subsection deals with the effects of the challenges facing reformation on rehabilitation of prisoners. This is followed by the strategies for controlling parenthood challenges in prison. Theoretical and conceptual framework guiding the study is then presented.

2.2 Parenthood Challenges and the Prisoners' Reformation

Being a parent whose relationship with children has been restricted by the prison walls can present a lot of distress such as a feeling of uselessness, anger, depression, shame, guilt, sadness and worries about what would be happening to their children at home (Young & Smith, 2000). Additionally, the distressing prison environment itself must be one of the hardest and most traumatizing situations that a loving parent would endure. The extent to which an imprisoned mother experiences these types of distress has implications for both the child's emotional development and the mother's mental health (Hock & Schirtzinger, 1992). Yet, very little research attention has been directed toward the effects of these parenthood challenges due to imprisonment on parent offenders' reformation.

Parenting while in jail for a loving mother or father cannot be an easy endeavor for someone who would want to do so because of the prison environment (Miller, 2008). Most mothers expect to unite again with their children upon release from prison. The only foundation of hope and inspiration for many imprisoned women during their involvement with the criminal justice system and their transition back to the community is a relationship with their children. When questioned why some women return to prison, one imprisoned mother remarked:

Many women that fall [back] into prison attribute their recidivism to the fact that their children have been taken away. When they go out to the street, they don't have anything, they have nothing inside. Because they say, "I don't have my children, what will I do? I'll go back to the drug again. I will go back to prostitution again. And I'll go back to prison again. Why fight? Why fight if I have nothing?" (Coll et al., 1998, as

cited in Coll et al., (Eds.) 2008, p. 120).

Consequently, it has been proposed that the strengthening and improving of family connections during incarceration should be highly considered (Young & Smith, 2000). Families can assume an important function in reintegrating inmates into meaningful social lives (Healy et al., 1999; La Vigne et al., 2008). Affirmative connections between a prisoner and their families, are strongly associated with reduced recidivism. Similarly, a study by Harrison (1997) found those inmates who were aided to sustain family relationships while in prison were re-incarcerated at a low rate of 2 to 4 %. Additionally, prisoners who mend and maintain family relationships have showed low disciplinary problems in prison, enhanced psychological health during their imprisonment (Fuller, 1993; Klein & Bahr, 1996). In this regard, this study is of high interest, since lack family contact especially with children can cause psychological problems to the imprisoned parents. It will be important to study the impact of challenges that imprisoned parents face in relation to their parenting on their reformation, which is the aim of this study.

Presence of a parent in a family ensures the much-needed parent-child bond that ensures healthy development between both parent and their children whom they fend for. Also, important to note is the fact that researchers have strongly associated parental incarceration with deep trans-generational effects, one of them being offending (Farrington & Welsh, 2007). Most children of incarcerated go through a lot of difficulties during the period when their parents are serving their time in prison. In countries where governments do not have foster care centers for such disadvantaged children, their plight is always compounded. Moreover, parents play important role in the intergenerational transmission of childrearing skills and culture to their children which is consequently badly disrupted by parental imprisonment (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2013). In the US, for instance, due to mass imprisonment, it is estimated that every, one (1) in forty-three (43) children are facing parental incarceration (Maruschak et al., 2010, as cited in Eddy & Poehlmann (Eds.), 2010, p.35). This shows how much the society is facing the effects of imprisonment. Most studies have focused on the effects of parental imprisonment. However, a gap exists on the rebound effects of parental imprisonment on the reformation of the same affected prisoners.

Significance of parent-child relations to the child's welfare and child development systems is imperative. Studies have shown that every individual in the family is swayed by their connections within and without especially in the context of sociocultural systems (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). Fathers contribute to the lives of their children by being available and

present, interacting directly with them and are responsible for their children's needs (Lamb et al., 1987, as cited in Lanaster et al., 1987, p. 119). International studies have lent credence to the importance of father's involvement in the life of their children by showing that in as much as they do not do caregiving work of their children unlike mothers, they spend much time playing with them (Parke, 2002, as cited in Bornstein, 2002, p. 599). This kind of interaction aids in the formation of emotional regulation, social ability, and safe attachment of children (Pleck, 2007). So, for fathers who were actively involved in the upbringing of their children, it is of much interest to study how their forced absence from their children affects their reformation.

Snarey (1993) notes that distinctive parental contributions on their children are always ignored by measures that concentrate singly on time used up on child upkeep undertakings. Imprisonment of a parent, therefore, impedes their involvement in the lives of their children, like a father's contact through play. This situation is always worsened by the length of the sentence or by the recidivism of the parent (Maruschak et al., 2010, as cited in Eddy & Poehlmann (Eds.), 2010, p. 35). As such, long sentences or recidivism results in a situation where parents go through long-term worries or resign to the fate of recidivism as a career criminal. If this becomes the case, the reformation of such prisoners becomes a big challenge and an important factor that informs this study.

According to Parke (as cited in Bornstein, 2002, p. 599), the value of the prisoner's relationship with their parent, especially men also determines their relationship through involvement with their own children. This underscores the argument put forward by the Bandura's social learning theory by postulating that children learn how to father from their fathers, thus, become like their fathers (Bandura, 1989, as cited in Vasta, 1992, p. 42). Conversely, some parents who went through negative experiences in childhood because of poor parenting can modify the idea of fatherhood so as to recompense for the privations they faced in their childhood (Parke, 2002, as cited in Bornstein, 2002, p. 599). The capability of these parents to be engaged in the lives of their children can likewise touch their prospects for a generativity. Generativity is a psychosocial stage in life that entails caring for others, together with succeeding generations (Erikson, 1998). This idea of generativity was then stretched by Snarey (1993) by coming up with three stages of generativity which include birth fathers (biological generativity), childrearing fathers (parental generativity), and cultural fathers (societal generativity). In his forty years' study of 240 fathers, Snarey (1993) established that parental generativity

(partaking in the rearing of a child) resulted in men's societal generativity.

Societal generativity means caring and enabling progress in other adults through supporting, mentoring, and leadership at a personal, and community level. In the context of the imprisoned parenthood, especially fathers, their chances of continuing interaction with their children are always so much narrowed. As a result, this situation, in turn, impacts negatively on their sense of identity and self-worth in the realm of their parenthood, parental generativity, and in the long run, parent's capability to becoming generative societally (Halsey & Harris, 2011). This fact further explains why the introduction of parenting programmes in prisons becomes imperative in helping criminal justice system to curb recidivism among the offenders. Therefore, it is important to also find out if impeded parenthood negatively affects general generativity of imprisoned parents. If so, then it is important know how that situation impact on the reformation of such affected inmates, which this study will also address.

Parents also face stigma due to imprisonment. For instance, in women, aberration from the societal roles as mothers that are occasioned by their imprisonment has been pinpointed as the cause. Stigma is experienced differently depending on a person's gender. Thus, women or mothers in prison grapple with more stigma than fathers due to the separation from their children. This is attributed to the perception of mothers as the children nurturers because of the ideals of power and because mothers are the primary caregivers of their children prior to their imprisonment. Furthermore, labeled principles of motherhood increase the stigma in mothers, unlike fathers (Morash & Schram, 2002). Stigmatization may in the long run impact on the reformation of these parent prisoners negatively since it can more often than not cause a lot of worry and stress. Worries and stress if not well managed, end up defeating the imperative goal of imprisonment such as reformation of parent prisoners.

During the period of the prison sentence, parents lose their parenthood identity and temporarily assume a prisoner identity so as to cope with the prison environment. This happens with the hope that he or she will return to the suspended parenthood identity especially for fathers or mothers who do not live with their children in prison. Studies have shown that prison experience is gendered with women facing more stigma than men. The key causes of this stigmatization are the general judgment of women in prison as being inadequate, unfit, heartless and sub-par according to the societal standard of motherhood (Kauffman, 2001). Stigma may bring more problems to these mothers such as low self- esteem, which can hinder the

rehabilitation of the prisoners whose very parenthood is already impeded.

Many caring parents in the prison find it hard to make decisions about the future of their children. The communication between parents and their children's caretaker is often irregular and stressed, which in turn hinders the parental role such as being responsible for the important aspects of the lives of their children. So, the prison environment, militate against parents by hindering them from retaining their authority as parents; communication problems; illiteracy; and ignorance of their need for involvement in the lives of their children are also obstacles to that authority (Beckerman, 1994). Authority forms an important aspect of child rearing in that it helps in the directing of one's child towards the right direction concerning his or her future. Authority is best achieved in close contacts unlike the exercise of it at a distance.

In the African context, children used to belong to the community. As such, it was everyone's responsibility in ensuring that a child's basic needs are catered for and their character molded according to the societal norms (Adinlofu, 2009). In such environments, the effects of parent-child separation on children of whatever form could be cushioned by the communities where such children came from. This benefitted the children themselves and to a larger extent, the parents of the child, especially where the separation is not as a result of the death of any of the parents. Thus, in the case of imprisonment, children of prisoners could still be cared for and this would lessen the worry of convicted parents.

However, with the changing culture of communal child responsibility to individual child responsibility, an imprisoned parent who loves his or her child will be forced to sink into worry about his or her child or children's well-being. This is in harmony with the report of Penal Reform International (PRI) (2015) about the children of imprisoned parents, which found out that they face a lot of violations as a result of their parent's imprisonment. This knowledge on the part of their loving parents and whose parenthood is impeded would only negatively impact on their reformation processes as this situation exacerbates worries and stress. In Kenya, imprisoned parents still face challenges of the impeded parenthood since the programmes that are directed towards enabling parenting while in prison are currently almost unavailable. This is the dearth which informs this current study in Embu GK prison as it is one area where a wealth of data can be gathered about the study problem.

2.3 Prisoners Coping Mechanisms and Reformation

Prison offers a chance to work on distress levels and parenting skills if right services are existing. A number of interventions to augment parenting and contact with children have been established world over. Parenting programmes emerge as the most common strategy to date. Some scholars have established positive results in a mothers' level of coping when they are involved in parenting courses. Others argue in contradiction of parental training in favour of quality interaction and privacy with their children (Gursansky et al., 1998). The latest research Celinska and Siegel (2010) focused on the coping mechanism of prisoners with parental challenges. Conducting a semi-structured interview with 74 mothers before trial and in the course of imprisonment, the researchers acknowledged seven coping mechanisms employed by women in prison or facing incarceration which separates them from their children. These strategies include mothering from prison, role redefinition, disassociation from prisoner identity, self-blame, planning and preparation, self-transformation and being a good mother. It will be interesting in this study to find out if these coping mechanisms are also practiced by imprisoned male prisoners.

According to Celinska and Siegel (2010), being a good mother, the first of these coping mechanisms uses the idea of parenthood as the key identity. This is an emotion-focused mechanism where a woman endeavors to prove how suitable she is like a mother by trying to bring attention to what she does for her children in the face of imminent imprisonment or during imprisonment. For instance, they do this by helping them do homework or disciplining them. Dealing with dangers to their parenthood identity by looking for ways to reinforce their parental identity gives hope for the mothers beyond their situation as prisoners. This is very important for their reformation, especially where parent-child contact is enabled by the correctional institutions where these parents are imprisoned.

The second coping mechanism, mothering from prison, concerns the idea of personal involvement in the lives of a parent's children notwithstanding the separation caused by the distance. According to Berry and Eigenberg (2002), 'mothering is not a static characteristic, but something that women create through action on a daily basis.' In the prison setting, such actions may entail, giving parental verbal discipline or advice on phone calls and during their visits, writing letters and ensuring maintained contacts with children's caregivers (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Currently, at Embu prison, this is not the situation. Hence, if parenting is enabled through a mechanism like phone calls or messaging and visits then these parents will be better

place, circumstantially, to be effectively reformed.

Another coping mechanism is role redefinition. This entails parents redefining their children as friends. It attempts to counteract the pains they have caused their children through their imprisonment while trying to lessen negative effects of their self-blame and feeling of disappointment (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Removing the identity of a prisoner, conversely, gives a parent an opportunity to perceive their children through a parental lens. Nevertheless, in the same breath, it makes the parent distance him or herself from viewing themselves as prisoners (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Role redefinition is an important aspect of the reformation process of a parent prisoner; reason being it reduces the worry that results in un-redefined roles of an imprisoned parent. It will be important in this current study to examine the impact of this mechanism or lack of it among the imprisoned parents at Embu prison.

Mechanisms of self-transformation, planning, and preparation are interconnected and emphasize the changing of a prisoner's identity to a good person's identity such as being a good mother. These mechanisms permit a person to see where he or she erred and reform (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Self-transformation basically would require a parent to be in contact with his or her child or children to whom he or she can actualize a self-transformation.

