

## **Effects of Family Counseling Services on Reintegration of Prison Ex-Convicts from Medium Prisons into Society In Homa Bay Sub County, Kenya.**

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### **Abstract**

The problem of crime and recidivism has been a major concern for policy makers and implementers of the said policies. This has called for various reforms being undertaken to address this challenge. Some jurisdictions have addressed the problem by initiating punitive prison regimes which ensures that those found culpable of crimes are sentenced to long term prison periods. Coupled with these, have been international instruments which have proposed humane treatment of offenders. Out of these reforms there has been vigorous implementation of family counseling services meant to change the character and behavior of offenders thus making them suitable to peacefully co-exist with others in the society. However recidivism has been a concern especially in Homabay Sub County as statistics show that in 2017 there was recidivism of 70 out of 421 offenders released that year from Homa bay male and female G.K. prisons. In 2018, there was a recidivism rate of 57 out of 524 prisoners released from Homa bay male and female G.K prisons and thus the need for this study. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of family counseling services on the reintegration of prison ex-convicts from medium prisons into the society in Kenya. The study's objectives was, to establish the effect of family counseling services on the reintegration of prison ex-convicts from medium prisons into society in Homa Bay Sub County. The research adopt descriptive and correlation survey design. Target population of 235 were involved in the study. The study used 18 prison officers through strata random sampling, 11 assistant chiefs through saturated random sampling and 30 prison ex-convicts through snowball sampling as well. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, while qualitative data were collected using interview schedules. Validity of the instruments was ascertained through the experts in the guidance and counseling department and incorporated their input in the study. Reliability of the instruments was established using test-retest method in 10% of each category and the results were subjected to Pearson's computation where, the coefficient of .71 at P value of 0.05 was realized therefore accepted as reliable. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means T-Tests and regression analysis. Qualitative data were transcribed and reported thematically. The study established that family counselling services have statistically significant effect on the level of Ex-prison convicts' reintegration into the society as study's findings revealed that, the Sig. (2- tailed)  $p = 0.001$  when compared to  $\alpha = .05$  with a correlation of .178\* It was concluded that family counseling services affect the level of reintegration of the ex-prison convicts into the society in Homabay Sub-County. The study therefore recommended that, the government should developed more programmes specifically on family counseling services within the prisons and probation's offices. The findings from this study are going to be useful to prison officers, probation officers counselors, psychologists, FBOs' NGO, s, society, the Government, offenders, groups and future researchers.

**Key words:** Effect; Family counseling; Ex-Prison convicts; Reintegration

**Research Area:** Counseling Psychology

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### **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

