

The Role of Staff Training in Building Rehabilitation Capacity in Kenya Prisons

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of staff training on prisoners' rehabilitation within the Kenya Prisons Service (KPS), against the backdrop of ongoing institutional efforts to strengthen rehabilitation outcomes. Despite these investments, there is limited empirical evidence on how staff training influences prisoner rehabilitation in Kenya, creating a need to assess the adequacy of training for chaplains and prison officers involved in rehabilitation programmes. The study adopted a descriptive research design and used both primary and secondary data. It was guided by Mugambi's Reconstruction Theology and Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory, which provided a framework for understanding the role of staff training in rehabilitation. The target population was 4,178, from which a sample of 290 respondents was selected using proportionate sampling. Purposive sampling identified key informants, stratified random sampling selected prison staff, and snowball sampling was used to reach less accessible prisoners. Data were collected using questionnaires for chaplains and officers, interview schedules for priests, Protestant ministers, and religious leaders, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with recidivists and prisoners. Quantitative data were processed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, and the results were displayed in tables, pie charts, and graphs. Qualitative data were examined thematically and used to support and enrich the quantitative findings. Data were cleaned, validated, and processed using SPSS to ensure accuracy and consistency. The study concludes that structured methodological procedures provided reliable evidence on staff training and rehabilitation. It recommends intensified staff training to enhance professionalism and competency in prisoner rehabilitation. It further recommends that the Kenya Prisons Service institutionalise staff training through clear policy frameworks to support sustainable rehabilitation outcomes.

Key terms: Chaplaincy, training, prisoners, prison staff, rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Globally, integrated training for prison chaplains and officers remains indispensable in addressing prisoners' rehabilitation challenges. Contextual, ritualistic, psychosocial, and organisational training is increasingly recognised as essential in prison systems. According to Sundt et al. (2002), prison chaplains play a crucial role in integrating holistic interventions into rehabilitation. Jeker et al. (2023) report that a qualitative study involving prison professionals in European countries identified staff training as a critical need, as prison work presents unique psychological and institutional challenges that require specialised skills, motivation, and functional values. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2025), recent prison reforms globally have emphasised trauma-informed care, digital rehabilitation approaches, and mental-health interventions for prisoners and prison staff. However, inadequate staff training in mental health management and psychosocial care inhibits the rehabilitation process. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2024) and Penal Reform International (PRI, 2025) contend that staff training significantly influences prison-system and prisoner-staff interactions, thereby supporting spiritual development, rehabilitation, humane treatment, and safe custody.

Rehabilitating prisoners is a complex, sophisticated, and demanding process involving holistic interventions that address socio-religious, psychological, educational, and vocational dimensions. UNODC (2024) further confirms that prison chaplains and officers' professional competencies, training, and expertise translate to effectively rehabilitating prisoners. Without adequate training, the capacity of prison staff to facilitate rehabilitation and reintegration remains limited.

In Africa, Mushanga (1974) and Muturi (2001) argue that criminality culminates in arrest and subsequently incarceration, necessitating the development and training of chaplains and prison officers to effectively reconstruct prisoners' lives. Maruna (2002) asserts that prisoners require rehabilitative institutions that promote usefulness and purposeful living. To realise rehabilitative potential, prison chaplains and officers ought to be supported through structural reforms that prioritise professional training and institutional

capacity building, Prisons Chaplaincy (2017) and African Correctional Services Association (ACSA, 2024). This presupposes the significance of context, specialised training for Prison staff and continuous professional development integrated into broader rehabilitative frameworks rather than peripheral assumptions. Similarly, WHO (2025) recommends a holistic training incorporating mental-health awareness, counselling skills, ethics, restorative justice, human rights, self-care, and integrated rehabilitation systems as imperative.

In Kenya, criminality trends within prisons remain a critical rehabilitative concern despite the role played by prison chaplains and officers. The persistence of recidivism and behavioural decadence amongst prisoners suggests that the existing rehabilitation interventions are inadequate. Wambugu (2014) identified inadequate training in rehabilitation as a major obstacle in prisoners' rehabilitation. The author further notes that a lack of professionalism, integrity, and specialised rehabilitative competencies impede reform. The chaplaincy functions stipulated in the *Kenya Prisons Standing Orders, Chapter 73 Section 6 (1976)* as prayers, Bible study, instructions, counselling, preaching, debates, concerts, religious hymns, concerts and drama, provision of spiritual books, literature, and magazines, should be implemented within an evidence-based rehabilitative framework that recognises training as a prerequisite for effective service delivery.

