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Inmates' Attitudes Toward Rehabilitation: The Influence of Prison Subculture in Kismayo, Somalia

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Abstract : The prison system plays a vital role in maintaining public safety and supporting the rehabilitation of offenders. Understanding inmates' perspectives on rehabilitation is crucial for effective criminal justice reform. This study investigates how prison subculture influences inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. The research was based on Social Cognitive Theory. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were gathered quantitatively from 213 inmates- both first-time offenders and recidivists- through the Inmate Rehabilitation Attitude Questionnaire (IRAQ). Three hypotheses were tested and analyzed with correlation and multiple regression methods. The zero-order correlation results showed strong positive links between inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation and prison programs ($r = .688$, $p < .01$), prison environment ($r = .570$, $p < .01$), and coping strategies ($r = .541$, $p < .01$). A multiple regression analysis indicated that these three factors together explained 70% of the variation in attitudes toward rehabilitation ($R^2 = .704$, Adjusted $R^2 = .700$, $F(3, 209) = 166.002$, $p < .001$), demonstrating strong combined predictive power. Further analysis of individual contributions revealed that prison programs had the greatest impact ($\beta = .546$, $p < .001$), followed by coping strategies ($\beta = .365$, $p < .001$), and prison environment ($\beta = .232$, $p < .001$). These findings imply that well-structured prison programs, supportive environments, and effective coping mechanisms significantly shape inmates' readiness for rehabilitation. The study recommends adopting a comprehensive approach to prison reform, focusing on improving programs, environmental conditions, and psychological support services to promote successful rehabilitation.

Keywords: Inmates, Attitudes toward Rehabilitation, Prison Subculture, Kismayo, Somalia

Introduction

Globally, rehabilitation is a fundamental goal of the criminal justice system, aimed at reducing recidivism and fostering reintegration into society. Successful rehabilitation interventions in prisons are designed to enable inmates to reform and become law-abiding citizens. Maltz (2001) submits that prisons should provide a rehabilitative environment that addresses the physical, social, and psychological drivers of criminal behaviour. Effective rehabilitation processes include planned activities that interrogate inmates' offending tendencies, while also providing education, work skills, and attitude adjustments to increase employment prospects upon release (House of Common Article, 2005). The role of rehabilitation in correctional institutions has been a central focus of modern penology, aiming to reform inmates and reduce recidivism by addressing issues such as substance abuse, anger management, and education deficits (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

However, the success of these programs often depends on inmates' attitudes toward them. Inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation are influenced by various factors, including the prison subculture, which encompasses the informal norms, values, and social structures that develop within correctional facilities (Sykes, 2007; Clemmer, 1940). Positive attitudes toward rehabilitation can facilitate engagement and program effectiveness, while negative perceptions can lead to avoidance or superficial participation (Visher et al., 2011). Also, studies on recidivism indicate that rehabilitation efforts are often insufficient.

Globally, 80% of inmates are rearrested within ten years after release (House of Common article, 2005; Freeman, 2003). In the U.S., nearly 44% of released prisoners are rearrested within the first year, and about 68% are rearrested within three years (Alper et al., 2018). This highlights a significant gap between the intended rehabilitative outcomes and the actual reintegration of former inmates into society. One significant factor shaping inmate attitudes toward rehabilitation is the prison subculture. This subculture consists of the unwritten norms, values, and social behaviours shared by inmates that govern how they interact with each other and prison staff. Over the years, prison subculture has included challenging authority, obeying the inmate code, and standing by one's fellow inmates (Clemmer, 1940). Because of these factors, a prisoner's attitude toward rehabilitation programmes can change. If someone follows the inmate code, which usually advises against agreeing with those working on behaviour improvement, they may refuse rehabilitation (Sykes, 2007).