However, as for the present circumstances at Embu prison, this is near impossible. Parent-child contact that would be ideal for the self-transformation is not available. This means that the reformation of prisoners who are parents will be affected in this context. Likewise, planning and preparation permit an imprisoned parent to acquire new skills developed through self-change and apply them to his or her daily life experiences through future planning for himself or herself and his or her child or children. The two mechanisms, therefore, help one to re-examine his or her priorities and re-channel his or her life to the desired end (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Planning and preparation can give an imprisoned parent a sense of responsibility, especially with the knowledge that he or she has a child or children to take care of after his or her release from the prison. This sense of responsibility would aid in the reformation of such prisoner because no responsible person would want to engage in antisocial behaviors like criminality which can again land them in prison.

The last coping mechanism is self-blame. Even though it has been perceived as negative to self-concept, it has been found to be instrumental in helping an inmate in the self-transformation process (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). Self-blame gives an inmate a chance to own

up and take up responsibility for his or her offense that landed him or her in the prison and hence facilitates self-transformation. This mechanism underscores the need for an individual to build his or her future from his or her past by being fully aware of where they are coming from and where they need to go. In a nutshell, owning up for a parent's offense, subsequent imprisonment and family disruption provide the inmates with an opportunity to transform their situation in a way that is profitable for their children and other people (Celinska & Siegel, 2010). For imprisoned parents, owning up would help in cementing his or her relationship with his or her children since it helps the prisoner in the path to a responsible post-prison lifestyle. Hence, the prisoner will be willing to reform and this will be more appropriate when such prisoner is in contact with his or her child or children and spouse.

However, with the lack of Embu prison's deliberate effort to make such important contact possible, reformation of such prisoner would be harder to achieve. It is not clear from the reviewed literature whether some parents may turn to negative coping mechanisms as a way of handling their pains, frustrations, humiliation, and guilt of losing their children through the separation brought about by their imprisonment. This current study will shed more light on this area and its possible effect the reformation of parent prisoners. Such negative coping strategies include drug abuse and recidivism. While some coping mechanisms are positive, others such as taking drugs are negative and more often than not affect the reformation process in a negative way. However, it is not always easy for an inmate to adopt a positive coping mechanism unless he or she is guided by an informed counselor. In that context, it, then, means that the reformation process would be heading in the right direction.

Prisoners resort to different coping mechanisms when separated from their children. These mechanisms have different effects on the self-will to transform into good citizens. This current study thus established the effects of these coping strategies on the reformation of the parenting prisoners in Embu Prison.

2.4 Prisoners' Parenthood Challenges and Reformation

The criminal justice system in its corrective efforts employs reformation strategy which entails altering the prisoners' mental attitudes and offering programmes that progress their skills. In so doing, these inmates become empowered with expertise that they can employ so as to earn a living without resorting to crime (Davis, 2011). Also offered by some prisons are socially attuned programmes that enhance non-parents' and parents' know-how of the importance of

continued contact with their families. Consequently, rehabilitation is deemed a success if it imparts the prisoners with the ability to handle post-prison life challenges without reoffending and enable them to handle their responsibilities without hindrances (Brooks & Bahna, 1994). Reformation, then has to focus majorly on the post-prison life where the nuclear family plays such an important role and more often determines the success of the reformation of the offender. For the imprisoned parents, this can play such an important role in their reformation and that is why parent-child contact is imperative while the prisoner is still serving his or her term in prison.

Effective prisoner reformation involves mandatory conversion into a person equipped with essential skills and emotional steadiness reliable for being responsible as a parent, spouse, and citizen. Parental separation from their children hampers prisoners' achievement of their duties as parents, which is against the very core aim of reformation. Prison's environment with its restrictive rules guiding the inmate's contact with his or her children and family, increases the possibility of future offending upon the prisoner's release from the prison (Arditti, 2012). This is because prisons without proper reformation programmes only create a group of dependents because prisoners do not perform duties like working, paying bills or any other active parental responsibilities. Therefore, with time, these prisoners having been separated from their families, become detached from their duties and then at worst being socialized into the life of a prisoner, and at that level, offending becomes normalized. With this fact in mind, one has to think that the converse which is making sure that there is regular parental contact with their kids through visits. Such visits would help realize the correctional goal of prisons (Brooks & Bahna, 1994). Consistent parent-child contact gives imprisoned parents a sense of duty and responsibility for their children at present and looking forward into the future after their release from prison. In the long run, an environment is created that is conducive for their reformation.

Communication between parents in prison and their children is very vital in helping to maintain their relationships active. However, prison is a place where communication is so much limited due to the rules that are more restrictive of communication. For instance, in Kenya, prisoners are not allowed to possess phones which most likely negatively affect their parenting roles. Poor parenting caused by impeded parenthood of the prisoners in the long run negatively impacts on the reformation efforts of the affected prisoners (Celinska & Siegel, 2010).

Challenges faced by parent prisoners have got an influence on their transformation. However,

this has not been clearly spelled out in studies so far. This current study thus intended to establish how such challenges like lack of prisoners' physical contact with their children, strained relationship with their relatives, and strained relationship with their children affects their reformation processes.

2.5 Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges and Reformation

Effective mechanisms of controlling parenthood challenges within the prisons have been implemented through the parenting programmes with the aim of ensuring sustained contact between the incarcerated parent and the child which ensures a mutual advantage (Poehlman, 2005). Contact maintenance programmes if regular, allow parents to feel connected to their children who also adjust better under such conditions. Contact with the child gives a parent the opportunity to parent responsibly, especially in a prison setting where parenting is restricted and challenging (Supervised Visitation Network, 2002). In circumstances where there are no such programmes aimed at maintaining the parent-child contact, the parents' enthusiasm to participate in family matters is lost and their children may start feeling abandoned. Thus, the aim of sustained parent-child contact is to strengthen parent-child bond which affords a secure bond for both (Stern & Oehme, 2002). Where the parent-child bond is strong, the parent will worry less and it will be easy for a parent to focus on his or her reformation process. Thus, active parenting can be one of the important strategies for curbing parenthood challenges.

One way of sustaining the contact is to allow prison visits which allow parents and children to bond while they interact, talk and play. According to Houck and Loper (2002), environment may lessen or hasten stressful responses. This calls for a cautious attention to be given especially to the meeting environment; for instance, the arrangements of furniture, lighting and its general peacefulness and cheeriness. Additionally, children should be allowed to engage in games and toys suitable for their ages provided. Parents and children should be allowed to snack or eat together so as to create chances of characteristic nurturing and satiating experience for both parent and child (Kates et al., 2008). Such an environment basically reduces the tension that may have built up between the parent and his or her children and stress on the part of a parent due to negative impact of self-blame.

Trained staff is preferred for both enabling the parent-child interactions during the prison visits and monitoring such interaction as an impartial third party. Most of the time, these children had earlier gone through traumatizing moments in their families. This necessitates the creation of an expected environment in which the child may feel they are in control (Johnston & Straus, 1999). It is also necessary to introduce children to the staff and the latter's availability

ascertained during the whole time of visitation. This is because such children need safety in such contacts without having to be drawn into the parental psychological sickness and even parental conflict (Stern & Oehme, 2002). The staff charged with monitoring the parent-child interactions should have the capacity to be dependable, kind and not quick to censure. The current study revealed the existence of visitation at the prison. However, only a small proportion of inmates are visited and the visits are intermittent. Therefore, there is a need for a parenting programme that would encourage the visitations involving children of the prisoners where applicable.

One of the most effective and widely publicized parent-child visitation programmes is the “Girls Scouts Beyond Bars Initiative” (U.S. Department of Justice, 1995). This programme enables mothers to prepare themselves expressively when visiting times are impending through planning for activities aimed at developing a strong parent-child bond. Additionally, the programme gives support to the daughters of the incarcerated mothers by facilitating their meetings and interaction in the community with those girls going through the same situation in their families (Hoffman et al., 2010). An environment where parent-child interaction is free and fulfilling is healthy for developing and supporting such relations, and mother’s uniqueness (Houck & Loper, 2002). This programme also provides family life programmes, themes of violence deterrence, and how to deal with family disruption. The programme also helps mothers as parents in the development and maintenance of involved, responsible roles. Such a programme also allows a prisoner’s children to interact and know their parent well (Kates et al., 2008). If this programme is introduced and practiced at Embu prison, then, in combination with other programmes, parenthood challenges in the prison will be reduced thereby enhancing the reformation of the imprisoned parents. This current study revealed the inexistence of a programme like this; thus, a need for its adoption by the institution.

When physical contact between parent and child is impossible, communication in the form of the phone calls and mails can help to maintain parent-child contact. This is imperative even if the calls are irregular as it makes the child feel valued and loved by the parent. For instance, keeping contact through calls has been found to be useful for the separated or divorced parent in an effort to talk with their children when personal contact is impossible (Stahl, 2002). So, in an effort to overcome the challenges of impeded parenthood, communication should be deliberately allowed between parents and their children. However, such communications

should be monitored by the prison personnel so as to ensure that only appropriate conversation is allowed between parents and their children.

According to Van Wormer and Kaplan (2006), there is need to offer gender-precise programmes for the parents by the correctional facilities. This means that in as much the programmes for both male and female inmates are the same, they should be directed to address specific needs of both genders as they experience imprisonment differently. The environment where programme is provided should be secure both physically and emotionally, which is essential for the inmates to interact freely and privately with correctional officers. Studies have shown that most females who go to prison have at one time been victims prior to their incarceration (NortonHawk, 2005). Consequently, it should not miss the attention of the gender-specific programme providers in ensuring that such programmes also address the past injustices and their effects on the incarcerated motherhood.

There is a need for health intervention among inmates with psychological sickness and those who are drug and substance abusers before they can meet their children or caregivers. Most prisoners have been found to lack appropriate parenting skills. This calls for the intervention in providing programmes that include parenting skills. Moreover, programmes that help in nurturing relationships most likely reduce criminal justice costs, adolescent pregnancy, and drug and substance abuse (Luke, 2002). These interventions will go a long way in overcoming parenthood challenges in prison like Embu and eventually aid in the reformation processes of the affected imprisoned parents.

Essentially, an effectively provided parenting programme for an incarcerated parent would help in preparing the prisoner for the life after the release. This is important because successful reentry of prisoners into the communities where they came from means that chance of reoffending is reduced, and this is the core goal of rehabilitation. So, this underscores the need for effective reform programmes that would address the challenges brought about by the challenges of the impeded parenthood that prisoners go through.

Since parenting programmes are known to positively contribute to reformation, the study anticipated establishing whether there are such programmes in Embu prison and how effective they have been in facilitating control of challenges and the reformation of inmates in Embu prison.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Cultural Transmission Theory, Reformation Theory of Punishment and Rational Choice Theory.

2.6.1 Cultural Transmission Theory

This theory was formulated 1920s out of studies by sociologists at the University of Chicago. Maybe, the strongest account on the cultural transmission theory originates from Clifford R. Shaw and H. D. Mckay. The dominant idea of this theory was that deviant behaviour was learnt in the transmission of culture to the individual from his or her societal background. Values promising to deviance are prominent and deemed normal by a group of individuals in social setting.

According to Shaw, “Through participation in the activities of (his or her) social world, beginning in such intimate group as the family, the play group, and the neighbourhood, the original activities of the individual are conditioned and organized and come to assume the character of well-defined attitudes, interests and behaviour trends” (Shaw, 1931). Therefore, Shaw held a belief that a great influence “tends to create a community spirit which not only tolerates, but actually fosters, in gradual formation and crystallization of deviant behavior traits” (Shaw,1931). At the time, Shaw deemed deviant behaviour to be “fixated” or to say differently, deviant behaviour was a facet of the personality. All the works of Shaw and Mckay assume that deviance comes to be hooked in a person's conduct trend and personality. Nevertheless, together Shaw and Mckay assumed that transformation was not an impossibility and could be achieved (Shaw et al., 1938). The most imperative components of transformation phase, according to their perspective, comprised two things:

- (i) Taking away individual from the environment that gave rise to the deviant behaviour;
- (ii) Formation of new relationships in conventional social groups.

The application of this theory in this study helps in understanding that through partaking in conventional groups and separation from deviant groups, the deviant would adopt new ideals and new behaviours which are harmonious with conventional values. However, theory mainly dwells on processes that give rise to deviance but does not explain how prisoners can or should be rehabilitated and reformed in the context of the correctional systems. Therefore, there is need for another theory that sheds more light on the measures that can be taken by the criminal justice system to ensure the success of the reformation of offenders at Embu prison.

2.6.2 Reformation Theory of Punishment

This theory was first advanced by Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham in the 18th century. The theory postulates that punishment should be aimed at changing the character of the offender. Thus, the punishment should be for the reformation of the offender (Sutherland & Cressey, 1985). The reformatory theory emerged after attempts to reduce crime through deterrent and retributive theories failed. This theory focuses on the criminal instead of the crime and seeks to bring the attitudinal change in the perception of the offender thereby rehabilitate him or her.

