

## Correctional Attitudes: An Impetus for a Paradigm Shift in Inmate Rehabilitation

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### Abstract

*The need for correctional reforms from punitive approaches to behaviour change has become apparent in Kenya's correctional facilities. Correctional facilities are expected to deter recurrence of criminal behaviour by transforming inmates through correctional counselling. This approach has subsequently started to change the correctional officers' responsibility from solely custodial to rehabilitative, in which officers are expected to manage rehabilitation treatment programmes. This paradigm shift raises a challenge in the execution of the dual role of inmate rehabilitation and incarceration. This study examines correctional attitudes toward the new responsibilities of transforming inmates through correctional counselling detailing the demographic, positional and occupational characteristics that predict the correctional attitudes. The study found out that correctional officers held affirmative attitudes towards correctional counselling and that age and rank were good predictors of correctional attitudes.*

**Key words:** Correctional Attitudes, Inmate Rehabilitation, Counselling, Prisons, Recidivism.

### 1. Introduction

Correctional facilities have long experienced tensions between two main missions of protecting public safety and rehabilitating offenders (Waters, 2007; Kolind, 2010). Indeed, research indicates that the paradox of the punishment and correctional approaches for behaviour change is as old as the correctional facilities globally. In the early 1900s, the correctional field started using treatment approaches after many years of dehumanizing and brutal prison conditions. The correctional officers had been for a long time been referred to as guards to reflect the security and punitive approaches used in prisons. Farkas, (1995) asserts that prior to 1956 the role of a guard was clearly defined; maintaining security and internal order. Indeed, the term "guard" suggests a custodial identity and function indeed, the change of the title to "correctional officer" reflects the introduction of the rehabilitative philosophy to the field of corrections.

In the mid-1970s there was move towards use of punishment to rehabilitate inmates indeed rehabilitation-oriented policies were blamed for causing trouble in prison. Literature in the 1970s suggested "nothing worked" in offender treatment (Lipton, Martinson, and Wilks, 1975; Martinson, 1974). Then the sentencing landscape changed to "get tough" laws, and community corrections followed suit by moving back to surveillance and punishment models. In the 1990s there was another paradigm shift in inmate rehabilitation in response to new research findings (McGuire, 1995). A new way of summarizing studies, a meta-analysis, gave researchers a better look at rehabilitation outcomes (Cullen and Gendreau, 2000). Research pointed out that the 1970s approach could not have been realistic. Many treatment models reduced recidivism with most punishment-oriented approaches not being effective in fact, some punishment-oriented programs that lacked a treatment component actually increased recidivism (Gendreau, et al., 2002; Gendreau, Little, and Goggin, 1996; Gibbs, 1986; Taxman, 1999).

Recent studies urge probation and parole officers to shelve the conviction that confrontational approaches are necessary in behaviour change in correctional facilities. Stohr and Zupan (1992), argue that the role of the correctional officer as a service provider is likely to solidify, rather than dissipate in the correctional facilities of the 1990s and beyond. This assertion is supported by recent studies which have shown that most correctional facilities across the globe have followed the aforementioned shift correctional approaches.

Studies have shown that correctional facilities in Asia, America and Europe are rapidly reforming their prisons so as to offer inmate rehabilitation, correctional counselling and treatment services as opposed to punishment (Stohr et al., 1996; Paboojian, Raymond & Teske, 1997; Moon and Maxwell, 2004, Kolind, 2010). This however, has not been without challenges, as (Kolind, 2010) notes, the availability of prison-based drug treatment has increased markedly throughout Europe over the last 15 years in terms of both volume and programme diversity. However, prison drug treatment faces problems and challenges because of the tension between ideologies of rehabilitation and punishment. Moon and Maxwell, (2004) indicate that the correctional goal in South Korea has recently changed from the straightforward punishment of inmates to rehabilitation. Emphasis is being placed on education, counselling, and other treatment programs. These changes have consequently begun to also change the correctional officers' roles from a purely custodial role to a human service role, in which officers are expected to manage rehabilitation and treatment programs. The same trend is reported in China in a study by Zhang, et al., (2009). Correctional facilities in Africa are also moving towards behaviour change approaches for inmate rehabilitations. Indeed some correctional facilities in Africa have incorporated correctional counselling in inmate rehabilitation programmes.