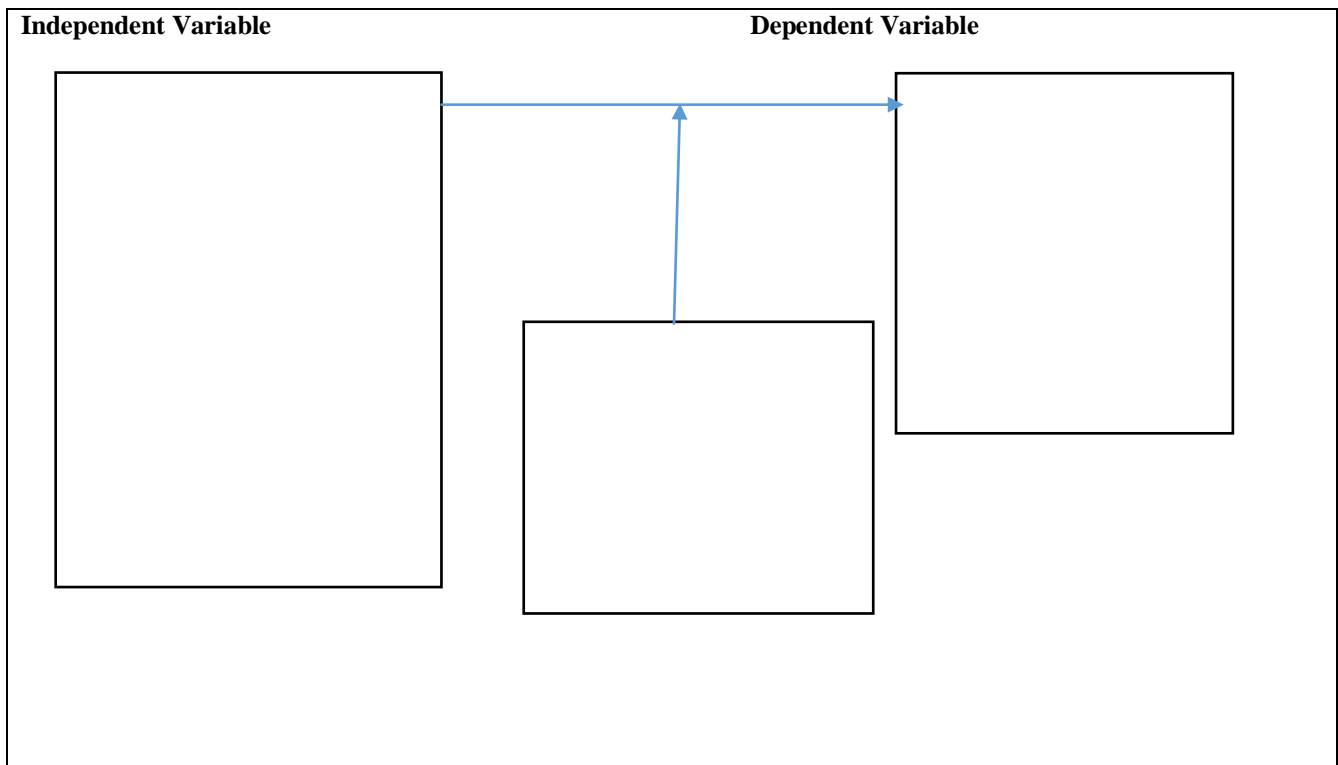
Many countries worldwide have witnessed a state of unprecedented rise in crime rates. It is a fact that those who have committed crimes against their fellow citizens deserve to be punished for their crimes (Usher, & Stewart, 2014). The kind of punishment being meted out to those individuals has however proven to be ineffective over time as it has been more retributive than reconciliatory (Cuomo, Sarchiapone, Di Giannantonio, Mancini & Roy, 2008). The view held by the United Nations prisons Reforms Agenda is that the main objective of prison should be to help prisoners successfully reintegrate back to the society after release (Baliga, 2013).

Kenya Prison Service has at least made progressive steps to incorporate family counselling programmes in all their correctional facilities. According to the Kenya National Human Rights Commission report (2010), the key reform agenda in the correctional facilities is family counselling of inmates and not just punishing them for their crimes.

It is however noted with concern that, Kenyan prisons have one of the highest rates of recidivism despite presence of rehabilitation programmes. A high rate of recidivism indicates that majority of those released did not successfully reintegrate back into the society hence they go back to prison for fresh crimes. This therefore means that the rehabilitation programmes being offered to the prisoners which includes family counselling, do not assist them to reintegrate successfully in the community. The increased recidivism rate has resulted in increased prison population over the years. The extent of criminality has been an appalling reality in Kenya as indicated by the 2016 prison statistics. In 2003 (3939582), 2004(42278), 2005(44757), 2008 (45000), 2009(48000), 2012(49947) 2013(49979 and in March 2013(52105). Given that about 47% of these inmates are repeat offenders creates a lot of concern as to the place of family counselling services in the reintegration of ex-prison convicts into society. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of family counselling services in the reintegration of the ex-prison convicts into society in Homabay Sub County. This study would be useful to prison officers, probation officers counselors, psychologists, FBOs' NGO, s, society, the Government, offenders, groups and future researchers.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was founded on the conceptual framework that assumed that family counseling had a direct effect on assisting prisoners understand the role the family will play in his or her reintegration. As indicated in figure 1



**Figure 1: Effects of family counseling services on reintegration of ex-prison convicts from medium prisons into society in Homa bay sub county, Kenya**

A well family counseling offered in this area should give noticeable indicators that will reflect the kind of change that has occurred on a given offender. Indicators of successful family therapy are; emotional attachment, mutual support, family commitment as well as unity of purpose. The offenders will be able to acquire these attributes that will make them adopt positive attitudes which can effectively enhance their successful reintegration back into the society once they are released from correctional facilities. The prisoners will be able to understand the role the family will play in their successful reintegration back into the society.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive and correlation survey design. This design according to Orodho (2003) is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of

individuals. The design can also be used to describe specific characteristics of a large group of persons, objects or institutions through a questionnaire (Jaeger 1988).