According to this theory, crime is determined by the existence of physical and emotional characteristics of the offenders' environment and situation of the society. It emphasizes that the criminal is not born but made by environment in the society where he or she lives. Therefore, offender is treated as a patient and not as a lawbreaker and that every society has the responsibility to reform the offender. The sentence should be used as a strategy to rescue an offender and not to do more harm to the criminal and any type of corporal punishment against the offender is condemned by the theory (Fitzgerald, 2009). Also, the proponents of this theory advocate that a judge must take into consideration the age and character of a criminal, situation that prompted the act and the motive behind it while giving a punishment. Only taking the prior mentioned perspectives would make the judge give out an impartial and justifiable verdict in a particular case.

Imprisonment should be aimed at bringing a change in the offender's psychological perception through useful measures during their imprisonment and not only incapacitation or deterrence. It is pegged on the view that loving, kind and careful handling of offenders can result in a radical transformation in their characters. It firmly opposes capital punishment since hanging is a revelation that humans are unable to reform their fellow men. This theory has proved imperative in the rehabilitation of first offenders and juvenile delinquents.

In the context of criminal justice, imprisonment has been used as a painful means of punishing offenders for the greater good of the society. Under the reformation theory, punishment serves the purpose of rehabilitation/reformation (Robinson, 2001). Reformation as a basis of imprisonment is aimed at preventing future reoffending by providing the inmates with vocational training and other educational programs such as parenting programmes. As a result, inmates become equipped to face life in the society and even compete in the job market. Thus,

reformation of offenders produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number when ex-prisoners return to their communities and do not re-offend (Flynn, 2011).

The application of this theory in this study helps in understanding how impeded parenthood by the criminal justice system within the prison setting, impacts on reformation of the incarcerated parents in Embu GK prison. In an effort to respond to the problem facing reformation of imprisoned parents, parenting programmes among others have been introduced in the prison institutions so as to ensure effective reformation of the offenders. According to Carlson (2009) and Rowland and Watts (2007), mothers who participate in the attachment parenting programmes have a low rate of reoffending as compared to those who do not undergo such programmes.

Moreover, Loper and Tuerk (2010) found that parenting programmes that concentrated on mental-behavioral mechanisms are important. This is because it helps in decreasing emotional reactions to traumatic conditions of inmates by providing parenting education to participants. Consequently, it reduces parenting worries and stress by the fact that it increased the vital contact between imprisoned parents and their children and children's caretakers. Stress reduction by such programmes in such group of people is important in that it goes a long way to improve the reformation initiatives by correctional institutions. This is because experiences have pointed to inmates resorting to drugs and substance abuse so as to try to cope with stressful situations in prisons. Additionally, studies have linked social generativity with parental generativity which has been associated with reduced reoffending among fathers. This is because their key motivation was to provide for their children which were jeopardized by engaging in crime (Peterson, 2006; Walker, 2010). Therefore, when such programs are introduced at the Embu GK prison, reformation of imprisoned parents will be possible.

This second theory is mainly based on the efforts of the prison to ensure or to bring about the reform agenda on the prisoner. However, it is important to note that the success of such initiatives depends on the prisoners themselves to either accept or reject reformation. The reformative theory fails to recognize the individual's rational choices to reform, therefore, there is need include a third theory explained below.

2.6.3 Rational Choice Theory

Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is an approach to the explanation of (deviance and conformity)

the preferences made by the self-interested individuals. It first originated from the works of Cesare Beccaria in the 18th century. In criminology, RCT assumes a utilitarian belief that an individual is a rational or a perceptive actor who assesses the cost and benefits, means and ends. This was a method proposed by Clarke (1997) to assist in discerning about circumstantial law breaking.

Rational choice theory assumes that individuals are rational and make their decisions in consideration to what is best for them with regard to achieving their goals (Clarke, 1997). Moreover, it assumes that individuals are goal focused and purposive in relation to the actions that they take. Thus, it is notable that in RCT, people are driven by goals that show their preferences. Individuals act within explicit and implicit constraints, and the basis of the information they are acting on. They must decide on the goals they want to achieve and the means of achieving such goals.

In the context of this study, imprisoned parents have to make rational choices on the cost and benefits of the reformation so as to either accept or reject it. Besides, the reformation efforts of the prisoners by the prison are purely dependent on the rational choice of the prisoner to accept to reform as it cannot be forced (East, 1947). Therefore, in a prison setting and with all the reform efforts, the success of offender reformation is absolutely pegged on the prisoner alone. This is based on the information they are given about reformation and their choices.

The application of this theory in the study helps in understanding how imprisoned parents have the sole power to make the reformations in prisons successful for themselves. This means that the prison can make the best of its efforts in regards to reforming the offender but the ultimate decision to reform is with the prisoner alone. The prisoner, therefore, must be able to clearly see the need and the benefit of such reforms to himself or herself so as to accept them.

2.6.4 Synthesis of the Three Theories

The Cultural Transmission Theory, Reformatory Theory and the Rational Choice Theory are important in understanding the spectrum of crime and success of the reformation in the prison context. While Cultural Transmission Theory focusses on how criminal or deviant behavior is formed, Reformatory Theory focusses on the efforts put by prisons to ensure that it achieves its goals, and lastly, Rational Choice Theory recognizes the prisoner's power of choice to accept reform. Therefore, the three theories play a complementary role in explaining the whole

spectrum of crime formation and reformation of the offenders in prison.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes impacts of challenges of impeded parenthood (independent variables) within the context of reformation of the offenders (the dependent variable). These challenges negatively influence the reformation efforts of the incarcerated parents by the correctional institutions such as diminished social generativity, stigma, and lack of communication. Figure 2.1 indicates the relationship between independent variables, intervening variables, and the dependent variables.

Independent Variables

Intervening Variables

Dependent variables

Impeded Parenthood

Parenthood challenges

- Diminished social generativity
- Stigma
- Lack of visits by prisoners' children
- Lack of child control
- Lack of communication
- Victimization of prisoners' children

Impacts of parenthood challenges

- Worry and stress
- Negative influence on offenders' reformation

Coping Mechanisms

- Changing prisoner identity to a good parent identity by: counseling their children, sewing clothes for their children, attending religious meetings, friendliness to their children etc.
- Role redefinition
- Self-blame
- Parent-child communication

Parenthood challenges control strategies

- Regular visits by prisoners' children
- Parent-child communication
- Parenting programs

- Parents' gender
- Age and gender of the child
- Criminal Justice policies and laws

Reformation of offenders



Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

According to Figure 2.1 above, the impacts of challenges of impeded parenthood due to imprisonment include lack of visits by the prisoners' children, stigmatization by the prisoners' children, lack of child control, diminished generativity, lack of parent-child communication, victimization of prisoners' children. These challenges contribute to worry and stress that negatively influence the reformation of offenders. The negative influences of parenthood challenges are also affected by intervening variables like the sex of the parent, criminal justice laws and the sex and age of the child in relation to the parent prisoners' reformation. These intervening variables, therefore, affect the expected relationship between the independent and dependent variables positively or negatively. Parenthood challenges and their effects on the parent inmates coping mechanisms as well as the institutional challenge control strategies highly influence the inmates' reformation or rehabilitation processes. The effects may be positive or negative.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the area of study, research design, population size, sampling procedure, and sample size, unit of analysis, data collection methods, data analysis and the ethical considerations which guided this research on the challenges of impeded parenthood: The impact on reformation of offenders at Embu prison, Kenya

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design. This design was chosen with an objective to attain an intensive descriptive and holistic assessment of the subject under study. This design was useful in finding out the opinions and attitudes of inmates on the challenges of impeded parenthood on reformation of offenders at Embu prison. The study design hence enabled the researcher to assess the distinctive aspects of the problem under the study meticulously.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted at Embu Prison in Manyatta Sub-county, Embu County in the Eastern region of Kenya. The prison is located approximately, 1 kilometer from Majimbo centre to the south, along the Embu-Kitui highway. There were approximately 1096 prisoners in custody. These prisoners were under the care of 170 prison officers. The rationale for selecting this area of study is because the prison holds both male and female inmates convicted of both minor and capital offenses. The area under study is shown in Figure 3.1.

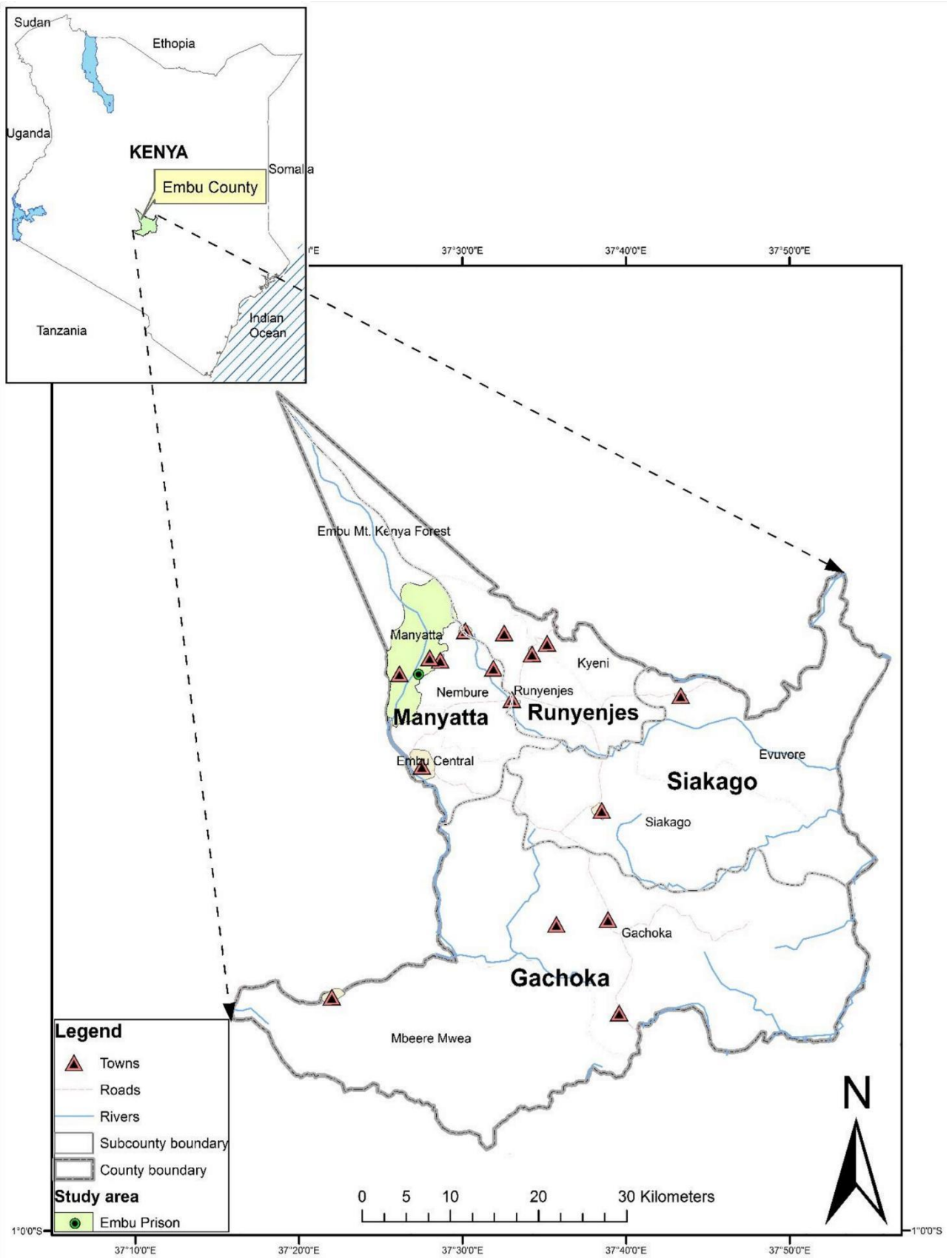


Figure 3. 1: Map of Kenya Locating Embu County and the Study Area

3.4 Target Population.

At the time of the study, there were 1096 inmates: 1055 males and 41 female prisoners. This included 480 (target population) incarcerated parents (458 fathers and 22 mothers) who had served at least 3 years and above and had children 17 years of age and below.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis was the male and female incarcerated parents in Embu prison who had served their prison terms for three (3) or more years and who had children aged 17 years of age and below.

3.6 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study adopted proportional sampling method. Proportional sampling is a technique in which a researcher divides a finite population into subpopulations and then uses simple random sampling methods to individual subpopulation (Salkind, 2010). The study adopted a formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for estimating the sample size, n, from the known population size, N.

Sample size for men;

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{\sigma^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where

N= total population = 458 n = required sample size

X² = Table value of chi-square for five degrees of freedom, that is 1.96 σ = degree of accuracy of value 0.05

p= proportion of population is taken to be 0.5 .