In Kenya, at Kamiti Maximum Prison (KMP) and Embu Women Prison (EWP), the training of prison chaplains and officers remains inadequate, particularly in the management of prisoners' complex psychological and socio-spiritual needs. The Handbook on Human Rights in Kenya Prisons (2006) questions whether prison staff training adequately responds to changing societal and correctional dynamics. It is evident that despite the centrality of prison chaplains and officers in shaping prisoners' behaviour and promoting rehabilitation, their conditions and behavioural modifications remain unsatisfactory. Training for prison staff should adopt holistic approaches that address prisoners' feelings of shame, rejection, isolation, and hopelessness. Muntingh (2009) argues that the question of how prison chaplains and officers can effectively rehabilitate prisoners remains unresolved. The existing

literature on the role of staff in prisoners' rehabilitation remains limited, thus necessitating further empirical research in the field of prisoners' rehabilitation.

The existing literature by Muntingh (2009), Maruna (2022), UNODC (2024) and PRI (2025) emphasises the relevance of prison chaplains and officers' training in enhancing prisoners' rehabilitation processes. However, there are limited empirical studies identifying training competencies. The escalating prisoners' population and recidivism, coupled with moral decadence, continue to portend adverse political, moral-cultural, environmental, religious and socio-economic consequences associated with rehabilitating prisoners. The study addressed this gap by investigating how staff training initiatives enhance competencies in rehabilitating prisoners and productive reintegration. Aligning staff training with KPS rehabilitation objectives remains essential in rehabilitating prisoners and subsequent reduction of relapse after prison release.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study examined the existing literature to identify appropriate training needs for prison chaplains and officers involved in the rehabilitation of prisoners at KMP and EWP. According to UNODC (2024), the influence of staff training and rehabilitating prisoners has gained increasing attention in global scholarly discourses. Prisoners' rehabilitation is significantly influenced by the level of competence, attitudes, and professional preparedness of prison staff, which influences constructive, humane, and sustainable rehabilitation. However, this conclusion appears generalised, given that in practice, effective rehabilitation is enhanced through integrated interventions including institutional positive culture, adequate staff training funding, and sustainable strategies. Prison staff training remains necessary but not sufficient in the sustainable rehabilitation process of prisoners.

Training of Prison Rehabilitators

Kratcoski (2007) defines training as a process of providing information and skills that facilitate development in work-related competencies. According to Lambert et al. (2009), prison staff with professional career growth embrace rehabilitation and

demonstrate high levels of effectiveness. In the USA, Glaser (1972) identified chaplaincy pastoral guidance as a significant factor in successful rehabilitation. In Africa, prisoners' rehabilitation calls for integrated staff training to acquire technical, administrative, and behavioural skills necessary for effective performance. Correspondingly, Smarto (1987) posits that prisoners who undertake educational and rehabilitative training while in prison are better able to reform and develop social responsibility. Muga (1975) notes that poor handling of prisoners by inadequately trained personnel inhibits rehabilitation. WHO (2025) and PRI (2025) emphasise specialised training in rehabilitation, such as trauma-informed care, mental health support, and digital literacy, as critical. Mandela's (2002) consider education as the most powerful weapon for changing the world, a view consistent with the Biblical prophet Hosea 4:6, which attributes societal destruction due to lack of knowledge.

One major role of prison chaplains and officers is to facilitate attitudinal change, moral reconstruction, and identity transformation among prisoners. Sheena (2018) asserts that effective prisoner rehabilitation requires professional knowledge and specialised training throughout the rehabilitation process. This necessitates prison staff to address rehabilitation needs from admission, incarceration, pre-release preparation, reintegration, and post-release follow-up stages. Recent rehabilitation frameworks by WHO (2025) and PRI (2025) provide prisoners with locus areas such as trauma-informed care, restorative justice, psychosocial support, and digital rehabilitation systems as essential training projections for prison staff. Similarly, an African study by Messif (2026) found that prisoners perceived staff training as a significant determinant in effective rehabilitation. However, despite the escalating prisoners' concern about rehabilitation processes, the existing literature provides limited empirical evidence regarding the extent to which staff training influences effective prisoners' rehabilitation.