Inside a prison, there is typically a subculture that encourages resistance to authority, hinders improvements, and increases involvement in crime (Irwin & Cressey, 1962). Many informal yet unequal rules can undermine rehabilitation efforts in prisons. Being part of this subculture may create stress for inmates, leading to more negative behaviours due to a lack of freedom, limited visits with loved ones, and standard quality meals (Buckallo, 2009). As a result of these challenges, the rehabilitation process is difficult for both male and female prisoners (UNODC, 2008). In addition to other difficulties, imprisoned women must confront raising their children in prison, facing negative labels, having a higher likelihood of contracting HIV, and experiencing abuse. Bronson and Berzofsky (2017) found that, among the U.S. prison population, female inmates are more than twice as likely as male inmates to suffer from major depression. Because rehabilitation centers do not always address women's healthcare needs, issues for women in rehabilitation become more challenging (Bastick & Townhead, 2008). Furthermore, those who adhere to the "inmate code" may isolate themselves from their peers out of fear that fellow inmates will disapprove of their decision to pursue rehabilitation (Garland, 1990). Rejecting the institution's rules prevents prisoners from engaging in beneficial educational, vocational, and therapy programmes (Clemmer, 1940).

Additionally, taking part in prisoner gangs and informal prison businesses often influences a prisoner's attitude toward getting better. According to studies, the need to follow a gang code discourages prisoners from changing their behaviour (Skarbek, 2014). Just as in regular communities, the existence of illegal activities among inmates causes many to depend on these for survival, which leads to less interest in skills and training for a regular job (Jacobs, 1977). At the same time, different prison conditions affect how successful rehabilitation programmes are around the world. The U.S. still deals with overcrowding, and California's prisons have populations 137% higher than their capacity (Gould, 2015). These overcrowding levels lead to more stress, fighting, and gang involvement, all of which hinder people from rehabilitation (Guerino et al., 2011).

However, despite the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) offering various programmes such as education and substance abuse treatment to lower the rate of repeat offenders, almost half of the released inmates went back to jail within three years (Soderborg, 2017). Unlike in Norway, German correctional facilities focus more on various training and work, which results in a lower recidivism rate of 40-48% (Fezel & Wolf, 2015). Because just over 83% of cells are in use and nearly 17% are vacant, rehabilitation can be more easily carried out in Germany's prisons (International Centre for Prison Studies, 2012).

In Africa, prisons face severe challenges that undermine rehabilitation efforts. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of adequate food, and limited contact with family members are common issues (ACHPR, 1995). In Cameroon, for example, the shortage of financial, material, and personnel resources hinders effective rehabilitation (Skotnicki, 2000). Women inmates suffer from inadequate medical care, with pregnant and nursing mothers receiving insufficient nutrition and healthcare (ACHPR, 2002). In Zimbabwe, unsatisfactory sanitary conditions force women inmates to use newspapers and pieces of blankets as substitutes for sanitary towels (Samakaya, 2003). Overcrowding exacerbates the spread of diseases like tuberculosis and HIV, with South Africa reporting a significant rise in inmate health problems due to these conditions (ACHPR, 2002). In Uganda, women inmates are often housed in facilities originally designed for men, further complicating rehabilitation (Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, 1999). This harsh environment leads to poor rehabilitation outcomes and high recidivism rates.

In East Africa, the prison systems across East Africa, including Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda, face substantial challenges that impact both the rehabilitation of inmates and the development of prison subcultures. Being overcrowded creates challenges everywhere, as it causes shortages and leads to more tension inside prisons. As an example, Kenya prison services reported in 2020 that the population in Kenyan prisons was 150% of their recommended capacity (Kenya Prisons Service, 2020). Excessive overcrowding leads to people not having enough food and health care, which prevents them from participating in rehabilitation programmes (UNODC, 2017). Besides the high number of inmates, the political problems in Somalia add extra challenges to prisons. Due to ongoing fighting in Somalia, the prison system in Kismayo is not easily equipped to assist with prisoners' rehabilitation because there is a shortage of both amenities and resources (HRW, 2019). Due to this instability, it becomes hard for the prison system to manage and train inmates, and it has a negative influence on both their lives and rehabilitation programmes (International Crisis Group, 2020).