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Thus } n &= \frac{1.96 \times 458 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{0.05^2(458-1) + 1.96 \times 0.5(1-0.5)} \\ &= \frac{224.42}{1.6825} \\ &= 133 \text{ respondents} \end{aligned}$$

Sample size for women;

$$n = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{\sigma^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where

N= total population of women = 22

n = required sample size

X^2 = Table value of chi-square for five degrees of freedom, that is 1.96 σ = degree of accuracy of value 0.05

p= proportion of population is taken to be 0.5

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Thus } n &= \frac{1.96 \times 22 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 (22-1) + 1.96 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)} \\ &= \frac{10.78}{0.5425} \\ &= 20 \text{ respondents} \end{aligned}$$

Total sample size for both men and women

$$= 133 + 20 = 153 \text{ respondents}$$

Even though the study envisaged to use 153 respondents, by the time of data collection, most desired respondents had been released as a result of presidential amnesty. The number of respondents that were available for the study was thus reduced to 132.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

This study used questionnaires to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the 132 inmate respondents. Due to perceived low levels of literacy of the respondents, the researcher employed self-completion of the questionnaires by the respondents with the help of two assistants. This allowed the respondents to seek for the clarification on the parts of the questionnaire which they did not understand. The study used structured questions that would produce standardized responses and unstructured questions that yielded narrative responses.

Key Informants were also purposively sampled based on the desired information. They were three Senior Prison Officers from Embu prison. Limited unstructured interviews designed to give the interviewees room for open response were also used.

3.8 Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyze data. Quantitative data was analysed descriptively through distribution tables using STATA software. The qualitative data included responses from the unstructured questions from questionnaires that were in narrative form were analysed by coding and then thematic grouping. Inductive coding was used based on the themes that arose from the prisoners' open-ended replies. These thematic groups were then used in the results segment to provide a context for the quantitative analysis, drawing on quotes where applicable. The quotes used in this study were written word for word by the researcher from the questionnaires. Where the quotes were in Kiswahili, they were translated by the researcher into English for easy understanding.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The entire study process was conducted with due respect to ethical considerations in research. The researcher obtained authorization from Graduate School and got a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovations (NACOSTI). Permission was also obtained from the commissioner general of the Kenya Prison Service. Informed consent of imprisoned parents as the respondents who participated in the study was also secured. There was total avoidance of actions and questions that could cause psychological harm to respondents. Asking embarrassing or irrelevant questions and using threatening language or making respondents uneasy was not applied at all. Respondents' views were also treated with utmost confidentiality. In general, a high degree of openness regarding the purpose and nature of the study was observed in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the study results guided by the specific objectives. Presentation of the chapter is organized into eight sections. The first section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the informants. Results for other sections such as parenthood challenges faced by prisoners at Embu prison; challenges faced by parenting prisoners and their reformation; and coping mechanisms with parenthood challenges and strategies for controlling parenthood challenges by prison administration to influence reformation are presented in sections 4.3 to 4.5 respectively. The discussion is presented in section 4.6.

Even though the study envisaged to use 153 respondents, by the time of data collection, most desired respondents had been released as a result of presidential amnesty. Hence the number of respondents that were available for the study were thus reduced to 132.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In this section the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents is presented in the following order: subsection 4.2.1 presents the information of respondents on gender, subsection 4.2.2 presents information on the respondents' level of education, and subsection 4.2.3 presents data on the respondents' age.

4.2.1 Gender of the Respondents

As shown in Table 4.1, majority of the respondents are male inmates (84.85%). Female inmates comprise 15.15%.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	112	84.85
Female	20	15.15
Total	132	100

4.2.2 Level of Education of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents (56.06%) are of primary level of education. This is followed by

30.30% composed of the secondary school leavers. Those who have attained college or university education were few (9.09%). A paltry 4.55% is composed of those who did not go to school/uneducated. This indicates that majority of the inmates' highest achieved formal education is the primary school level. The proportion of each category decreases upwards from primary to college level. The least in number is the uneducated inmates. The results of respondents' level of education are presented in Table 4.2 as shown below.

Table 4.2: Level of Education of the Respondents

Education level	Frequency	Percentage %
Uneducated	6	4.55
Primary	74	56.06
Secondary	40	30.30
University/college	12	9.09
Total	132	100

4.2.3 Age Range of Respondents

Most of the inmates (30.30%) are in their late youth and early middle ages (31 to 40 years of age). This is followed by age 18 to 30 years (22.73%), the late teenage and youth age. Age 41 to 50 years comprise 21.21% as 51 to 60 years make up 16.67%. Few of them (9.09%) are in the 61 years and above age bracket. These findings thus show that majority of the inmates are in the late teenage and early middle ages (53.03%). As age increases from 41 years, the number of the incarcerated persons reduces (46.97%). The results of respondents by age range are presented in Table 4.3 as shown below.

Table 4.3: Age Range of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
18-30	30	22.73
31-40	40	30.30
41-50	28	21.21
51-60	22	16.67
61 and above	12	9.09
Total	132	100

4.3 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners at Embu prison

This section presents the results of the challenges faced by the parent prisoners at Embu prison. In this regard, questions regarding the challenge of uncertainty about children’s caregivers, challenge of imprisoned parents not being visited by their children, challenge of social stigma towards prisoners, challenge of prisoners’ lack of control over their children, challenge of the effect of parental absence from home on their children, challenge of prisoners’ absence from home and the victimization of their children, challenge of children’s reaction to stigmatization, challenge of children’s delinquent activities and the challenge of the effect of imprisonment on parent-child relationship were assessed.

4.3.1 Uncertainty about Children’s Caregivers

Majority of the respondents (54.5%) had their children under the care of their wives (children’s mothers) while 28.8% indicated that their children were under the children’s grandparents. 11.4% reported that their children were under the care of other relatives. 3.8% of the respondents indicated that their children were on their own while 1.5% of the female respondents indicated that their children were under their father’s care. These findings indicate that since most of the respondents were men, most of their children are under their wives’ care at home. These are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Children’s Caregivers

	Frequency	Percent
Father	2	1.5
Mother	72	54.5
Grandparents	38	28.8
Other relatives	15	11.4
Alone	5	3.8
Total	132	100.0

4.3.2 Challenge of Imprisoned Parents’ Visits by their Children

Table 4.5 shows the frequency of visits that prisoners got from their children. Majority, 56 (42.4%) of the prisoners indicated that they were never visited by the time this study was carried out, 42 (31.8%) of the respondents indicated that they received monthly visits from

their children, 24 (18.3%) reported that they were visited after every 9 months, 8 (6%) noted that visits were yearly while 2 (1.5%) respondents reported receiving visits anytime. This shows that most of the prisoners at Embu prison are not visited monthly which may be considered inadequate especially due to their much worries about their children.

Table 4.5: Frequency of Prison Visits

	Frequency	Percent
Never	56	42.4
Monthly	42	31.8
Every 3/4 months	24	18.3
Yearly	8	6
Anytime	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.3.4 Social Stigma towards Prisoners

Tables 4.6 and 4.7 present results on whether or not prisoners experienced stigma and if yes, the nature of stigma. As shown in Table 4.6, 84 (63.6%) of the respondents reported that they experienced stigma by either their children, spouse and/or other family members for being imprisoned, 42(31.8%) of the respondents reported that they did not receive any form of stigma by either their children, spouse and/or other family members for being imprisoned while 6(4.5%) did not give a response.

Table 4.6: Stigma Experience

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	63.6
No	42	31.8
NR	6	4.5
Total	132	100.0

4.3.5 Nature of Prisoners Experienced Stigma

As indicated in Table 4.7, out of the 84 respondents, who reported having received stigma, 30 (35.7%) of the respondents indicated their children not being brought to visit them as their form of being stigmatized against, 38 (45.2%) indicated not being told about how their children

back at home were fairing as their way of being stigmatized against while 16 (19%) did not know about the nature of stigma that they received.

Table 4.7: Nature of Stigma Experienced

	Frequency	Percent
Child not brought to see me	30	35.7
Not told how they are	38	45.2
I don't know	16	19
Total	84	99.7

4.3.6 Challenge of Control Over their Children

As indicated in Table 4.8, 46 (34.8%) of the respondents indicated that they had control over their child/ children while a majority 84 (63.6%) of the respondents indicated that they did not have control over their child/ children. The remaining 2 (1.5%) of the respondents did not give a response.

One male respondent said,

“...It is impossible for me to control their behavior since they are away and don’t even visit me. Also, I cannot reach them even through phone because they don’t have a phone at home.”

Table 4.8: Prisoners Control Over Child/Children

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	34.8
No	84	63.6
NR	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.3.7 Prisoner’s Opinion on Improving the Situation

As indicated in Table 4.9 26.2% of the respondents reported that regular visits to them by the children to know the child’s wellbeing can help improve the situation, 40 (47.6%) reported that they should be taken home in order to be in control over their children while 14 (16.7%) reported that it was not possible to be in control over their child/children. The rest, 8 (9.5%) of

the respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.9: Prisoners’ Opinion on Improving the Situation

	Frequency	Percent
Regular visits to me to know child’s wellbeing	22	26.2
I be taken back home	40	47.6
Not possible	14	16.7
NR	8	9.5
Total	84	100.0

4.3.8 Effect of Parental Absence from Home on their Children

The results presented in Table 4.10 show that, having been asked whether their absence from home negatively affects their children, majority of the prisoners, 116 (87.9%), gave a “Yes” answer while 14 (10.6%) gave a “No” answer. However, 2 (1.5%) did not give a response. Out the 116 respondents who gave a “Yes”, 22 (19%) indicated that their child/children may not have the best education the respondent would have wished for, 52 (44.8%) indicated that they can’t care for their child/children and their own properties, 16 (13.8%) indicated that they have no one to care for their child/children, 18 (15.5%) indicated that they did not have a direct contact with child/children while 8 (6.9%) did not give a response.

Table 4.10: Effect of Parental Absence on their Child/Children.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	116	87.9
No	14	10.6
NR	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.3.9 Children’s Stigma

Table 4.11 shows the responses of the respondents in connection to stigmatization. The prisoners were asked whether their children have been stigmatized and how they react. 108 (81.8%) indicated that their child/children had been stigmatized.

One respondent observed,

“...Mtoto wangu anatusiwa kuwa ni mhalifu kama mamake.” ... (my child is being insulted that he is criminal like his mother).

While 22 (16.7%) said that their child/children did not experience any form of stigma, 2 (1.5%) of the respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.11: Child Stigmatization

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	81.8
No	22	16.7
NR	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.3.10 Children’s Reaction to Stigmatization

Furthermore, respondents were asked how their child/children reacted to stigmatization and the responses they gave are presented in Table 4.12. As indicated in the table, 36 (27.3%) of respondents reported that their child/children were quiet and stressed, 22 (16.7%) reported that they did not know how their child/children reacted to stigmatization, 58 (43.9%) reported that their child/children were stressed, 2 (1.5%) reported that their children became disobedient while 14 (10.6%) of the respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.12: Children’s Reaction to Stigmatization

	Frequency	Percent
Quiet and stressed	36	27.3
I do not know	22	16.7
Stress	58	43.9
Disobedient children	2	1.5
NR	14	10.6
Total	132	100.0

4.3.11 Child’s/Children’s Victimization

Respondents were also asked if their child/children were victimized as a result of their imprisonment. As indicated in Table 4.13, 64 (48.5%) of the respondents reported that their

child/children had been victimized. An equivalent number reported that their child/children had not been victimized. However, 4 (3%) did not give a response.

Table 4.13: Whether prisoners' Child/Children /have Been Victimized

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	64	48.5
No	64	48.5
NR	4	3.0
Total	132	100.0

4.3.12 Nature of Victimization

Furthermore, respondents were asked how their child/children were victimized. As indicated in Table 4.14, out of the 64 respondents who reported that their child/children were victimized, 14 (21.9%) indicated that their child/children were abused, 4 (6.3%) indicated that their child/children were overworked, 4 (6.3%) indicated that their child/children received poor education, 10 (15.6%) indicated that their child/children received inadequate food and other basic needs, 12 (18.8%) indicated that their child/children were victimized in many ways while 16 (25%) indicated that their children were wrongfully accused. 4 (6.3%) of the respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.14: Nature of Victimization

	Frequency	Percent
Abused	14	21.9
Overworked	4	6.3
Poor education	4	6.3
Inadequate food and other basic needs	10	15.6
In many ways	12	18.8
Wrongfully accused	16	25.0
NR	4	6.3
Total	64	100.0

4.3.13 Effect of Imprisonment on Parent-Child Relationship

The respondents were asked how their imprisonment had affected their parent-child relationship. The results are tabulated in Table 4.15 which shows a majority of the prisoners 44 (33.3%) do not know how relationship with their children has been affected by children being victimized for their parents' imprisonment, 34 (25.8%) indicated that their relationship is strained as the child/children hate them for their crimes, 20 (15.2%) reported that their children pity them for imprisonment, 16 (12.1%) indicated that their children do not respect them for being imprisoned while 18 (13.6%) did not give a response.