Descriptive survey designs are commonly used when investigating the social issues that exist in communities', (Mugenda, 2011). Since this research aimed at determining the effects of counseling on the reintegration of ex-prison convicts which is a social issue within the community, this design was appropriate. The target population for this study were 180 prison officers from Male and Female Homabay G.K Prisons, 11 area assistant chiefs and 44 ex-prison convicts. The unit of analysis in this study were the ex-prison convicts who are currently residing in Homabay Sub County since they are the ones who have gone through correctional counseling as well as reintegration back into the society, hence are well versed with the experience on the variables under investigation. The study used 18 prison officers through strata random sampling, 11 assistant chiefs through saturated random sampling and 30 prison ex-convicts through snowball sampling as well. Reliability of the data collection instruments was established through test and retest of the data collection instruments. (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). There was Test- retest and use of Pearson's *r*, where a coefficient of 0.7 and above at p-value of .05 was considered reliable.

The filled questionnaires were checked for completeness. The interview schedule was verified to confirm if all the parts had been filled. This was done to ascertain if there were any anomalies that could be detected. Quantitative data were analyzed by use of frequency counts, means, percentages t-Tests and regression analysis. Qualitative data from the questionnaire were converted into quantitative data by use of rating scale. The data from the interviews were transcribed and categorized then analyzed into emergent themes and sub-themes.

### III. FINDINGS

This subsection dealt with the objective of the study which was to establish the effect of the Family Counseling Services on ex- Prison Convicts in Homabay Sub-County. The preliminary results were as shown in table 1

**Table 1: Ex-prison convicts Report on Effect of Family Counseling Services on reintegration of Ex-prison convicts in Homabay Sub-County**

<b>Effect of Family Counseling Services on Reintegration of Ex-Prison Convicts</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Not sure	5	16.7%
Agree	20	66.7%
Strongly Agree	5	16.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 indicated that most of ex- prison convicts at (66.7%) agreed that there was effect of family counseling on the reintegration to the society. There were also 16.7% of the ex-prison convicts who reported that they highly agreed that family counselling had an effect, while 16.7% were not sure of the effect. Strongly disagree and disagree responses reported 0% each.

On looking at prison ex-convicts on level of reintegrated of the prison ex- convicts, the preliminary information was as indicated in table 2.

**Table 2: Ex-Prison convicts' report on the level of reintegration into the society in Homabay Sub-County**

<b>Level Reintegration into the society</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nil Level	1	3.3%
Low Level	4	13.3%
Moderate Level	22	73.3%
High Level	3	10.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 indicated that majority of ex-prison convicts (73.3%) reported that there was moderate level of reintegration into the society. This was followed at a distance by those who reported that there was low level at 13.3%. High level of reintegration was interpreted to mean that there was satisfactorily effect of family counselling to the ex-prison convicts during the term they served as inmates.

These preliminary results indicated that as family counseling services for the ex- prison convicts increases so does the level of reintegration into the society. The research hypothesis tested under this study was; **H0<sub>1</sub>** : There was no statistically significant effect between family counseling services and the level of

reintegration of the ex- prison convicts into the society in Homabay Sub-County. Hypothesis was tested by use of paired sample t-test at .05 alpha level of significance. The purpose of the test was to determine whether there is statistical significant effect between paired observations. The findings were as indicated in table 3.