The degree of success in implementing behaviour change approaches in these correctional facilities is however wanting (Tenibiaje, 2010; Ijaiya, 2009; Makan, 2000). Makan, (2000) adds that prisons in South Africa have become the breeding ground for further violence while Tenibiaje, (2010), argues that in spite of the fact that prisons are supposed to be a place for transformation and rehabilitation, Nigerian Prisons have become training ground for inmates to become hardened criminals. This raises the question as to whether correctional officers have the requisite attitudes to match the paradigm shift in correctional facilities. Lariviere, (2001) argues that, because of their number and influence, correctional officers are ideally placed to rehabilitate and influence the inmates positively. This can mainly be done during their frequent interaction. It is important, therefore, to gain insight into their attitudes, particularly as these attitudes relate to inmates and the prison system. The findings by Lariviere, (2001) indicate that correctional officers' attitudes towards inmates would be associated with better work adjustment. In a study conducted by Farkas (1999), the orientation of correctional officers towards inmates was examined. The study indicated that despite the punitive sentiment among the public and policymakers, correctional officers still do not express a punitive attitude toward inmates and generally support rehabilitation programs for inmates.

The study also looked at the impact of several individual characteristics and work variables on officer attitudes. Results showed work variables are strongly associated with attitudes among correctional officers. Reising & Lovrich, (1998) found out that individual attitudes, positional characteristics and managerial practices had an effect on correctional officers' job attitudes. Furthermore, researchers have found some problematic associations between the rigid, paramilitary structure employed by many prisons and personnel affected attitudes towards their work (Jurik and Musheno, 1986). Problems occur in prison when prison personnel are unsure of which roles can be relaxed and under what set of conditions. Furthermore the negative effects of role problems on job attitudes have been consistently reported in prison personnel literature (Hepburn 1987; Poole & Regoli, 1980). Among individual characteristics, age, gender, and education have been the most frequently examined as determinants of correctional orientation. Several studies that examined the relationship between the level of education and officers' correctional orientation found no significant relationship between them (Crouch & Alpert, 1982; Farkas, 1999; Jurik, 1985), whereas other studies (Poole & Regoli, 1980; Lariviere, 2001) found a positive relationship between level of education and support for rehabilitation.

Officers with higher education were more likely to have positive attitudes toward rehabilitation and treatment programs. Gender has also been extensively examined, however a majority of studies found that gender has no significant impact on their correctional orientation and their attitude toward inmates (Crouch & Alpert, 1982; Paboojian and Teske 1997) However, Rule & Gandy, (1994) reported that women have more positive attitudes toward individual counselling than men do. Other studies have impressed on the importance of examining the effects of the demographic variables on correctional officers' ability to perform their roles. This is because correctional officers come from a diversity of backgrounds. The more that is understood about the differences caused by the demographic variables, the more that the Competency Based Counselling Training Programme (CBCTP) can be tailored to meet correctional officers' needs. For example, as a result, training effects may be enhanced in the long run. It is apparent that research in this area cannot yet fully address the issues of the demographic variables. The overall effects of the correctional program are based on type of treatment, methodological considerations, location, offender characteristics, organizational and staff characteristics, nature protective factors, and relapse prevention (Correctional Service of Canada, 2004)

Concerning the relationship between seniority and correctional orientation, a few studies (Farkas, 1999; Toch & Klofas, 1982) found significant positive relationships between seniority and counselling/rehabilitation orientation. Correctional officers who have worked longer on these jobs tended to have a positive attitude towards counselling. Other studies (Poole & Regoli, 1980), however, found a positive relationship between seniority and punishment orientation. A factor that has not been frequently examined in many studies but had been found by some studies to be a significant predictor of officers' attitudes toward correctional orientation is the motivation to become a correctional officer. A study by Robinson, et al., (1993) found a strong positive relationship between a human service motivation to join corrections and rehabilitation orientation. Corrections officers whose motivation to join corrections was their interest in the human service part of the job were more likely to support rehabilitation.

It was also found that correctional officers whose motivation to join corrections was their interest in security issues were less likely to support rehabilitation. Seniority, frequency of inmate contact, rank, role problem, job stress, job satisfaction, and the security level of institutions have been examined as organizational variables that are predictors of correctional orientation among correctional officers. It is clear from the literature that correctional reforms are inevitable if correctional officers are expected to deter recurrence of criminal behaviour. The reforms will enable the correctional officers' deal with the challenge of execution of the twin role of inmate rehabilitation and incarceration. It is also clear that for this to be achieved the correctional officers must have the right attitude for behaviour correction. This paper will therefore, examine correctional attitudes establishing the demographic, positional and occupational characteristics that predict the correctional attitudes.