Furthermore, the way culture and society operate in East African prisons helps shape the culture among inmates. For instance, different ethnic and social groups among imprisoned individuals in Uganda result in the formation of complicated social structures and informal ways for earning money in prison (Nabirye et al., 2021). These forces can play a role in forming a prison subculture, which influences inmates' behaviour and how they connect, and might keep them from participating in rehabilitation. Additional challenges for rehabilitation programmes in East Africa are related to limited resources and the lack of well-built programmes. In Kenya, efforts to launch vocational training and education programmes are frequently restricted by problems with funding and irregular execution (Kenya Prisons Service, 2019).

Similarly, in Somalia, because there are limited rehabilitation and support services for inmates, it is hard for them to successfully rejoin society (UNDP, 2020). They are further complicated by not providing enough training and services for the staff who help with rehabilitation. Measures at the global and regional levels focus on fixing problems in prisons and on making rehabilitation services better. The African Union and the United Nations are pursuing several programmes that focus on improving conditions in prisons and supporting changes (African Union, 2018). Even so, these initiatives have produced mixed results because of problems involving organization and a lack of appropriate funds (UNODC, 2021). Somalia's prison system was mostly intended by the European colonisers to punish people rather than help them improve (Mushanga, 1976; O'Kubasu, 1996; Bernault, 2003; Dikotter & Brown, 2007). Contemporary Somali prisons, managed by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of the National Government, aim to rehabilitate offenders through training and treatment programs (KPS, 2015).

However, these efforts have not been entirely successful. Recidivism rates in Somalia remain alarmingly high, between 60% and 80% (Somalia Prisons Statistics, 2014). Overcrowding is a significant issue, with the prison population standing at 54,000 as of September 2018, against an official capacity of 26,687, resulting in an occupancy level of 202%. This overcrowding, combined with the influence of terrorist groups like Al Shabab, which recruit inmates within these prisons, severely undermines rehabilitation efforts (Kahara, 2017). A study revealed that over 26% of offenders reported being approached by terrorists while incarcerated, further complicating the prison environment's ability to reform inmates effectively.

Theoretically, the Social Cognitive theory of Albert Bandura (1977) suggests that individuals learn behaviours through observing and imitating others, especially those in their social environment. In the prison setting, inmates may learn to reject rehabilitation by observing and mimicking other inmates who devalue or oppose these programs, reinforcing negative attitudes toward change. The theory holds that a person's acquisition of knowledge can be directly affected by observing what other people are doing within social interactions and experiences, and, consequently, learning from them, with the environment, behaviour, and cognition as important factors in influencing development (Bandura, 1986). Indeed, the environment a person lives in may influence his/her behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

In Kismayo, various studies have been conducted on prison rehabilitation, there remains a significant gap in understanding the influence of prison subculture on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation uptake. For instance, Wekesa (2013) highlighted the positive impact of spiritual rehabilitation, vocational training, formal education, and counseling on inmates' lifestyles. However, Muasya (2013) noted dissatisfaction among ex-offenders regarding the rehabilitative programs offered. Moreover, Mwangi (2017) identified poor-quality education as a major contributor to high recidivism rates.

Taken together, the existing literature highlights a persistent global challenge in aligning rehabilitation goals with real outcomes, especially in prisons influenced by ingrained subcultures. While worldwide rehabilitation efforts have advanced to include structured educational, psychological, and vocational programs aimed at reducing recidivism, their success is often hampered by prison subcultures, resource shortages, and systemic flaws—particularly in under-resourced regions like East Africa and Somalia where tough conditions, overcrowding, and informal inmate codes significantly obstruct inmate engagement and successful reintegration. Therefore, this study aims to examine how prison subculture affects inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia, providing evidence to guide policy and practice in post-conflict correctional reform.

Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

i. To analyze the relationship between prison environments, prison programmes, coping mechanisms, and inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.
ii. To describe the joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.
iii. To examine the relative effect of prison environment, prison programs, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Research Hypotheses

Three research hypotheses were raised and tested at a 0.05 significance level:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between prison environments, prison programmes, coping mechanisms, and inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Ho2: There is no significant joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Ho3: There is no significant relative effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Methodology

The study utilized a cross-sectional survey research design. A simple random technique was used to select 222 participants, out of which 9 inmates withdrew voluntarily two weeks after being given the questionnaire for the study by not submitting theirs. The remaining 213 were the participants in the study. The Inmate Rehabilitation Attitude Questionnaire (IRAQ) was self-structured for the study after a rigorous reading through the literature. The scale has 21 items divided into three sub-sections: prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms. The scale features 4 Likert responses: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Higher scores indicate a positive attitude toward rehabilitation, while lower scores suggest resistance or skepticism. The content validity of the scale was 0.72, 0.81, and 0.74, respectively.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between prison environments, prison programmes, coping mechanisms, and inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Table 1: Zero-order correlation showing relationships among variables

	Variables	$\bar{X}$	St.Dv	1	2	3	4
1	Inmates' Attitudes Toward Rehabilitation	2.4373	.57212	1.0			
2	Prison Environments	2.4668	.64530	.570**	1.0		
3	Prison Programmes	2.7492	.52556	.688**	.362**	1.0	
4	Coping Mechanisms	2.5580	.58821	.541**	.385**	.159*	1.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024 *(** significant at 0.01, * significant at 0.05)*

Table 1 indicates a significant relationship between the inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation and prison programmes (r=.688), prison environment (r=.570), and coping mechanisms (r=.541). This implies that effective prison programmes, more favourable prison environments, and better coping mechanisms are each associated with positive attitudes among inmates toward rehabilitation.

Ho2: There is no significant joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Table 2: Table 1: Regression summary showing the joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation

R= .839 Adj.R^2 = .700 R^2 = .704 Std. Error =.31329					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.479	3	16.293	166.002	.000
Residual	20.513	209	0.098		
Total	69.392	212			

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 shows regression results from this study revealed a statistically significant joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. The model yielded a high multiple correlation coefficient (R = .839) and a strong coefficient of determination (R^2 = .704), indicating that these three predictors collectively account for approximately 70% of the variance in inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation. The adjusted R^2 (.700) confirms the model's robustness, while the ANOVA result, $F(3, 209) = 166.002$, $p < .05$, affirms that the observed relationships are not due to chance.

Ho3: There is no significant relative effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia.

Table 3: Multiple Regression summary showing the relative effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on the prediction of inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation.

	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(constant)	-.610	0.139	-	-4.385	<.001

Prison Environment	0.205	0.038	0.232	5.363	<.001
Prison Programmes	0.594	0.044	0.546	13.526	<.001
Coping Mechanisms	0.355	0.040	0.365	8.945	<.001

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 results from the multiple regression analysis provide compelling evidence regarding the relative influence of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. All three predictors were statistically significant, with prison programmes ($\beta = .546$, $t = 13.526$, $p < 0.05$) having the strongest standardized effect, followed by coping mechanisms ($\beta = .365$, $t = 8.945$, $p < 0.05$) and prison environment ($\beta = .232$, $t = 5.363$, $p < .0.05$). These findings underscore the multidimensionality of rehabilitation and point to prison programmes as the most powerful lever in shaping positive rehabilitative attitudes.

Discussion

This study examined the influence of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. The results revealed statistically significant relationships among all variables, highlighting the multidimensional nature of inmate rehabilitation. This discussion situates the current findings within the broader literature, noting both congruencies and points of divergence.