Table 4.15: Effect of Imprisonment and Parent-Child Relationship

	Frequency	Percent
They do not respect me for being a prisoner	16	12.1
They hate me for crimes	34	25.8
I do not know	44	33.3
They pity me	20	15.2
NR	18	13.6
Total	132	100

4.3.14 Proportion of Children's Delinquent Activities

Table 4.16 presents data that show that majority of the prisoners' children (86.4%) have never engaged in criminal activities such as serious fights as a few (13.6%) have had minor fights with other children. Data also indicate that (98.5%) of their prisoners have children who have never been charged with any crime. Majority of the respondents (95.4%) indicate that their children have never been involved in sale of narcotics or alcohol to get money for survival. Only (4.6%) have been involved in sale of alcohol for upkeep money. These findings indicate that to answer the three questions, (83.47%) of the prisoners' children have never been involved in crime.

For instance, one of the key informants remarked,

“... Some of the prisoners' children are affected so much so that there are cases where the children of the prisoners who are left back at home are forced even to steal food or engage in illegal activities to eke a living. This situation results in a lot of worries on the affected inmates; this consequently negatively affects their reformation process.’

(Source: Female key informant, Welfare Officer at Embu women prison, 2018)

Table 4.16: Percentage of Children in Delinquent Activities

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Have your children been in fights since you're a prisoner?	13.6	86.4
Any of your child ever charged with crime?	1.5	98.5
Has any of your children sold drugs & alcohol for upkeep money?	4.6	95.4

4.4 Challenges Faced by Parent Prisoners and their Reformation

This section reviews the challenges that imprisoned parents face. In this regard, questions concerning, relationship between children's absence and reformation, prisoner's parental control on their children and reformation, caregiver's effort and reformation process were asked. The findings on the challenges faced by parenting prisoners and their reformation are shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Effect of Lack of Regular Contact on Reformation

Does lack of the regular contact negatively affect your reformation?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	106	80.3
No	24	18.2
NR	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.4.1 Children's Absence and Reformation

The respondents were asked if their child's/children's absence negatively impacted on their reformation process and if so how. The results are tabulated in Table 4.18.

As shown in Table 4.18, 106 (80.3%) of the respondents indicated that their child's/children's absence negatively impacted on their reformation process while 24 (18.2%) respondents reported that their child's/children's absence did not negatively impacted on their reformation process. However, 2 (1.5%) of the respondents did not give a response to this question.

4.4.2 Effects of Child's/Children's Absence and Reformation

Out of the 106 who said their child's/ children's absence negatively affected reformation, 66 (62.3%) of them reported that they always thought about their child's/children's more than anything else, 32 (30.2%) of them reported that they were always stressed by their child's/children's absence, 2 (1.9%) reported that they contemplated escaping owing to their child's/children's absence while 6 (5.7%) of them did not give a response.

One imprisoned parent remarked,

"...naadhibiwa kwa sababu ya kuvunja sheria lakini pia maafande wanajanajaribu kuturekebisha. Mimi binafsi niko na stress kwasababu kwa miaka tano sasa, sijawaona watoto wangu walasijui wanavyoendelea. Kuna haja gani ya kuwa mzuri kama hauna maana kwa familia yako na bibi yangu kutoroka baada ya kufungwa..." (I am imprisoned because of crime but the warders are also trying to reform us. Personally, I'm stressed because for five years, I have not seen my children and I don't know about how they are faring on. Why be good when you are worthless to your family and my wife deserted after my imprisonment.)

One respondent observed:

"...It is challenging to reform a prisoner who loved his or her children yet he or she is separated for a long time from his or her children due to imprisonment. This is due to the fact that some of these imprisoned develop the feeling of worthlessness while some become so much stressed. Consequently, some of these affected inmates develop resistance to reformation efforts and recidivate even within the prison or immediately after release from prison."

(Source: Male key informant, Welfare Officer at Embu male prison, 2018)

One key informant observed,

"...I have observed through long-term engagement with these female inmates that those had their children with them had fewer worries and are easier to rehabilitate than those with young children left at home. Still, most of these mothers with children at home are rarely visited by their children."

(Source: Female key informant, Welfare Officer at Embu women prison, 2018)

Table 4.18: Effects of Child’s/Children’s Absence and Reformation

	Frequency	Percent
Thinking about them more than anything else	66	62.3
Stressed always	32	30.2
I feel want to escape	2	1.9
NR	6	5.7
Total	106	100.0

4.4.3 Prisoners’ Regular Communication with Children and Reformation

Furthermore, information on whether or not lack of regular communication with the child/children impacts on the prisoner’s reformation negatively and how it impacts reformation was sought. 96 (72.7%) of the respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children impacted on their reformation negatively, 32 (24.2%) of the respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children did not impact on their reformation negatively while 4 (3%) did not give a response. The results are shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4.19: Negative Impacts of Lack of Regular Communication with Child/Children and Reformation

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	96	72.7
No	32	24.2
NR	4	3.0
Total	132	100.0

4.4.4 Lack of Regular Communication with Child/Children

Out the 96 respondents who answered “Yes”, 34 (35.4%) respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children resulted to them not knowing the on goings of their child/children at all, 38 (39.6%) respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children resulted into them not knowing about their child’s/children’s welfare at all, 16 (16.7%) respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children caused them lack of concentration while 2 (2.1%) respondents reported that lack of regular communication with their child/children caused them

to develop stomach ulcers.

Table 4.20: Effects of Lack of Regular Communication on Prisoners

	Frequency	Percent
I no longer know their on goings	34	35.4
I do not know about their welfare	38	39.6
Lack of concentration	16	16.7
Stomach ulcers	2	2.1
NR	6	6.3
Total	96	100.0

4.4.5 Prisoner’s Parental Control on their Children and Reformation

The relationship between the prisoners’ poor parental control of their children and how lack of parental control of their children affects prisoners and reformation by inference. The results established that 22 (16.7%) of the prisoners got stressed, 14 (10.6%) got so worried about children’s wellbeing always and 4 (3%) always got worried about their children’s whereabouts. The results are shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Prisoner’ Lack of Control on their Children and Reformation

		How children absence impacts reformation process			
		I am so stressed	Always worried about their wellbeing	Always worried about their whereabouts	Total
Do you think you still have your child/children Control	Yes	22 16.7%	14 10.6%	4 3%	40 30.3
	No	44 33.3%	24 18.2%	6 4.5%	74 56.1%
	NR	4 3%	6 4.5%	8 6.06%	18 13.6%
Total		70 53 %	44 33.3%	18 13.6%	132 100%

4.5 Coping Mechanisms with Parenthood Challenges and Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation

This section, firstly, presents the findings of the respondents’ coping mechanisms with parenthood challenges that affect their reformation. In this regard, the respondents were asked questions aimed at revealing their coping mechanisms which included trying to be good parents while in prison, attending religious meetings while in prison, changing the prisoner identity, and self-blame. Secondly, the strategies for controlling parenthood challenges by prison administration to influence reformation are also presented. In this regard, questions concerning regular visits by the prisoner’s children and reformation; parent-child communication, and parenting programmes were asked.

The findings on the prisoners’ coping mechanisms with and strategies for controlling parenthood challenges by prison administration to influence reformation are shown below.

4.5.1 Trying to be Good Parents while in the Prison

Table 4.22 presents results which show a majority of the respondents 124(93.9%) indicate that they try to be good parents while in prison while only 8 (6.1%) do not.

Table 4.22: Response on Being a Good Parents while in the Prison

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	124	93.9
No	8	6.1
Total	132	100.0

4.5.2 Ways of Practicing Good Parenting

As presented in Table 4.23, out of those trying to do good parenting, 82 (66.1%) do so by talking and advising their children, 28 (22.6%) try to do good parenting by indicating they have changed and reformed from bad behaviour, and 10 (8.1%) do so by improving on their behaviours. However, 4 (3.2%) did not indicate how they practice good parenting while in prison.

One of the inmates commented,

“...I try to be a good parent by counseling my children not to engage in bad behaviors like engaging in criminal activities and overreacting due to anger. I advise them to

avoid bad friends and groups.”

Table 4.23: Ways of Practicing Good Parenting

	Frequency	Percent
Talking & advising them	82	66.1
I have changed	28	22.6
I have improved	10	8.1
NR	4	3.2
Total	124	100.0

4.5.3 Prisoners’ Involvement in their Child/Children’s Lives and Affairs

Moreover, respondents were asked if they were still involved in their child/children’s affairs and in what way while still in prison. The results are tabulated in Tables 4.24 and Table 4.25. As shown in Table 4.24, 96 (72.7%) of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the child’s/children’s lives and affairs, 32 (24.2%) of the respondents indicated that they were not involved in the child’s/children’s lives and affairs. However, 4 (3%) respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.24: Prisoners’ Involvement in their Child/Children’s Lives and Affairs

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	96	72.7
No	32	24.2
NR	4	3.0
Total	132	100.0

4.5.4 Ways of Prisoners’ Involvement in their Child/Children’s Lives and Affairs

Among those who indicated that they were involved in the child’s/children’s lives and affairs, 74 (77.1%) of the indicated that they counseled their child/children not to be involved in any crimes, 8 (8.3%) indicated that they do not see them, 4 (4.2%) reported that they were with their child/children in prison while 10 (10.4%) did not give a response to the question. This information is presented in Table 4.25.

Table 4.25: Ways of Prisoners' Involvement in their Child/Children's Lives and Affairs

	Frequency	Percent
Counselling them not to do any crimes	74	77.1
I do not see them	8	8.3
I am with them in prison	4	4.2
NR	10	10.4
Total	96	100

4.5.5 Friendliness to Child/Children

Lastly, respondents were asked if they made any efforts to be friendly to their child/children and, if they did, in what way. These results are presented in Tables 4.22 and Table 4.23. As indicated in Table 4.26, a majority, 112 (84.8%) reported that they try to be friendly to their child/children while 16 (12.1%) indicated that they do not try to be friendly to their child/children. However, 4 (3%) of the respondents did not give a response.

Table 4.26: Friendliness to Child/Children

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	112	84.8
No	16	12.1
NR	4	3
Total	132	100

4.5.6 Prisoner's Manner of Friendliness to their Children

Out of the 112 respondents who reported that they tried to be friendly to their child/children, 32 (28.6%) of the respondents encourage them that they will be free someday, 37 (33%) counsel their children to get good friends, 38 (33.9%) try to be friendly to their child/children through indirect communication with them while 5 (4.5%) respondents did not give a response. This is indicated in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27: Prisoner’s Manner of Friendliness to their Children

	Frequency	Percentage
Encouraging them that one day I will be out of prison	32	28.6
Counsel them to get good friends	37	33
Through indirect communication with them	38	33.9
NR	5	4.5
Total	112	100

4.5.7 Prisoner’s Religiosity

Table 4.28 shows that in their reformation processes, 112 (84.8%) of the respondents have attended religious gatherings while in the prison, 16 (12.1%) of the respondents did not attend religious meetings while 4 (3%) did not give a response to this question.

Table 4.28: Prisoners’ Religious Meetings Attendance

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	112	84.8
No	16	12.1
NR	4	3.0
Total	132	100.0

4.5.8 Effects of Prisoners’ Religiosity

Out of the 112 respondents who reported to have attended religious meetings while in prison, 28 (25%) indicate that they now know what God wants from them as good parents, 38 (33.9%) have learnt their responsibilities as parents, 16 (14.3%) indicate that attending religious meetings has helped them to reduce stress and 28 (25%) respondents got born again. However, 2 (1.5%) respondents did not indicate how attending religious gatherings impacted their lives. This information is presented in Table 4.29.

Table 4.29: Effects of Prisoners' Religiosity

	Frequency	Percent
I know what God wants from me as good parent	28	25
Learnt my responsibilities as a parent	38	33.9
Reduces stress	16	14.3
Got born again Christian	28	25
NR	2	1.8
Total	112	100

4.5.9 Changing the Prisoner Identity to a Good Parent Identity

As presented in Table 4.30, nearly all prisoners 128 (97%) would want to change their prisoner identity and have done several things to facilitate the change. Only 2(1.5%) did not express willingness to change and a similar number did not give a response.

Table 4.30: Willingness to Change

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	128	97.0
No	2	1.5
NR	2	1.5
Total	132	100.0

4.5.10 Changing Prisoner Identity to a Good Parent Identity

Furthermore, information was sought on the ways prisoners were willing to change to being good parents. Out of the 128 who answered Yes, 70 (54.7%) of them indicated that they counsel their child/ children on good behaviour, 30 (23.4%) reported that they attend religious meetings, 8 (6.3%) indicated that they practice good parenting skills, 12 (9.4%) of them indicated that they try to be friendly to their child/children. However, 8 (6.3%) did not give a response. This information is tabulated in Table 4.31.