Mutie (2018), in a study on correctional rehabilitation in Kenya, found that overcrowding, lack of specialised competencies in counselling, behavioural change monitoring and mentorship link and psychological domains constrain the proficiency of prison chaplains and officers to deliver effective prisoner rehabilitation.

The preceding assumptions regarding the link between the prison staff and prisoners in terms of training lack empirical evidence, particularly in spaces where trained personnel offer services under constrained resources and an escalating prison population. This study opines that effective rehabilitation is not about staff training but competencies and developing specialised skills in all aspects regarding the psychosomatic nature of human beings.

Training Interventions

The training of prison chaplains and officers in rehabilitating prisoners is a complex and multifaceted process. International research emphasises that effective rehabilitation depends on continuous professional development, as new rehabilitation approaches are advancing faster than staff capacity. Focus on training interventions to strengthen prisoners' rehabilitation is therefore valuable. Globally, reform literature highlights that rehabilitation is composed of multiple interventions. McGuire (2002) argues that prison staff require training to implement rehabilitation of prisoners effectively in areas of education, behavioural change programs, and psychosocial locus. In Africa, prison reform systems experience myriad structural, institutional and personal challenges such as inadequate staff specialisation, skills gap, overcrowding, limited resources, staff shortage, lack of professional development and burnout, poor working conditions, low motivation, weak institutional support, resistance from prisoners, and inadequate collaboration. Muntingh (2009) asserts that prison staff operate without sufficient training in behavioural change, counselling and reintegration, limiting rehabilitation effectiveness. This study posits that as rehabilitation processes become complex, staff are expected to possess multifaceted skills in specialised rehabilitation training to improve staff professionalism and capacity. The gap can be addressed by praxis and policy actions to ensure skills and competencies are continuously updated.

The evolved rehabilitation approaches require socio-managerial, psychological, spiritual, and correctional competencies achievable through proper training and institutional investment in chaplains and prison officers to improve their performance and alignment

with the mission and objectives of the KPS. Similarly, recent African correctional studies indicate that although pastoral programmes are widely used as rehabilitation tools, their effectiveness is undermined by inadequate staffing, poor prison conditions, limited professional development, and a shortage of rehabilitation resources. According to RODI Kenya (2026), without trained prison chaplains and officers, rehabilitation efforts remain fragmented and less effective in reducing recidivism. In the same vein, Wambugu (2014) observes that the lack of a standardised rehabilitation curriculum for prison staff undermines consistency and quality of Prison rehabilitation services. However, while it is acknowledged that effective prisoners' rehabilitation necessitates multifaceted impetuses, there remains limited clarity on how the KPS, as currently constituted, effectively sustains integrated strategies. A clear policy, adequate training, strategic leadership, and multidisciplinary continuous evaluation to ensure the effective rehabilitation of prisoners and the subsequent successful stories of clients is imperative. This study provides scholarly contributions relating to training as a concept, professionalism, financial implications of training, job progression, and institutional capacity building as key to prisoners' effective rehabilitation.

The work of rehabilitating prisoners requires knowledge in biblical hermeneutics, human rights, counselling psychology, restorative justice, trauma care, conflict mediation, and mental health management. Prisons chaplaincy report (2026) records that only 62 out of 324 chaplains deployed by the Public Service Commission of Kenya (PSC) in 2006 and 2022 possessed accredited degrees in theology, religion, or related disciplines. Due to the shortage of professional chaplaincy personnel, the KPS redeploys or second uniformed prison officers to support chaplaincy work as catechists. However, according to the Chaplaincy Academic Report (2024), many officers possess limited theological training despite serving increasingly digital-space staff and prisoners. Literature demonstrates that successful behavioural transformation among prisoners is difficult when prison chaplains and officers lack expertise in rehabilitation work. Osugo (2010) notes that rehabilitation efforts had improved through the recruitment of personnel in social work and religious

disciplines. Nevertheless, KPS chaplaincy staffing levels in 2006 and 2021 (Daily Nation, 2006, 2021) remain inadequate, with only 301 professional chaplains serving against the current prisoners' population of approximately 64,000 in 2026.