The study findings show that the prison environment has a moderate, statistically significant effect on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation. This means that a humane and supportive prison environment leads to positive attitudes of the inmates toward rehabilitation. This agrees with Sauter et al. (2019), who found that a positive team climate and functional organizational structure within prisons were significantly associated with inmates' positive attitudes toward treatment. Specifically, when prison staff felt adequately informed, valued by leadership, and well-qualified for their work, inmates were more likely to trust in therapy and show less resistance to treatment. Additionally, Day et al. (2011) indicated that a positive social climate within prisons, characterized by social cohesion and mutual support, was associated with inmates' readiness to engage with offender programmes. Similarly, Azemi (2020) revealed that where the prison environment was perceived as positive, inmates exhibited better attitudes toward rehabilitation. Trotter (2014) further emphasized that rehabilitation is most effective when reinforced by stable post-release support such as reintegration into society, employment opportunities, stable housing, and community support networks.

Conversely, the present study reflects upon findings that contradict its results. Day et al. (2011), in a separate investigation in Kosovo, found that inmates exposed to negative prison environments exhibited more unfavorable attitudes toward rehabilitation. Nurse et al. (2003) reported that environmental stressors like isolation and poor staff-prisoner relationships adversely affected inmates' mental health and impeded rehabilitative efforts. Moreover, Lutze (2001) found that shock incarceration programs, which are characterized by strict discipline and military-style environments, showed mixed results, with some inmates reporting positive behavioural adjustments, others experiencing increased conflict and stress, indicating that a highly controlled environment does not uniformly lead to positive attitudes toward rehabilitation. These contradictions suggest that the impact of the prison environment on rehabilitation may be context-dependent and influenced by individual perceptions, prison management styles, and broader systemic conditions

The findings further indicate that prison programmes had a statistically significant moderate effect on inmates' attitudes to rehabilitation. This suggests that well-structured, engaging programmes such as vocational training, counseling, and education play a vital role in shaping inmates' readiness to reform. The results corroborate Aghan's (2016), who argued that a positive impact of custodial rehabilitation programmes is instrumental in the reduction of recidivism and helps inmates to change their attitude towards crime, make the right choices, and desist from criminal tendencies that make them relapse into recidivism. He recommended the improvement of criminogenic need-based rehabilitation programmes to ensure that all inmates have access to all programmes, as they complement each other in the lives of inmates. The results also agree with Ogeto (2009), who pointed out the prevalence of vocational programmes in Kenyan prisons, noting that inmates largely benefited from skill acquisition. Muteti (2008) similarly stated the importance of adequate resource allocation to support programme implementation, although he acknowledged that many prisons struggle with underfunding, which limits the effectiveness of available interventions.

However, the results partially disagree with Haney (2018), who explored the psychological impact of incarceration. He found that the stress and coping mechanisms shaped by the prison subculture can affect inmates' mental well-being and adjustment, which could hinder their engagement with rehabilitation. This suggests that, while structured programmes are important, their effectiveness may be undermined by internal prison dynamics or adverse psychological conditions that are not adequately addressed.

Although coping mechanisms showed a relatively weaker but statistically significant effect, the findings underscore their importance in influencing inmates' rehabilitation attitudes. This agrees with Taxman and Belenko (2012), who emphasized the integration of evidence-based practices in community corrections and addiction treatment within prison settings, highlighting their role in improving inmates' overall well-being and reducing substance use. By improving inmates' psychological resilience, such

interventions may increase the likelihood of engagement with rehabilitative efforts. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2018) further support this position by demonstrating that strong family ties and supportive social networks can significantly reduce recidivism rates and promote prosocial behaviours among former inmates. While their research does not directly address the role of prison subculture, it emphasizes the value of positive coping systems in shaping rehabilitation outcomes. Nonetheless, the potential influence of prison subculture on inmates' ability to maintain such relationships warrants further exploration.