Table 4.31: Prisoners' Identity Change to a Good Parent Identity

	Frequency	Percent
I counsel my child/ children on good behaviour	70	54.7
I attend religious meetings	30	23.4
I practice good parenting skills	8	6.3
I try to be friendly to my child/children	12	9.4
NR	8	6.3
Total	128	100.0

4.5.11 Self-blame

Table 4.32 presents results on self-blame for imprisonment. As shown, 112 (84.8%) of the prisoners blamed themselves for their actions that led to imprisonment, 10 (7.6%) did not blame themselves while a similar number did not indicate whether or not they blamed themselves for being imprisoned.

Table 4.32: Self-blame for Imprisonment

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	112	84.8
No	10	7.6
NR	10	7.6
Total	132	100

One male imprisoned parent commented that;

“... Because of going to church here in prison, I am changed and now I blame myself for the action that led to my imprisonment. If I would have been going to church, I would not have been jailed.”

One key informant remarked,

“...Imprisoned parents who attend church here have shown better response to reform than those that don't attend church. This is attributable to parenting programmes that

the church teaches the inmates.”

(Source: Male key informant, Provincial prisons’ Chaplin at Embu women prison, 2018)

4.5.12 Prisoners’ Opinion of Re-jail

Moreover, the respondents were asked whether they hated being imprisoned again. As shown on the Table 4.33, 44 (39.3%) indicated that they would hate to be jailed again since they have reformed, 36 (32.1%) indicated that they would hate to be jailed again since they have changed completely, 28 (25%) indicated that they would hate to be jailed again as they will never repeat crime(s). 2 (1.8%) reported that they would not hate to be jailed again and a similar number did not give a response.

Table 4.33: Prisoners’ Opinion of Re-jail

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I have reformed	44	39.3
Yes, I have changed completely	36	32.1
Yes, I will never repeat it	28	25.0
No	2	1.8
NR	2	1.8
Total	112	100.0

4.5.13 Regular Visits by the Prisoner’s Children and Reformation

From the Table 4.34, majority of the prisoners (85.9%) indicated that if allowed to have regular visits, it would enhance parenting roles on their children. A few of them (14.1%) indicate that regular visits would not enhance parenting roles in prison. This implies that the prisoners are willing to remain good parents despite their incarceration. They wish to keep seeing their children, counsel and give them advice to make them law abiding citizens.

Table 4.34: Controlling Parenthood Challenges in Prison

	Yes (%)	No (%)
Would regular visits enhance parenting roles?	85.9	14.1
Can phone calls communication help keep important parenthood contacts?	71.9	28.1
Any need for parenting programs?	88.9	11.1

4.5.14 Importance of Children’s Frequent Visits their Imprisoned Parents

As indicated in Table 4.35, out of those who agreed that regular visits would enhance parenting roles, 63 (54.8%) of them indicated that their children do not forget them and 47 (40.9%) indicated that regular visits help them to keep advising children about the right and wrong things in life. However, 5 (4.3%) of the respondents did not give a response.

One key informant commented:

“...The Kenya Prison Service had launched the Remote Parenting as a rehabilitation idea that has allowed prison visits. However, the challenges to this brilliant concept are that almost all of the caregivers of the children of prisoners cannot afford to bring prisoners’ children for the visits. This may be among other factors, mainly because of financial constraints.”

(Source: Male key informant, Welfare Officer at Embu women prison, 2018)

Table 4.35: Importance of Children’s Frequent Visits

	Frequency	Percent
They do not forget me	63	54.8
To keep advising them about right and wrong things	47	40.9
NR	5	4.3

4.5.15 Importance of Parent-child Communication

As shown in Table 4.36, out the respondents that indicated that phone calls communication can help keep important parenthood contacts, 20 (21.7%) indicated that calls help since their children hear their mother's/father's voice, 56 (60.9%) of them reported that if allowed to make phone calls, there is control of the parenting challenges since children know their parents are

still there for them, 12 (13%) of them indicated that they always keep contact with their children while 4 (1.3%) did not give a response.

One respondent commented:

“...Now we allow them to have phone calls through the institution-provided mobile phones. However, these calls are made under the supervision of welfare officer.”

(Source: Male key informant, Welfare Officer at Embu women prison, 2018)

Table 4.36: How Phone Calls Control Parenting Challenges

	Frequency	Percent
They hear their mother's/father's voice	20	21.7
They know I am still there for them	56	60.9
Always in contact with them	12	13
NR	4	4.3
Total	92	100

4.5.16 Parenting Programs in the Prison

Table 4.37 presents data on the importance of parenting programmes. Out of the respondents who indicated that there was need for parenting programmes, 14 (12.5%) of the respondents parenting programmes are necessary as they are able to able discuss problems with other parents, 54 (48.2%) indicated that parenting programmes would impart good parenting knowledge and skills, 30 (26.8%) reported that parenting programmes are necessary as solutions to many problems facing them are discussed, 10 (8.9%) indicated that parenting programmes are necessary as parenting is so complicated and needs good advice. However, 4 (3.6%) did not give a response.

Table 4.37: Importance of Parenting Programs in the Prison

	Frequency	Percent
Able to discuss problems with other parents	14	12.5
Would impart good parenting knowledge & skills	54	48.2
Solution to problems are discussed	30	26.8
Parenting is so complicated and needs advice	10	8.9
NR	4	3.6
Total	112	100

4.6 Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive discussion of the research findings in line with the objectives of this study. It highlights, among other things, parenthood challenges faced by prisoners at the Embu Prison. Secondly this section highlights the effects of such parental challenges on the prisoners' reformation. Finally, this section highlights the coping mechanism of prisoners with and strategies for controlling parenthood challenges by prison administration to influence reformation at the Embu Prison.

4.6.1 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners that Affect Reformation

This study shows that most of the prisoners at Embu prison are not visited. This finding concurs with a study by Kalkan and Smith (2014) which found out that families of prisoners are faced with major difficulties concerning visiting the imprisoned member. This is due to cost of travel, and distance of prison from home.

This study also shows that most of the prisoners get stigmatized by their children, spouse and other family members for being imprisoned. These findings are in support of empirical studies noting that parents also face stigma due to imprisonment (Corston, 2007; Snyder, 2009). For instance, women's aberration from the societal roles as mothers that are occasioned by their imprisonment has been pinpointed as the cause. Stigma is experienced differently depending on a person's gender. Mothers in prison grapple with more stigma than fathers due to the separation from their children. Labeled principles of motherhood increase the stigma in mothers unlike fathers (Morash & Schram, 2002). More studies show that the prison experience is gendered with women facing more stigma than men. The key causes of this

stigmatization are the general judgment of women in prison as being inadequate, unfit, heartless and subpar according to the societal standard of motherhood.

The study found that as a result of imprisonment, majority of the prisoners do not have control over their children. These findings lend support to the study by Beckerman (1994) which argued that the prison environment militate against parents by hindering them from retaining their authority as parents; communication problems; illiteracy, and ignorance of their need for involvement in the lives of their children are also obstacles to that authority. Additionally, the distressing prison environment itself must be one of the hardest and most traumatizing situations that a loving parent would endure. Further, as argued by Miller (2008), the study found that parenting while in jail for a loving parent cannot be an easy endeavor because of the prison environment.

According to this study, absence of imprisoned parents from home negatively affects their children due to loss of livelihood which also has further implication on children. Accordingly, such children, out of their disadvantaged situation, may turn to crimes. Fathers contribute to the lives of their children by being available and present, interacting directly with them and imparting responsible behaviour and catering for their children's needs (Lamb et al., 1987, as cited in Lanaster et al., 1987, p. 119). Moreover, a study done by Maruschak et al. (as cited in Eddy & Poehlmann (Eds.), 2010, p.35) showed that the imprisonment of a parent, impedes their involvement in the life of children, like the father's contact through play. This situation is always worsened by the length of the sentence or by the recidivism of the parent. The findings of this study that parental absence through imprisonment resulted in the victimization of their children, mirrors the study by Roberts (2012), which found out that children whose parents are incarcerated may become victims of bullying in school.

Further, the current study also revealed stigmatization of the prisoners' children. This lends credence to findings by Robertson (2013) that parental incarceration contributes trauma among their children. The implication here is that children may have to cope with the stress of fending for the younger siblings due to parental imprisonment (Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, SCCYP, 2011).

Even though most prisoners' views were of the position that their children have never engaged in criminal activities, this contradicts this finding by Lamb et al. (1987) as cited in Lanaster et

al., (1987, p. 119) that showed impeded parenthood children's propensity to turn to crimes as a way of venting their stress and frustrations about their situation that has been caused by the imprisonment of their parents.

4.6.2 Parenting Prisoners' Challenges Faced and Reformation

This study found that children's absence affected incarcerated parents' reformation process. Whereas this can only be attributed to psychological factors, these findings concur with reviewed literature noting that for the imprisoned parents, parent-child contact can play such an important role in their reformation and that is why parent-child contact may be encouraged with regard to the prisoners (Brooks, 1994). Moreover, a study Moloney et al. (2009) on the effect of fatherhood on male gang in San Francisco revealed that becoming a father represented a turning point on the cessation of offending and an instigator for transformation for many of them. This therefore, means that assisted parenting through parenting programmes in prison would enhance the rehabilitation and reformation of parent prisoners.

It is noteworthy from the literature that parental separation from their children hampers prisoners' achievement of their duties as parents which is against the very core aim of rehabilitation. Prison's environment with its restrictive rules guiding the inmate's contact with his or her children and family, increases the possibility of future offending upon the prisoner's release from the prison (Arditti, 2012). Prisoners, when separated from their families, become detached from their duties and then at worst being socialized into the life of a prisoner; thus, offending becomes normalized. With this fact in mind, one has to think that making sure that there is regular parental contact with their children through visits would help realize the correctional goal of prisons (Brooks, 1994). According to Robertson (2012) and Prison Reform Trust (2013) prison visits reduce recidivism. Poor parenting caused by impeded parenthood of the prisoners in the long run negatively impacts on the reformation efforts of the affected prisoners (Celinska & Siegel, 2010).

4.6.3 Prisoners' Coping Mechanisms and Strategies for Controlling Parenthood Challenges by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation

According to this study, most parent prisoners counsel their children to cultivate good behaviour. This indicates that most of the parents would like to practice good parenting mainly to counsel their children to avoid landing in prison too. This is why a majority of them are counseling their children against bad friends, against crimes, and encouraging them to get good

friends. This is in harmony with the study done by Celinska and Siegel (2010) who noted that in the prison setting, such actions may entail giving parental verbal discipline or advice on phone calls and during their visits, writing letters and ensuring maintained contacts with children's caregivers. This, in turn, improves reformation of the incarcerated parents because it enhances parenting roles of a prisoner and the prisoners' social capital (Mills & Codd, 2008).

This study shows that most parent prisoners in their reformation process have attended a religious gathering in the prison as a way of coping with imprisonment. This is in concurrence with studies, including interviews with inmates, which have revealed that religion has strong impacts even on deviants, hence, has great prospective to 'control' crime (Hoyles, 1965; Musgrave, 2004).

As argued by Celinska and Siegel (2010) this study has found that self-blame, as a coping mechanism, has been found to be contributory in helping an inmate in the self-transformation. Self-blame gives the inmate a chance to own up and take up responsibility for the offense that landed him or her into the prison and hence facilitates self-transformation. This sense of self-blame and practice of responsibility would aid in the reformation of prisoners because no responsible person would want to engage in antisocial behaviour on repeated occasions.

This study found out that prison visits by the family and children of prisoners is a strategy for reducing and controlling parenthood challenges in prison. This finding supports previous studies' findings that one way of sustaining the contact is to allow prison visits which enable parents and children to bond while they interact, talk and play. This is imperative for reformation of imprisoned parents. Houck and Loper (2002) posit that the environment may lessen or hasten stressful responses. Parents and children should be allowed to eat together so as to create chances of characteristic nurturing and satiating experience for both parent and child. Such an environment basically reduces the tension that may have built up between the parent and his or her children and stress on the part of the parent due to the negative impact of self-blame (Kates et al., 2008).

This study also shows that allowing imprisoned parents to make many phone calls home would facilitate their parenthood while in prison. This is in agreement with other findings noting that, when physical contact between parent and child is impossible, communication in form of the

phone calls and mails can help to maintain parent-child contact. Even if the calls are irregular, it makes the child feel valued and loved by the parent. Keeping contact through calls have been found to be useful for the separated or divorced parent in an effort to talk with their children when personal contact is impossible. In an effort to overcome challenges of the impeded parenthood, controlled communication should be deliberately allowed between parents and their children (Stahl, 2002).