## 2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey. The selection of the design was to facilitate the collection of original data necessary to realize the research objectives. It was also appropriate in collecting useful data that could be quantified and reported as a representation of the real situation on characteristic in the study population. The survey was conducted in selected correctional facilities in Nairobi, Kenya. There were seven (at the period of data collection) correctional facilities in Nairobi with a total population of 2103 correctional officers and 8,777 inmates. The study focused on 5 correctional facilities, which had a population of 1733 correctional officers. The selected Correctional facilities were considered adequate because they represented all categories of correctional classifications in Kenya. A sample of 104 correctional officers was drawn from selected correctional facilities. The sample was obtained using the coefficient of variation. Nassiuma, (2000) assert that in most surveys or experiments, a coefficient of variation of at most 30% is usually acceptable. This study used a coefficient variation of 21% and a standard error of 2%. Nassiuma (2000) gives the following relation for determining sample size.

$$n = \frac{NC^2}{C^2} + (N - 1)e^2$$
, Where  $n$  = Sample,  $N$  = Population,  $C$  = Coefficient of variation and  $e$  = Standard error

Thus  $n = \frac{1733(0.21)^2}{0.02^2} + (1733 - 1)0.02^2 = 104$ .

To take account of representation of all types of correctional facilities, stratified random sampling was done. The correctional facilities were stratified into five (5); Maximum Security Prisons, Medium Security Prisons, Remand Prisons, Women Prisons and Youth Institutions. The researcher prepared and administered an attitude test to all the correctional officers. The five point likert scale attitude test was developed through a synthesis of relevant literature on attitude tests (Lopokoiyot, 1995). Some items were drawn from already existing attitude tests and modified and adapted while a pool of others were developed to suit the present study. It contained items on the officers' correctional attitudes, occupational attitudes and attitudes towards training.

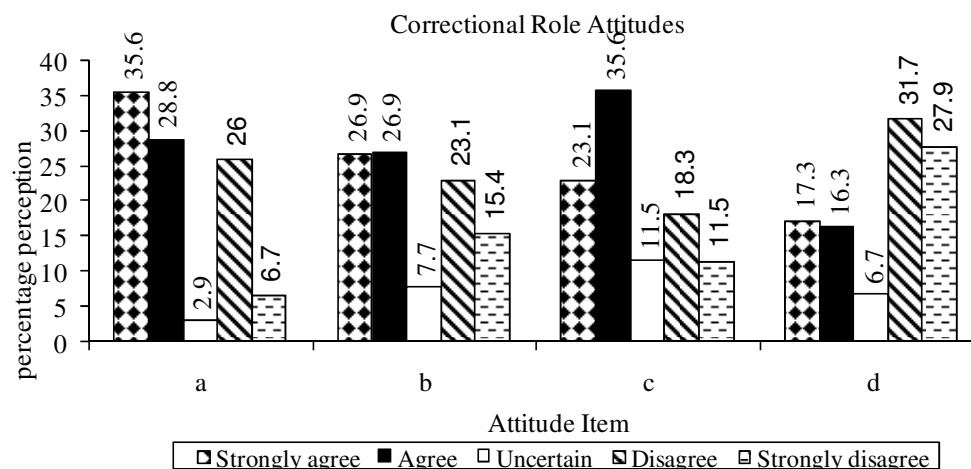
To ensure validity of the instruments, the questionnaires were reviewed by research experts in the Department of Education Psychology and Counselling at Egerton University. In order to ensure reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher conducted a pilot study. Before collecting the necessary data, the research instrument was pilot tested with a small representative sample. The pre-test of the instrument was necessary to find out if the tool could collect the necessary data. The results of the pilot were subjected to a reliability test and a reliability coefficient of .826, was obtained. This was acceptable because it was above the .70 threshold recommended by Selltitz, Writsman & Cook, (1976). Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarise the raw data into frequencies and percentages, while Spearman's correlations was used to conduct a bivariate relationship between correctional attitudes and the demographic, positional and occupational characteristics.