**Table 3: Paired Samples Test for family Counselling Services and Level of Reintegration of Ex- Prison Convicts**

Paired Samples	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Mean Score of Family Counselling Services & Mean score of level of reintegration	1.2533	.5438	.0993	1.0503	1.4564	12.625	29	.001

From the findings in Table 3, it is indicated: There is a significant average difference between Score of family counselling services and those score of level of reintegration ( $t_{29} = 12.625, p = 0.001$ ). On average, family counseling services scores were 1.25 points higher than level of reintegration. The  $p < 0.05$  meaning that we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative hypothesis that there were significant effect between family counselling services and level of reintegration of ex-prison convicts into the society. Further investigation was done by determining the correlation. The results were as indicated in table 4.

**Table 4: Paired Samples Correlations for Score of family Counselling Services and Level of Reintegration of Ex-Prison Convicts**

Paired Samples	N	Correlation	Sig.
Score of family Counselling Services & Score of Level of reintegration	30	.178*	.347

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the paired samples correlation table 4 indicated that family counseling services and the level of reintegration of ex-prison convicts into the society scores are significantly positively correlated ( $r = .178$ ). This correlation between the two variables was reported when a Paired  $t$  Test was run. This was important to consider how strongly the two variables were associated with one another. The score of Family Counseling Services & that of the level of reintegration were weakly and positively correlated ( $r = 0.178, p = 0.001$ ). Since  $p = .001$  and  $\alpha = .05$  then  $p < 0.05$ . Using Hypothesis testing principle, the p-value (.001) is less than the significance level (.05). This study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and adapted the alternative hypothesis. Family counselling services have statistically significant effect on the level of ex-prison convicts' reintegration into the society. The purpose of a regression analysis was to determine the predictability, strength and character of the effect between the dependent variable (Score of Level of reintegration denoted by Y) and independent variables (score of Family Counseling Services denoted by X). The regression model used was simple linear regression:  $Y = a + bX + u$ .

**Table 5: Model Summary and Parameter Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Mean score on the level of reintegration

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates	
	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1
Linear	.032	.915	1	28	.347	2.670	.118

Table 5 provided the  $R^2$  values. The  $R^2$  value represents the determinant of the value 0.032 for the linear regression. Parameter Estimates of 2.670 as constant and .118 as slope for linear regression are presented in the table. This was interpreted to mean that improvement in family counseling services to the inmates will translate to a high level of reintegration of the ex-prison convicts into the society.

The above finding was also affirmed by both prison officers and the area assistant chiefs who during their interview reported that, family counseling help these inmates to live peacefully with their families so that they do not go back to prison hence are able to reintegrate well in the society.

These findings were in agreement with earlier study by Taylor, (2016) on “The role of family in the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals which established that a higher level of emotional support was associated with a significant reduction in reoffending.

A research by Swint (2009), on The effect of family therapy and prison –based substance abuse treatment on recidivism outcome for incarcerated women disclosed that there is a delay in recidivism for those who went through family therapy and prison-based substance abuse treatment. This study was carried out in Philadelphia adult correction facility in U.S.A .The study by Swint (2009) therefore confirms that family therapy reduces the rate of recidivism hence enhances chances for successful reintegration of ex-prison convicts into the society. The above findings are well in agreement with the results of the research project on the Effect of Family Counseling on the Reintegration of Ex-prison Convicts into the Society.

Another study by Kaslow, (2007) on couples or Family Therapy for prisoners and their significant others sought to determine how family therapy is significant to prisoners after their release. The study recommended that couples or family therapy should be included as part of services that should be offered prior to and after discharge. The study also posited that including family therapy as part of the rehabilitation programme may lead to a more pro-social post release lifestyle.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The study established that there are many problems prisoners face after returning home. In addition to generally adjusting to life after jail, there might be specific difficulties regarding employment, family life, and societal stigma. Therefore family counseling services should be expounded to friends and family of the individual prison ex-convict for a smoother transition back to society. This is because, one of the most crucial elements of successful reintegration for former prisoners is having loved ones to help usher them through the process. Other factors such as; Provision of Housing, Focus on Socialization, Facilitation of Productivity and Watching for Mental Health Warning Signs of the individual who return home should also be put into consideration in order to achieve successful reintegration.

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