Professional inadequacy among prison chaplains and officers undermines the rehabilitative agenda of the KPS. Handling prisoners without specialised expertise inhibits rehabilitation and contributes to ineffective prison systems. Existing prison literature is replete with accounts of conflicts involving prison personnel who oversee rehabilitation processes while lacking an adequate understanding of prisoners' psychosomatic and behavioural complexities. Consequently, prison chaplains, officers, and prisoners often experience a sense of being underserved due to unclear policy implementation frameworks and inadequate training provisions. This view is in concurrence with ACSA (2024), that the role of prison chaplains and officers remains under-researched and unrecognised, necessitating evidence-based empirical studies to inform sustainable rehabilitation.

Staff Job Training and Promotional Needs

Staff job training, promotional needs, and career development projections are closely linked aspects of professionalism. Dessler (2020) contends that training and promotions enhance employee performance by developing job-related competencies. Within the African context, prisons continue to experience a shortage of adequately trained staff rehabilitators. Furthermore, limited promotional spaces may affect morale, motivation and commitment to rehabilitation objectives. In Kenya, regarding job training and promotional needs, Madoka Report (2008) observed that the prison chaplaincy scheme of service lacks comprehensive career progression structures. Recent KPS reviews suggest that failure to expand promotion structures resulted in job stagnation for decades (Prisons Report, 2025). Similarly, initially employed chaplains in 2006, in Job Group K and above, continue to serve under contractual terms with limited job security, professional, and political benefits. Although the Madoka Report (2008) justifies chaplains' contractual deployment based on age 45 and above, such an assumption remains unfounded, erroneous, and has negatively affected morale and professional commitment among the KPS chaplaincy personnel.

Advanced training and promotional pathways are drivers of employee motivation. The KPS and the Government of Kenya ought to provide adequate financial support for chaplains pursuing further studies and professional development courses for career progression. Mugambi (1995) argues that learning is essential for reconstruction and productive living. However, failure to support chaplains academically results in diminished effectiveness. Prison Chaplaincy Reports (2025) reveal that none of the chaplains had undertaken a strategic leadership development course, while a handful had pursued senior management or supervisory skills programs, despite the courses being earmarked as mandatory for civil service promotion and career progression as per the Scheme of Service for Chaplaincy Personnel (2017). The promotional systems are unclear and infrequent, and may cause staff performance and motivation decline. Therefore, there is a compelling need for KPS to strengthen access to promotional and career progression pathways in enhancing motivation, professional development and institutional effectiveness.

Rehabilitators and Prisoners Expectations

A growing body of literature posits that prisoners are a priority in advancing education and vocational and technical spaces, while the staff rehabilitators receive comparatively limited specialised training. On the prisoners' side, a significant proportion possess Diploma, Bachelor's, and Master's level education qualifications. Educational disparity between prisoners and prison chaplains and officers hinders effective rehabilitation. Existing literature has largely focused on prisoner education and skills, with limited attention to the staff, a gap that has justified further empirical investigation into staff training needs in prison facilities. Therefore, prison staff require continuous academic and professional education to remain relevant, effective and motivated. According to Cheti (2025), Kenya's prison system comprises approximately 31,227 prison officers, 176 technical staff, and 62,400 prisoners. According to the Chaplaincy Staff Establishment (2026), the number of professional chaplains serving across 135 prisons in Kenya is three hundred and one (301)

The Chaplaincy Staff Report (2026) recommends PSCK consider the recruitment of an additional 1,865 professional chaplains on permanent and pensionable terms to improve rehabilitation. The increasing prisoner population places greater demands on KPS staff to provide adequate rehabilitation services. Regarding prison officers, Madoka Report preliminaries (2008) describes the Kenyan prison system as administratively strained, with officers lacking adequate training and clear job descriptions in handling criminality and rehabilitation. Crime trends are increasingly sophisticated and complex, necessitating specialised correctional competencies. Effective rehabilitation, therefore, requires consideration of multiple behavioural variables, including age, gender, education, marital status, socio-economic background, and personal experiences. The researcher concurs with King and McDermott (1989) that an effective prison system requires proper staff selection, remuneration, motivation, and professional development to respond to evolving institutional dynamics. The study contributes to the enhancement of training policies and practices to improve behavioural transformation, productivity, and social reintegration for the common good.