The findings of this study indicate that the respondents need parenting programmes in prison as a way of mitigating parenthood challenges in prison. This concurs with the position put forth by Van Wormer and Kaplan (2006) that there is a need for the gender-precise programmes for the parents in the correctional facilities. This means that, in as much the programmes for both male and female inmates are the same, they should be directed to address specific needs of both genders as they experience imprisonment differently. Most prisoners have been found to lack appropriate parenting skills. This calls for the intervention in providing programmes that include such skills. Moreover, programmes that help in nurturing relationships most likely reduce criminal justice costs, adolescent pregnancy, and drug and substance abuse (Luke, 2002).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of major findings of the study. It similarly gives both the theoretical and the empirical conclusions of the study. Moreover, it presents the recommendations on how to lessen the impact of the impeded parenthood so as to ensure that the reformation goal of the imprisonment is achieved. Finally, suggestions for further studies are also made.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The challenges of impeded parenthood are a very important factor in the process of offender reformation. However, a little attention has been paid to these challenges, perhaps because of little knowledge occasioned by the lack of research in this area. A research on the effects of challenges of impeded parenthood on the reformation of offenders would inform a clear policy of dealing with the challenges that the inmates face with regards to parenting. Thus, analysis of the literature pointed to this dearth of knowledge that this study sought to fill. This section thus presents the major findings of the study with regards to the specific objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners at Embu Prison

The parenthood challenges that prisoners face and that affect their reformation are lack of adequate visits by their children; prisoners' stigmatization by their children; lack of the parental control over their children; inability to provide for their children due to their imprisonment; and lack of regular communication with their children through phone calls.

The findings of this study showed that parent prisoners' visits are allowed. However, this study showed that most of the prisoners at Embu prison are not visited frequently which may, in turn, result in their stress and worry. The study found out that prisoners get stigmatized by their children, spouse and other family members for being imprisoned. These are big challenges that affect them in prison. However, most of the prisoners face stigma from relatives but do not know the nature of the stigma faced by their children, other relatives, and spouses. The study indicated that prisoners do not have control of their children, in prison. The study showed some prisoners have no control over their children but would like to get more children visits to prison so as to increase their control.

The study findings also indicated that the parent prisoners' absence from home negatively affected their children. For instance, some of the children of prisoners' resort to deviance and delinquency; they, for instance, engage in stealing of foodstuffs. Moreover, the study showed prisoners' absence from their children negatively affected their children's education and general care. These realities affect the imprisoned parents in a huge way because of stress and worry.

When asked about how their children react to stigmatization, the majority indicated that their children have been stigmatized. Most of these prisoners' children react to stigmatisation by feeling stressed and worried. This indicates that being a prisoner has made their children to be stigmatised and even their children's ways of reacting are also a big challenge to them as incarcerated parents.

5.2.2 Impacts of the Parenthood Challenges Faced by Prisoners on Reformation

This objective sought to find out the effects of the parenthood challenges on the reformation of prisoners. The parenthood challenges according to the findings of this study include lack of adequate visits by their children; prisoners' stigmatization by their children; lack of the parental control over their children; inability to provide for their children due to their imprisonment; and lack of regular communication with their children through phone calls.

The study indicated that lack of adequate visits by prisoners' children made prisoners sink into worry and stress. Stigmatization of imprisoned parents by their children also contributed to their stress and worry. The study also showed that the imprisoned parents' lack of control over their children resulted in the prisoners' worry and stress that negatively impacted on their reformation.

The study also found out that the prisoners' lack of regular contact with their children through phone calls further worsened their stress and worry levels to near depression. According to this study, imprisoned parents were not able to adequately provide basic needs and other general welfare needs. This was said to affect their reformation aspect due to perceived suffering of their children. In addition, some children of the prisoners turned to crimes such as stealing to fend for themselves. This negatively affected their parents' interest in reformation as there were fears that this may similarly land their children in jail.

5.2.3 Prisoners' Coping Mechanisms and Strategies by Prison Administration to Influence Reformation

The question that guided this objective was how prisoners cope with parenthood challenges that affect their reformation. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the inmates have adopted various coping strategies. These coping mechanisms put them in a good state of mind and, in turn, alleviate worries and stress that may hinder their reformation at Embu prison. These included regularly attending religious gathering in prison, telephone conversations with their children at home, and, in the case of women, by trying sewing of pullovers and sending them to their children at home, among others.

The findings of the study also indicated imprisoned parents try to cope with their imprisonment by changing their prisoner identity to a good person identity. This has been achieved by trying to provide for their children, for instance, the women sew pullovers and send them to their children. Still, others have decided to start attending church services and being born again Christians. Findings of the study also indicated that imprisoned parents blame themselves for their actions that led to imprisonment. As such changing of the prisoner identity to a good person identity is ultimately important to the reformation of imprisoned parents at Embu prison.

The study established that a large proportion of the prisoners were of the view that regular visits would have enhanced parenting roles for their children. This implied that if regular visits were allowed, there could be increased control over the challenges faced by parenting prisoners. Moreover, the majority of the respondents indicated that regular visits help them to keep advising children about the right and wrong things in life. This controls a lot of challenges brought about by the absence of both the parent and the children. Majority of parenting prisoners opined that allowing them to make many phone calls home would facilitate them to fulfil their parenting roles while in prison. Majority of the prisoners felt that making frequent calls at home would help them maintain contact with their children.

According to this study, majority of the parenting prisoners needed parenting programmes in prison. The implication here is that this, in combination with other strategies, could greatly impact positively on the reformation of the imprisoned parents. Parenting programmes would impart them with highly needed parenting skills, and general knowledge on best parenting methods, in what they termed as willful reformation.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Theoretical Conclusions

This study was guided by three theories, the Cultural Transmission Theory which informed the study by focusing on how criminal or deviant behavior is formed, the Reformatory Theory which informed the study by explaining that a criminal is not born but made by the environment in the society where he or she lives. Therefore, the imprisoned parents should be treated as patients and not as a lawbreaker and that every prison has the responsibility to reform the offenders such as the imprisoned parents. Rational Choice Theory which informed the study on the rational decisions that both the prison's administration and the inmate have to make for the sake of ensuring that the reformation efforts are a success. The study concluded that there is a need for the prison to adopt more reformation strategies and programmes to ensure effective reformation of the imprisoned parents. As argued by the rational choice theory, individuals make rational decisions based on the information they have, due to the fact that they are rational beings. This study, in addition, concludes with a call to prison administration to create enabling environment for prisoners that will trigger and facilitate positive choices and decision making for meaningful change or reformation processes.

5.3.2 Empirical Conclusions

Study findings have indicated that the parenting prisoners are facing myriad impeded parenting challenges. It is thus concluded that impeded parenting has brought about the parents-children separation and absence. This situation is impeding the imprisoned parents' reformation which is one of the most important aims of the imprisonment. However, it should be noted that not all parents are good at or love their families so much so that their absence from their family would negatively impact on their reformation. Again, due to this lack of parent-child contact, prisoners and their children face victimization and stigmatization which is causing a lot of stress and mental torture to the prisoners. Parents keep thinking about the welfare of their children under the caregivers. The children are also equally stressed since their loved parents are absent to offer comfort and care as expected. So, the study suggests that this cannot allow parents to go through their reformation process properly due to the resultant mental torture. Nevertheless, this also is dependent on whether the individual parenting prisoner loves and cares about the welfare of his or her child or children. Moreover, the reformatory programmes that have been suggested in this study are dependent on both external and the internal factors. External factors comprise family factors like the availability of money to cater for fares to and from prison and the societal factors like public perception on prisoners. Internal factors include

the availability of the resources to implement such programmes and the willingness of the individual prisoner to reform.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

- i. It is recommended that the correctional facilities should have policies to allow frequent parent-children contacts in prison. This would allow some mental satisfaction and well-facilitated willingness to transform. Although there are government policies for releasing prisoners who are left with very short sentences to serve and those considered fully transformed, parents should be considered a lot more. Such policies and their enactment should consider inmates who are parents so as to facilitate the growth of their children as responsible citizens who would not grow with bitterness and become criminals too.
- ii. It is recommended that there should also be gender-based parenting programmes mainstreamed in both prison divisions for male and female inmates alike. This would reduce stress and facilitate acquisition of parenting skills among prisoners. Such programmes would facilitate self-transformation. Inmates would leave prison not only as punished but corrected and reformed citizens.
- iii. It is recommended that the Remote Parenting Program should be given more attention and be implemented in totality. This will in turn positively impact on the reformation of the imprisoned parents.

5.4.2 Areas for Further Research

Whereas this research has brought out important understandings on impeded parenthood, it mainly focused on the challenges thereby not touching on other important factors that may help in the reformation endeavors at Embu Prison. According to the findings, further studies may be done on some other aspects of impeded parenthood

Firstly, the findings of the study revealed that there some parenting programmes at Embu prison. At the core of such programmes is the Remote Parenting Programme which was initiated by the Kenya Prison Service as a rehabilitation strategy for the prisoners in Kenya.

The study, therefore, recommends that an exhaustive study is done on the effectiveness of the Remote Parenting Programme on the imprisoned parents' reformation.

Secondly, this study combined both genders but found out that there is a gender-based parenting programme at the Embu prison. In this regard, the study recommends that future studies should be done entirely on the contribution of gender-based parenthood programmes on the imprisoned parents' reformation.

Lastly, the study found out that there are some imprisoned parents that were not interested in reformation, however, reformation still remains a key goal of imprisonment. Therefore, the study also recommended for a study to be conducted on the impact of the recidivism among the imprisoned parents on their reformation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Imprisoned Parents

Demographic data

1. Your Age (Select only one.)

18-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

61 and above

2. Your Gender / Sex (Select only one.)

Female Male

3. What is your level of education?

Uneducated

Primary

Secondary

College/ University

4. How many children do you have?

B: Parenthood challenges faced by inmates and reformation

4. Now that you are imprisoned, under whose care are your children / child?

Father

Mother

Grandparents

Other relatives

Are

alone

5. a) Does the prison allow for the visits when you can interact with your children?

Yes

No

b) If yes, how often are you visited by your children?

Never;

Monthly;

After every 3 / 4 months;

Yearly

6. (a) In your opinion, do you feel or have you experienced stigma from your spouse,

children or family members or caregiver of your child / children due your imprisonment?

Yes No

b) If yes, how?

.....
.....
.....

7. Do you think you still have control over your child / children?

Yes No

8. In your opinion, what is the most important thing that you would wish to be doing for your children which you are not in a position to do now?

.....
.....

9. a) To the best of your knowledge, do you think your children / child have ever been stigmatized because of your imprisonment? Yes No

(b) If yes, in what way?

.....c

(c) How do you react to such stigmatization?

.....1

10. a) Do you know of situations your child /children have ever been wrongly accused because of the perception that they are children of a prisoner?

Yes No

b) If yes, how?

.....

11. How do they such accusation affect your relationship with them?

.....

12. (a) To the best of your knowledge, do you think that your children are well cared for by the caregiver?

Yes No

(b). Does this affect your prison life?

Yes No

13. How would you describe your relationship with your child / children following your imprisonment?.....

.....
.....
.....

14. How does thought of how your children are cared for affect you while in prison?

Negatively Positively No effect

15. (a) To the best of your knowledge, has any of your children / child ever been involved in a serious problem ever since you got imprisoned?

Yes No

(b) If yes, how often?

Never 1-2 times 3-5 times 6 or more times

16. Does the prison arrange for regular visits by your children and relatives?

Yes No

17. (a) Do you use any other form of communication to your children?

- Yes No

(b) If above is yes, which one?

- SMS Phone Calls Letter None

18. Do prison challenges affect your ability to change behaviour?

- Yes No

19. Which challenges do you face most as a parent in prison?

- Stress Stigma Cannot control my children
 Not allowed to talk to my children

10. How do these problems affect your reformation process?

- Bitterness Want to revenge/hurt Want to abuse drugs
 Want to continue in crime

C: Coping strategies of inmates with parenthood challenges and reformation

11. (a) Do you try to be a good parent you should, despite your imprisonment?

- Yes No

(b) If yes, how?

.....
.....
.....

12. (a) Are you still actively parenting through involvement in their lives and affairs?

Yes No

(b) If yes, how?

.....

.....

.....

13. (a) Do you strive to make yourself friendlier to your children to ensure sustained relationship?

Yes No (b) If yes, how?

.....

.....

.....

14. (a) Do you experience the need to change the prisoner's identity to a good person's identity such as a good parent?

Yes No

(b) Explain your answer above

.....

.....

15. (a) Ever since you got jailed, have you attended any religious meeting?

Yes No

(b) If yes, how has the attendance impacted your reformation?

.....
.....
.....2

16. (a) Which are the main ways of coping with prison challenges as parent?

- role redefinition disassociation from prisoner tag self-blame, planning and preparation for future self-transformation being a good parent

(b) How do these coping ways help in reformation process?

- adversely positively no effects I don't know

B: Challenges faced by imprisoned parents and reformation

29 How does your inability to be present for your children due to imprisonment impact your reformation process?

.....
.....
.....