### 3. Results and Discussion

For easy analysis and understanding, the attitude items were classified into three attitude themes relevant to the study: correctional role attitudes, occupational attitudes and training attitudes. For description purposes, we combined 1) strongly agree and 2) agree into “agree” and 3) disagree and 4) strongly disagree into “disagree”)

#### Correctional Attitudes

The correctional attitudes were measured by presenting four items to the respondents on a likert scale. The correctional attitude items were on counselling helping rehabilitate inmates, comparison of counselling with punishment, inmate correctional officer interaction and correctional officers as role models. The items are labelled a, b, c and d in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Attitudes towards Correctional role

- a. Counselling helps rehabilitate inmates
- b. Counselling would rehabilitate inmates more than punishment does
- c. To me having opportunity to interact with inmates and help them solve their problems is the major satisfaction in my job
- d. Inmates have a lot to copy from the correctional officers, which can enhance behaviour change.

The findings (Figure 1) indicated that the majority (64.4%) of the correctional officers believe that counselling helps rehabilitate inmates, 2.9% were not certain whether it does help while 32.7% believe that counselling does not help rehabilitate inmates. These results imply that in a situation where most of the frontline staff approves the effectiveness of rehabilitation, offenders can benefit from rehabilitative programmes. It was further revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents (53.8%) believe counselling would rehabilitate inmates more than punishment. This means that there are some who believe that counselling helps rehabilitate but would prefer punishment to counselling. Only 7.7% were undecided on which mode of (between counselling and punishment) rehabilitation is better for the inmates. While 38.5% hold punitive attitudes believing that punishment helps in inmate rehabilitation more than counselling does. More than half of the Correctional officers (58.7%) derive satisfaction from interaction with inmates meaning that they have a positive attitude towards inmates, 11.5% were undecided and 29.8% of the officers did not derive satisfaction from interaction. This outcome is thus a good predictor of a conducive environment for inmate rehabilitation. This is consistent with Young (2009) who report that good interactions of correctional officers and inmates can make a correctional facility a more positive place. The other finding was that the respondents who believed that inmates had a lot to copy from the officers in order to enhance behaviour change constituted 33.6% while 6.7% are undecided and 59.6% believe that inmates do not have much to copy from the correctional officers. This means that most correctional officers do not perceive themselves as role models for inmates' emulation.

#### Occupational Attitudes

Occupational attitudes were measured by presenting three items to the respondents on a likert scale. The items interrogated the correctional officers' attitude towards their profession, the responsibility of their profession to society and whether if the working conditions were changed they would wish to remain correctional officers.

The items are labelled a, b, and c in Figure 1.

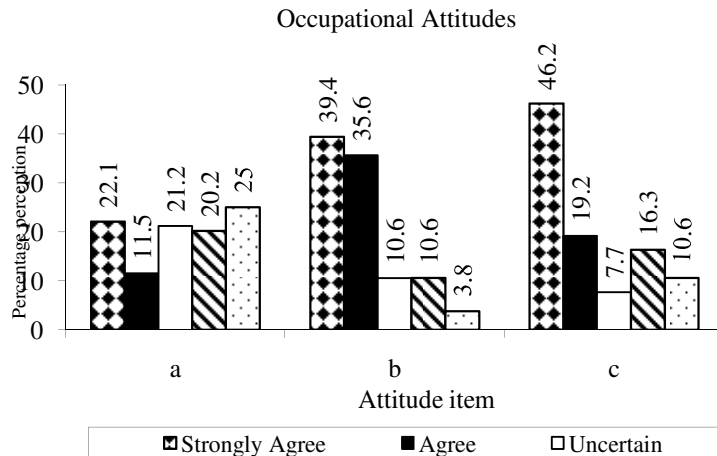


Figure 2: Occupational Attitudes

- a. Being a correctional officer is a honourable profession
- b. Correctional officer have serious responsibility to society and the next generation
- c. Given favourable working conditions I would wish to remain a correctional officer

The results as shown in Figure 2 indicated that only 33.6% of the correctional officers consider their profession honourable with 21.2% not sure while 45.2% do not consider the profession honourable. However, the results indicated that the majority of the officers (75%) agree that they have a serious responsibility to society and the next generation with 10.6% undecided on their responsibility to society and the next generation and the minority (14.4%) disagreed with this statement. The study produced interesting results in that although 45.2% of the officers felt that the profession was not honourable, the majority (65.4%) would wish to remain in the profession given a favourable environment. This implies that they have positive attitudes towards their profession. The findings indicated that only 26.9% would not wish to remain in that profession even if the working conditions were changed.