The recommendation by the KPS to establish a Prison Service Commission responsible for recruitment, remuneration, promotion, discipline, training, and retirement of officers remains unimplemented. The Maraga task force (2023) identified systematic challenges within the KPS, including inadequate staffing, poor working conditions, and insufficient training, and recommended comprehensive reforms to enhance professionalism and rehabilitation effectiveness. The work of prison chaplains and officers requires advanced skills, integrity, and continuous opportunities for professional growth in line with emerging correctional trends. The relationship between prison chaplains and officers is complementary, with each contributing distinct roles in the rehabilitation of prisoners.

The recent global, African and Kenyan studies demonstrate the importance of staff training in rehabilitating prisoners. Many of the findings focus on prisoners' programs rather than on staff promotional and career needs. This reflects Omondi's (2007) concern that prison reforms frequently prioritise

prisoner welfare while neglecting prison officers' welfare and professional development. Further, there is hardly any empirical analysis on how staff training, career progression and upward mobility influence effective rehabilitation. The study findings seek to establish appropriate training areas and build institutional capacity necessary for prison chaplains and officers to positively impact prisoners' spiritual development, rehabilitation, reformation, reconciliation, and reintegration. The analytical review of the literature establishes the need for multifaceted interventions and a growing dynamic for staff training, continuous professional development, institutional policy framework, and organisational capacity for chaplaincy and psychosocial staff.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design, as it is appropriate for combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The design enabled exploration and reporting on prison staff training and its influence on rehabilitating prisoners at KMP and EWP in Kenya. It was also appropriate for quantitative and qualitative analysis of perceptions, experiences, and praxis. A pilot study was carried out in PSTC and Ruiru prison to test the adequacy of the research instruments, consistency and validity on staff training and rehabilitating prisoners. The actual sample size was 290 respondents, comprising prisoners, recidivists, chaplains, officers, directors of religious organisations, priests, and protestant church ministers. The study employed a combination of sampling approaches to improve the reliability of the findings. Stratified random sampling ensured representation of prison staff, purposively identified key informants, and snowball sampling reached out to less accessible prisoners and recidivists.

Data collection instruments included questionnaires for prison chaplains and officers, interview schedules for priests, protestant ministers, and directors of religious organisations, and FGDs for recidivists and prisoners. The categorisation of respondents was informed by the Boston Consulting Stakeholders' Matrix for categories with power, influence, and interest. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyse quantitative data, which were then presented in tables, graphs, and bar charts capturing the attitudes, opinions, and

perceptions of prison chaplains, officers, and prisoners on staff training and rehabilitation. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis on staff training and prisoner rehabilitation to complement the quantitative results in line with the study objectives. Data was validated, cleaned and entered in SPSS for processing, consistency and meaningful interpretations. The methodology provides reliable and ethically-based data through informed consent to

safeguard human dignity and the accuracy of study findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to establish appropriate training for prison chaplains and officers in rehabilitating prisoners.

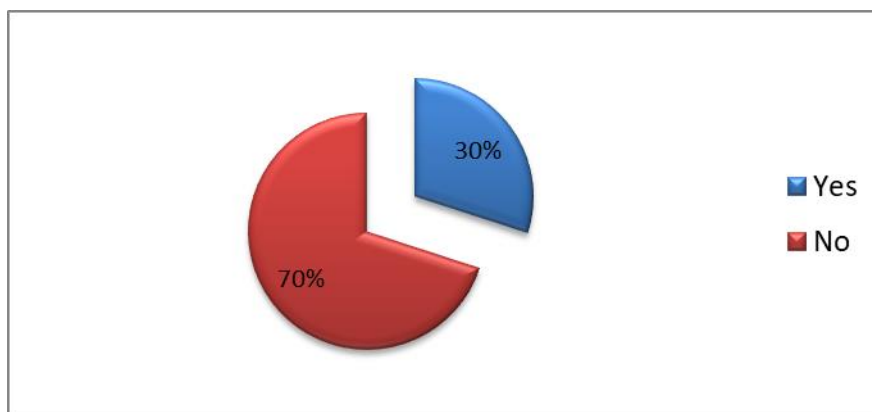


Figure 1: Chaplains Training since Deployment

According to Figure 1, since deployment to KPS, 70 per cent of chaplains had not undertaken any training, whereas 30 per cent had received training through self-sponsorship. For proficiency, training should encompass a range of skill sets that address prisoners' rehabilitation. The study findings confirm Cote's (2002) scholarly work that professional development of chaplains, training and mentorship requires further development. Chaplains should be sponsored by the GoK and KPS to undertake supervisory skills, senior management, and strategic leadership development courses at the Kenya School of Government. Inadequate training of chaplains inhibits the prisoner rehabilitation process. Glaser's (1972) research affirms that one-sixth of the rehabilitated prisoners in the USA attribute success to the guidance and professional