The regression results from this study revealed a statistically significant joint effect of prison environment, prison programmes, and coping mechanisms on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. These findings are consistent with a body of empirical research underscoring the multifactorial nature of inmate rehabilitation. The substantial proportion of explained variance highlights the interdependence of institutional, programmatic, and personal factors in shaping inmate outlooks and behaviours. The prison environment has been widely acknowledged as a foundational determinant of rehabilitation success. For instance, Sauter, Gutknecht, and Warth (2019) found that institutional environments promote safety, respect, and transparency contribute significantly to inmates' engagement with rehabilitative processes. Similarly, Day et al. (2011) emphasized the role of a positive prison climate in fostering readiness to engage in offender rehabilitation programs, highlighting how structural and relational elements of the prison environment affect motivation and treatment compliance. Prison programmes are also a critical determinant. Aghan (2016) and Ogeto (2009) observed that structured vocational, educational, and therapeutic programs directly influence inmates' attitudes by equipping them with life skills, fostering self-efficacy, and encouraging behavioural reform. Muteti (2008) further stressed that despite resource limitations in many African correctional facilities, well-managed programmes can yield transformative results when inmates perceive them as meaningful and tailored to their needs.

Coping mechanisms, although contributing a smaller individual effect as shown in earlier analyses, play a vital role in the broader psychosocial adjustment of inmates. Taxman and Belenko (2012) argue that the integration of evidence-based treatment practices that enhance inmates' psychological resilience is essential in reducing resistance to change. Johnson and Dobrzanska (2018) add that personal coping strategies, especially those bolstered by social and familial support, promote pro-social behaviour and reduce the likelihood of recidivism. Together, these studies support the current finding that the interplay of environment, institutional programming, and psychological resilience has a substantial predictive influence on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation. The high R^2 value observed in this study reinforces the idea that effective rehabilitation is a holistic endeavor requiring attention to both systemic and individual-level interventions.

However, not all research supports the strong joint effect observed in this study. Some scholars argue that institutional and programmatic interventions may have limited impact unless individualized psychological, cultural, or post-release factors are concurrently addressed. For example, Haney (2018) highlights how prison subculture and chronic psychological stressors can undermine the benefits of structured programmes and positive environments. His work suggests that even in settings with adequate programming, inmates may resist rehabilitation due to entrenched distrust, trauma, or adaptive coping mechanisms developed in response to incarceration. Moreover, Lutze (2001) reported mixed outcomes in his study of shock incarceration programs. While some participants benefited from the structured, intense format, others experienced heightened stress and alienation, suggesting that uniform approaches to rehabilitation may not work equally well for all inmates. This insight aligns with the unexplained 30% variance ($1 – R^2 = 0.296$) found in the present study, pointing to potential influences such as inmates' histories, mental health status, peer dynamics, and post-release opportunities that were not accounted for in the current model.

Relatively, the prominence of prison programmes in predicting inmates' rehabilitative attitudes is well supported by existing research. Programmes that include vocational training, education, therapy, and life skills development are critical in equipping inmates with the tools they need for reintegration (Aghan, 2016). Such programmes often instill a sense of purpose and self-efficacy, which are vital components of internal motivation for change (Ogeto, 2009). Muteti (2008) also notes that well-structured prison programmes mitigate idleness, improve inmates' behavioural outcomes, and reduce the risk of recidivism even when resource constraints exist. Conversely, Haney (2018) warns that if not properly implemented, such programmes can be ineffective due to broader prison subculture dynamics. His research highlights how psychological distress and institutional cynicism may dampen the impact of otherwise well-designed interventions. In addition, Lutze (2001) reports that programs grounded in punitive, military-style discipline, such as boot camps, may produce only superficial behavioural compliance rather than genuine rehabilitative change. This suggests that programme content and delivery style critically influence outcomes.

The finding that coping mechanisms have a strong and statistically significant effect further reinforces the idea that rehabilitation is not only institutional but also psychological. Taxman and Belenko (2012) argue that inmates with healthy coping strategies are more likely to benefit from prison programmes and maintain adaptive behaviours post-release. These mechanisms, such as emotional regulation, seeking support, and cognitive restructuring, serve as buffers against the psychological toll of incarceration. Additionally, Johnson and Dobrzanska (2018) found that inmates with strong familial and community support networks are more inclined to adopt positive coping strategies, further enhancing rehabilitation outcomes. However, the development of effective coping can be hindered

by the prison subculture, trauma, and lack of mental health support (Haney, 2018), pointing to the necessity of psychosocial services and trauma-informed care within correctional systems.