30. (a) Do you think lack of regular contact with your children negatively affects your reformation process?

- Yes No

(b) If yes, please explain how?

.....
.....
.....

31. (a) Do you think that lack of regular communication with your children negatively impacts your reformation?

Yes No

(b) If yes, please explain your answer

.....
.....
.....

C: Strategies of controlling parenthood challenges and reformation

32. (a) Do you think that allowing children to visit you in prison would enhance your parenting roles?

Yes No

(b) If yes, explain your answer.

.....
.....
.....

33. (a) Can the communication between you and your children through phone calls help you in maintaining the contact that is important for parenting?

Yes No

(b) If yes, explain your answer.

.....
.....
.....

34. (a) Do you think there is need for parents to be provided with parenting programs aimed at enhancing their skills in parenting?

Yes No

(b) If yes, explain your answer.

.....
.....
.....

35. (a) Which are the ways that prison staff uses to help you in your parenting?

SMS our children Call our children Regular contacts/talks with prison staff
 Regular mental health checks None

(b) Other (please specify)

.....
.....

36. (a) Does the control strategies help you in your reformation process?

Yes No

(b) How do these control strategies help in your reformation.

Comfort Willingness to change behaviour Ready to hurt others

Always ready to do right things No effects

(c) How do you think the situation can be corrected?

.....
.....
.....

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Key Informants

A: Parenthood challenges of prisoners and reformation

- 1 Does the prison allow for the visits when one can interact with their children and are the prisoners frequently visited by their children?
- 2 Have you ever come across information of stigmatization of any prisoner by his / her children or relatives?
- 3 Do you think prisoners can maintain control over their child / children?
- 4 In your opinion, would you say that a prisoner's absence from his/her family can negatively affect his/her child /children?
- 5 To the best of your knowledge, can children / child of a prisoner be stigmatized because of his/her imprisonment?
- 6 Do you know of situation(s) where child /children of a prisoner have ever been wrongly accused because of the perception that they are children of a prisoner?
- 7 To the best of your knowledge, do you think that prisoners' children are well cared for by their caregivers?
- 8 Generally, how would you describe prisoners' parent-child relationship?
- 9 Have you ever known if there any of prisoners' children who has ever been forced to sell illicit alcohol and /or drugs to get money for their upkeep?
- 10 How do these challenges affect offenders' reformation?

B: Coping strategies of inmates with parenthood challenges and reformation

- 11 Do you know of the prisoners who try to be a good parent they should, despite their imprisonment? Please explain it.

12 Do you know of the prisoners who are actively parenting through involvement in the lives and affairs of their children and how they may be doing this?

13 Do you know of prisoners who strive to make themselves friendlier to their children to ensure sustained relationship?

14 Do you think prisoners experience the need to change the prisoner's identity to a good person's identity such as a good parent and how does this happen?

15 Do you know of parents in prison who blame themselves for the actions that caused their imprisonment?

16 How do coping measures affect prisoners' reformation?

B: Challenges faced by prisoners and reformation

17 How does inability to be present for their children due to imprisonment impact prisoners' reformation process?

18 In your opinion, does lack of regular contact between the prisoner and his/her children negatively affects his/her reformation process and how?

19 Do you think that lack of regular communication between the prisoner and his/her family members like children negatively impacts his/her reformation and why?

C: Strategies for controlling prisoners' parenthood challenges and reformation

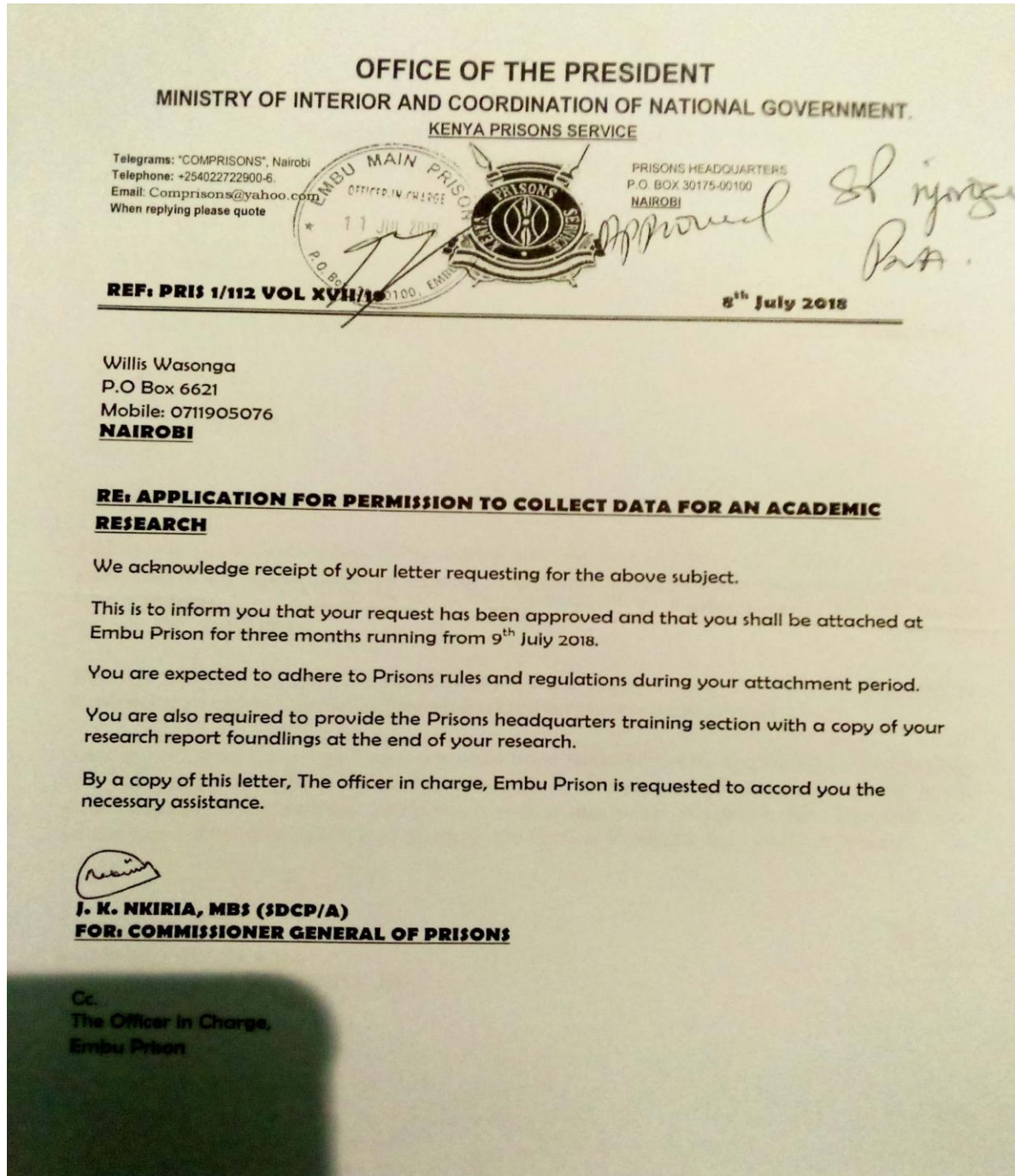
20 Do you think that allowing children to visit their parents in prison would enhance their parenting roles and how can this?

21 Can the parent-child communication through phone calls help prisoners in maintaining the contact that is important for parenting?

22 Do you think there is need for parents to be provided with parenting programs aimed at enhancing their skills in parenting?

23 How do your control strategies influence the prisoners' reformation?

Appendix III: Research Authorisation Letter by KPS



Appendix IV: Research Authorisation Letter by NACOSTI



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI Upper Kabete
Off Wanyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/26602/23688**

Date **20th July, 2018**

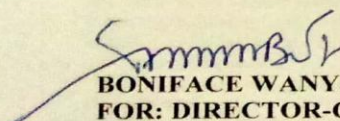
Willis Wasonga
Egerton University
P.O. Box 536-20115
NJORO

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Effect of impeded parenthood on reformation of offenders at Embu Prison”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Embu County** for the period ending **19th July, 2019**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Embu County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Embu County.

The County Director of Education
Embu County.

Appendix V: Research Permits

Appendix V: Research Permits

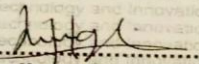
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. WILLIS - WASONGA
of EGERTON UNIVERSITY, 0-40103
KISUMU, has been permitted to conduct
research in Embu, County

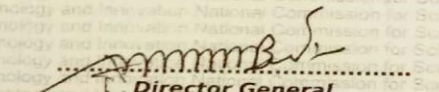
Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/26602/23688
Date Of Issue : 20th July,2018
Fee Received :Ksh 1000

on the topic: EFFECT OF IMPEDED
PARENTHOOD ON REFORMATION OF
OFFENDERS AT EMBU PRISON

for the period ending:
19th July,2019




.....
Applicant's
Signature

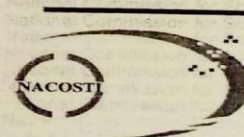

.....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
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7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
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REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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RESEARCH CLEARANCE
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CONDITIONS: see back page

Appendix VI: Published Papers Abstract

IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)
Volume 24, Issue 4, Ser. 2 (April. 2019) 65-77
e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
www.iosrjournals.org

Effect of Impeded Parenthood on Reformation of Offenders at EMBU Prison

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Abstract: This paper examines the effect of impeded parenthood on the reformation of offenders at Embu Prison. It was necessitated by the fact that impeded (hindered) parenthood at Embu prison has caused worries and stress which can, in turn, affect reformation of the imprisoned parents and who constitute a significant prison population. The specific objectives of the study were: to identify the parenthood challenges prisoners face during imprisonment, to assess how prisoners cope with parenthood challenges, to describe the effects of the challenges faced by prisoners on the reformation of prisoners and to examine how parenthood challenges in prison can be controlled by prison administration at Embu Prison. This study was guided by the reformatory theory and rational choice theory. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample total of 153 inmates comprising of 133 males and 20 females was found representative but purposively a sample of 132 inmates serving long-term (more than 3 years) sentences and who have children aged below 17 and below years and five key informants were identified and selected. Interview schedule and questionnaire were the instruments for data collection. The data analysis was done with the help of Excel computer program and Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. Analysed data was presented by frequency tables and percentages. The findings of this study indicate that parenting prisoners face a lot of challenges such as stigma 87.5% from relatives their children, lack of visits by their children, lack of parental control over their children and victimization of their children. Analysis of the coping mechanisms of imprisoned parents indicated that they try to be good parents 95.2%, counseling their children, and attending religious gatherings. The study found out that prison challenges resulted in stress and worries among imprisoned parents which had adverse effects on their reformation. The study concluded that strategies for controlling parenthood challenges by the prison administration which were found to be; regular visits by prisoners' children, allowing frequent prison visits, more but controlled phone calls by inmates and parenting programs would facilitate reformation imprisoned parents. This study, therefore, recommends for more reformation programs to be introduced at the prison. Also, an environment where reformation would easily acceptable to the imprisoned parents needs to be created as part of the initiatives of the larger spectrum of reformation.

Keywords: Impeded parenthood; imprisoned parents; parenthood challenges; stress and worries; reformation.

Date of Submission: 20-03-2019

Date of acceptance: 06-04-2019

**IMPEDED PARENTHOOD: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LINK
BETWEEN PRISONERS' COPING MECHANISMS AND REFORMATION AT
EMBU PRISON**

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Abstract

The paper objective of this paper was to analyse how prisoners' coping mechanisms with parenthood challenges affect their reformation at Embu prison. It was necessitated by the fact that impeded (hindered) parenthood at Embu prison had presented a lot of challenges prisoners' parenting endeavors. These challenges in turn caused worries and stress which can, in turn, affect reformation of the imprisoned parents and who constitute a significant prison population. The specific objectives of the study were: to assess the effect of prisoners' coping mechanism with parenthood challenges on their reformation. This study was guided by the reformative theory and rational choice theory. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample total of 153 inmates comprising of 133 males and 20 females was found representative but purposively a sample of 132 inmates serving long-term (more than 3 years) sentences and who have children aged below 17 and below years and five key informants were identified and selected. Interview schedule and questionnaire were the instruments for data collection. The data analysis was done with the help of Excel computer program and Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. Analysis of the coping mechanisms of imprisoned parents indicated that they try to be good parents 95.2%, counseling their children, and attending religious gatherings. The study concluded that the positive coping mechanisms of parenting prisoners have positive effect on their reformation. This study, therefore, recommends for more reformation programs that tend to promote coping mechanisms among parenting to be introduced at the prison. Also, an environment where reformation would easily acceptable to the imprisoned parents needs to be created as part of the initiatives of the larger spectrum of reformation.

Keywords: Impeded Parenthood; Imprisoned Parents; Parenthood Challenges; Stress And Worries; Coping Mechanisms; Reformation.