expertise of chaplains. For the chaplains to effectively facilitate the rehabilitation of prisoners, investing in theological knowledge, pastoral care, socio-psychological counselling, and hermeneutics is critical. Further, training helps chaplains gain expertise, upward mobility and career progression, which translates to motivation, enhanced service delivery, and the capacity to maximise their full potential in enhancing the KPS rehabilitation agenda.

Training Suggested for Chaplains in Enhancing Rehabilitation of Prisoners

Table 1 shows the areas of training recommended to prison chaplains to enhance service delivery in rehabilitation work.

Table 1: Areas of Training suggested for Prison Chaplains by various Respondents

Area of Training Suggested	Frequency	Percentage
Counseling Psychology	26	25
Stress Management	25	24
Public Relations	24	23
Law	16	16
Leadership	6	6
Family Life	2	2
Criminal Psychology	1	1
Music	1	1
Communication	1	1
Philosophy	1	1
	103	100

Table 1 shows areas of training recommended for prison chaplains: counselling psychology, 25 per cent; stress management, 24 per cent; public relations, 23 per cent; law, 16 per cent; leadership, 6 per cent; family life, 2 per cent; criminal psychology, music, communication and philosophy, 1 per cent. The highest Counselling psychology was preferred due to challenges encountered by prisoners, including HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, violence and mental health concerns. However, counselling calls for a range of skills rather than a single therapeutic method. The challenge is that despite counselling, the majority of prisoners hardly resolve to change, but rather see themselves in prison against their will, and if they seek counselling at all, it is to improve chances for early release or remission of sentence. Yochelson and Samenow (1977) disillusion that:

When we began Inmates' ministry, the term therapy was employed, then psychotherapists. We soon learned that criminals were feeding us with what they thought we wanted to hear. The criminals viewed therapy as a means of removing oneself from jeopardy.

From Table 1, the respondents felt that the GoK should recruit more professional chaplains to strengthen prisoner reform. The findings concur with Armstrong (2002) and Glaser (1972) that relevant training of chaplains maximises expertise in Christian faith and praxis, prisoners' management change, transformation and adjustment to new trends. Despite setbacks in the rehabilitation process, chaplains' work takes pride in the successful stories of many ex-prisoners involved in the church ministry, entrepreneurship, politics, leadership, and holistic ventures. To enhance the training of chaplains, the current scheme of service for chaplaincy personnel 2017 should be expanded by PSCK, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Public Service and the Commissioner General of Prisons to recruit additional chaplaincy personnel to provide a more defined career structure, job progression, structured training, and development. Further, a structured international offender management system based on risks, needs and responsibility to evaluate the role of the chaplains in augmenting prisoners' rehabilitation work is deemed not only necessary but sufficient.