Though the prison environment had the lowest standardized beta coefficient, it was still a significant predictor of rehabilitative attitudes. This aligns with findings by Sauter et al. (2019), who report that a supportive, respectful, and transparent prison climate fosters inmates' trust in the system and enhances their willingness to engage with rehabilitation initiatives. Similarly, Day et al. (2011) found that the social climate, particularly staff-inmate relationships, was a crucial determinant of programme participation and attitude change.

However, as observed by Nurse et al. (2003), negative environmental factors such as overcrowding, isolation, and poor staff-prisoner interactions can undermine rehabilitative goals by fostering anxiety, resentment, and resistance. These effects, while sometimes subtle, can erode inmates' belief in the system's capacity to facilitate genuine transformation.

Collectively, these findings highlight that while prison programmes are the most potent driver of rehabilitative attitudes, their success is significantly enhanced or hindered by both the environmental context and inmates' psychological resilience.

Conclusion

The findings of this study provide robust evidence that prison programmes, the prison environment, and inmates' coping mechanisms significantly influence inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. Among the three, prison programmes emerged as the most powerful predictor, highlighting the critical role of structured, skill-based, and rehabilitative interventions in fostering positive behavioural change among inmates. Coping mechanisms and the prison environment also made substantial contributions, underscoring the importance of inmates' psychological resilience and the quality of prison conditions in shaping rehabilitative outcomes. Additionally, the study aimed to assess how prison subculture influences inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia. However, it did not cover all aspects of the prison environment. Future research could explore inmate social services and their living conditions, as well as the impact of guidance and counselling services on their overall well-being. Additionally, caution must be exercised when generalizing the findings of this study. Findings from Kismayo Central Prison may not apply to other correctional facilities in Somalia or other regions, due to variations in prison cultures, management practices, and inmate demographics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation in Kismayo, Somalia:

1. **Strengthen Prison Programmes**: Given the strong influence of prison programmes on inmates' attitudes toward rehabilitation, there is an urgent need to expand and improve the quality, diversity, and accessibility of these programmes. This includes vocational training, formal education, psychosocial support, life skills development, and behaviour modification initiatives. Programmes should be evidence-based and tailored to inmates' individual needs to promote long-term behavioral change and reduce recidivism.

2. **Improve the Prison Environment**: Correctional authorities should work to create a prison environment that is safe, respectful, and supportive of rehabilitation. Improvements should focus on enhancing staff-inmate relationships, reducing overcrowding, ensuring adequate lighting, ventilation, and hygiene, and promoting transparency and fairness in institutional procedures. A positive prison climate can increase inmates' trust in the system and motivation to engage in rehabilitation.

3. **Integrate Psychological Support and Coping Mechanism Training**: Inmates should be provided with consistent access to mental health services, including counseling, therapy, and support groups, to help them develop effective coping strategies. These services are essential for managing the psychological stresses of incarceration and increasing inmates' capacity for positive change and rehabilitation.

4. **Adopt a Holistic and Integrated Approach to Rehabilitation**: Rehabilitation efforts should not be limited to individual programmes or environmental upgrades. Instead, a coordinated and holistic strategy is necessary—one that aligns programme delivery, environmental improvements, and psychological support as interdependent components of a comprehensive rehabilitative model.

5. **Policy and Resource Mobilization**: Policymakers should prioritize prison reform by allocating adequate financial, human, and material resources to support sustainable rehabilitation efforts. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations, mental health experts, and educational institutions can be leveraged to support the implementation of effective rehabilitation models.

6. **Further Research and Monitoring**: Future research should explore other potential factors influencing rehabilitation, such as prison staff attitudes, inmate motivation, and post-release support systems. Regular evaluation and monitoring of rehabilitation efforts will also ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of programmes.

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