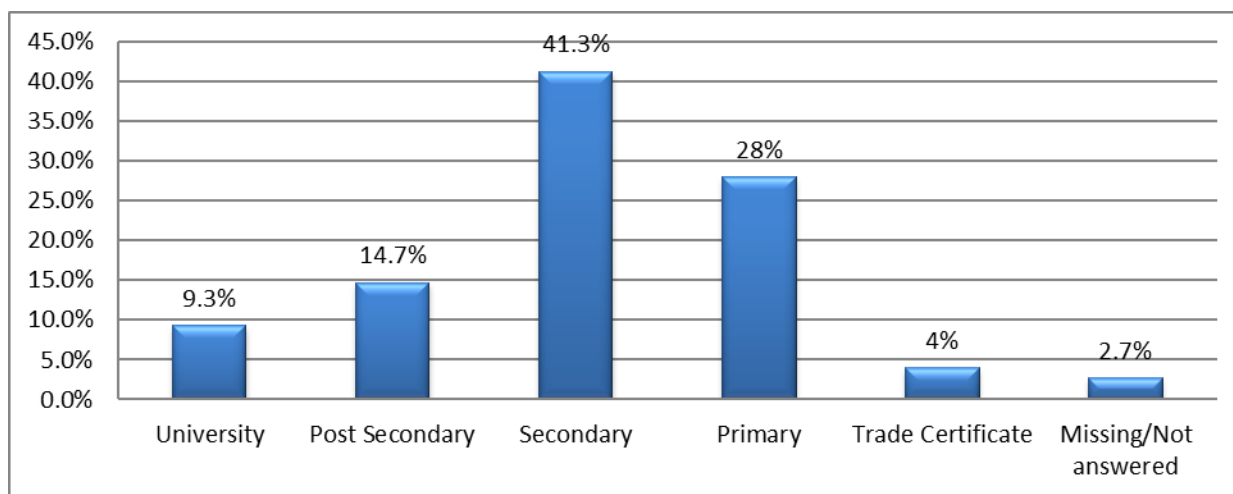


Figure 2: Prisoners' Highest Level of Education at KMP

From figure 2, the level of education at KMP, 41 per cent had secondary education, 28 per cent primary, 15 per cent post-secondary, 9 per cent had a university degree, 4 per cent had a trade certificate, while 3 per cent abstained. From the findings, a majority, 65 per cent of prisoners at KMP had interests in matters educational from secondary school to university levels. However, education should not be limited to academic excellence but also include a kind of sobriety, responsibility, critical thinking and life skills that prepare prisoners to navigate constructively in a globalised world. Although prisoners at KMP generally

had relatively high levels of education, this did not automatically lead to reduced moral decay or lower rates of recidivism. The findings point out that education per se may be insufficient to respond to the desired behavioural change. Rehabilitation requires a multifaceted approach, transformation in attitudes, psychological emotions, values, and behaviour. When the institutional environment is not structured to enhance rehabilitation, education tends to remain theoretical and fails to translate into meaningful prisoner rehabilitation.

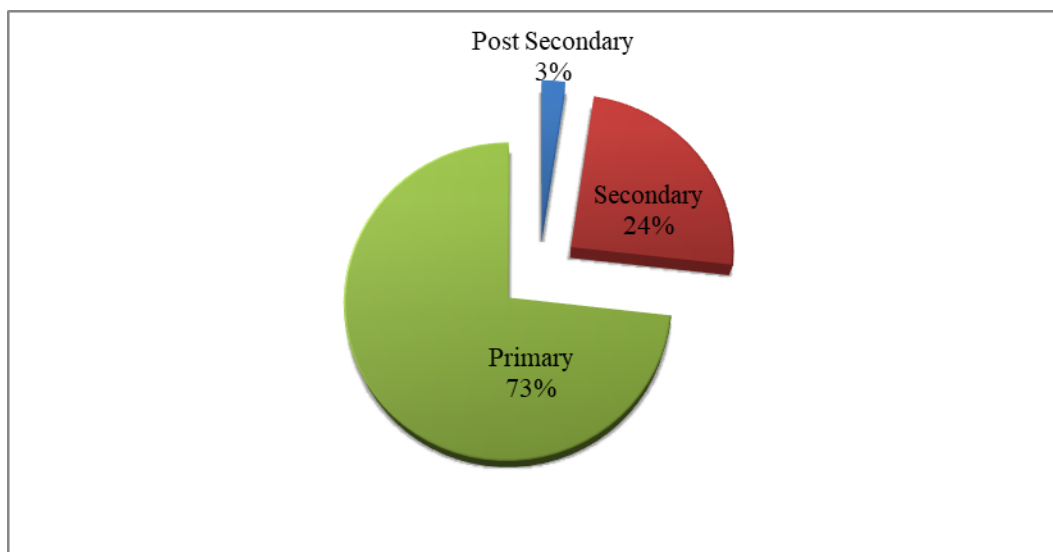


Figure 3: Prisoners' Highest Level of Education at EWP

According to Pulse Kenya (2024) and Kenya Prisons Service (2024), numerous prisoners in Kenya have pursued higher education, earning Bachelor's and

Master's degrees, with notable examples such as Ruth Kamande at Langata Women's Security Prison, who earned a law degree in 2024 from

the University of London, Ezekiel Maina, a medical doctor, and others, including Joseph Liyaka, Joshua Ondengo and Philemon at Kericho Medium.

At EWP, 73 per cent of prisoners had attained primary school education, 24 per cent secondary and 3 per cent post-secondary. Unlike KMP, education for female prisoners was low; this could have been attributed to socio-cultural phenomena, as the majority hailed from Embu County and exhibited peculiar behaviour shaped by societal influences. In many patriarchal societies, parents tend to prepare their daughters differently from sons on the assumption that educating a girl-child is less beneficial. However, in some societies, advances in female education are widespread. At EWP, out of the 120 prisoners, 60 had relapsed, translating to a 50 per cent recidivism rate. This was attributed to illiteracy, joblessness, and poverty. Cheti (2023) and RODI Kenya (2026), citing KPS data, reported that recidivism rate in Kenya stands at 47 per cent reflecting significance gaps in prisoner rehabilitation. Bishop Aquinas (as cited in Hoyles, 1952) also acknowledged the influence of poverty on crime and, in some cases, argued that theft driven by desperate need could be morally excused.

Holistically, prisoners should undertake vocational technical training such as carpentry, masonry, welding, basketry, tailoring and formal education as facilitated by prison officers. However, the findings show that secular programs hardly reconstructed the lives of prisoners to normalcy since crime is more of a moral problem, solvable through spiritual, moral, ethical and behavioural aspects associated with the rehabilitation process. There is also formal education whereby prisoners pursue academic advancement in various levels of education: primary, secondary, tertiary and university. Numerous prisoners in Kenya have pursued higher education, earning Bachelor's and Master's degrees, with notable examples such as Ruth Kamande at Langata Women's Security Prison, who earned a law degree in 2024 from the University of London, Ezekiel Maina, a medical doctor, and others, including Joseph Liyaka, Joshua Ondengo and Philemon at Kericho Medium.

Education remains an important tool in inculcating positive values in prisoners through acquiring

knowledge to secure gainful employment after release. The chaplains concur that educated prisoners are likely to succeed in adjusting to outside life after release. However, the chaplaincy system of rehabilitating prisoners should be holistic in terms of training, empowerment, capacity building, discipleship and education. Insufficient education may cause the process of rehabilitating prisoners to be flawed and ineffective. This has reference to Hosea 4:6, which remarks that "My people perish because of lack of knowledge" (New International Version, 2011). Concisely, proper training of prison staff and prisoners is key to enhancing effective rehabilitation and Justice. This study is crucial in establishing appropriate training for chaplains and prison officers in rehabilitating prisoners.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study established that staff training is imperative in enhancing the effectiveness of prisoners' rehabilitation within the KPS. Adequately trained prison chaplains and officers play a valuable role in rehabilitating prisoners and subsequent reintegration into society. Nevertheless, the findings point out that existing training initiatives are not sufficiently responsive to emerging rehabilitation trends such as digital support, psychosocial, trauma care, restorative justice programs, mental health issues, aesthetic activities, technical, formal education programs, and life-skills. Constructive knowledge, skills and attitude are critical in adjusting to Smart training objectives, which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound training objectives to help rebuild on positive civility and decency out of the chaos of modern life. Education has to inculcate positive values in prisoners through acquiring skills and knowledge to adjust to life-changing trends.

The study further concludes that gaps in staff training negatively affect the quality of rehabilitative work, resulting in an increasing prisoner population and recidivism, coupled with moral decadence. Therefore, strengthening training, capacity building, and empowerment among the prison chaplains, officers and prisoners in terms of re-definition, re-tooling, intensification and further development to achieve the KPS objective in prisoners' rehabilitation is crucial.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: The study establishes that the KPS should provide continuous professional training of prison chaplains, officers and prisoners capable of transforming and renewing the individual mind (Romans 12.2). The KPS should expand staff training impetus to equip Chaplains and officers with relevant rehabilitation competencies, skills and career progression linked to training, promotion and upward mobility to motivate and empower staff. The KPS and the State Department for Correctional Services (SDCS) should develop constructive policies that institutionalise mandatory training for all rehabilitators as per their scheme of service. Specialised training for chaplains and prison officers should be introduced to address emerging trends such as trauma-informed care, psychological support, restorative justice, digital rehabilitation, mental health, and gender responsive issues. For prisoners, a personal conscience to positively and informingly remain focused on God shift destructive thoughts to reconstruction. The proficient equip prisoners make a profit out of life, guarantee their well-being and enlightenment in the understanding of God. A rehabilitation measure of training, policy, preparedness and interventions are essential as crime becomes demanding, complex and sophisticated in the 21st-century dispensation.

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