**Attitudes towards training**

The study further sought to find out the correctional officers attitude towards inmate rehabilitation. Three items were presented to the respondents. The first item was on the necessity for training in inmate rehabilitation, the second was on their ability to rehabilitate using the initial training and the final item sought to establish the role of exposure on rehabilitation. The results are presented in the figure 3.

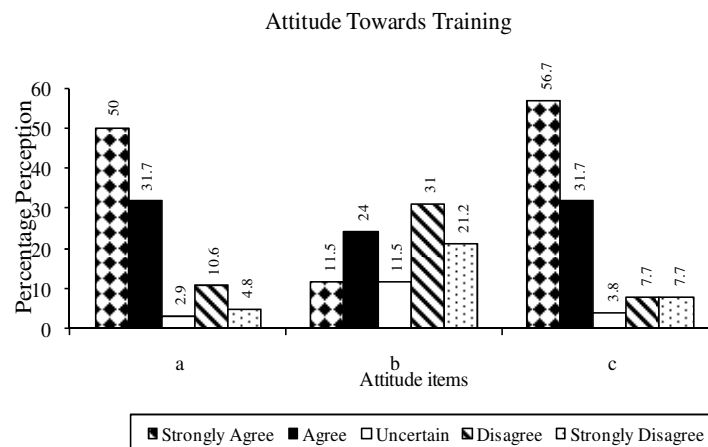


Figure 3 : Training Attitudes

- a. It is necessary to train every correctional officer in inmate rehabilitation.
- b. My training at prison training college has enabled me rehabilitate inmates
- c. More training and exposure would make me enjoy my work more.

The results (Figure 3) indicated that most of the correctional officers (81.7%) have a positive attitude towards training in inmate rehabilitation, agreeing that every correctional officer should be trained in inmate rehabilitation with a very small percentage 2.9% and 15.4% undecided and disagreeing respectively. The results also indicated that only 34.5% of the officers felt that the current training at the Prisons Training College enabled them rehabilitate inmates with 11.5% undecided while more than half (52.2%) felt that the training did not enable them rehabilitate inmates. These results can be attributed to the lack of adequate rehabilitation courses in the prison training college curricular. The results further indicated that 88.4% of the officers agreed to the statement that more training and exposure would make them enjoy their work more with only 3.8% undecided and 15.4% disagreeing. These results indicate that the majority of the officers have a positive attitude towards traini

### Factors Influencing Correctional Attitudes

To find out the factors that might have influenced the officers' attitudes, a bivariate correlation among individual attributes, positional characteristics and correctional officers' attitudes was done using Spearman's correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Bivariate relationships among Variables**

variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sex (1)															
Rank (2)	.083														
Age (3)	-.052	.584**													
Education (4)	-.089	-.214	-.002												
Experience (5)	.037	.498**	.503**	-.167											
Enjoy work (6)	.289**	-.016	-.088	-.071	-.093										
Counseling (7)	-.007	.002	.301**	-.087	.380**	.089									
Rehabilitates (8)	-.089	.031	-.198*	-.038	.311**	.298**	.311**								
Counseling preferred (9)	.063	-.179*	-.006	.230*	.039	.098	.197*	.135							
Company of inmates (10)	.006	-.098	-.113	.072	-.039	.080	.162	.221*	.111						
Officers are Models (11)	-.147	-.230*	-.023	-.137	-.086	.254**	.197*	.344**	.202*	.235*					
My job is honorable (12)	-.057	.023	-.067	.135	.104	.026	.088	.110	.168	-.174	.003				
social responsibility (13)	-.157	-.284*	-.047	-.132	-.080	.042	-.016	.121	.451**	.052	.179**	.138			
Will Keep my job (14)	-.014	-.220*	-.061	-.105	-.042	.120	.052	.238*	.289**	-.030	.106**	.442**	.322**		
Training is necessary (15)	-.095	-.240*	.245*	.248*	-.132	.314**	.148	.284**	.197*	.475**	.527**	-.034	.148**	.059	
Current training is adequate (16)	-.147	-.135	-.043	-.239*	.023	-.050	.004	-.030	-.032	.061	.009	.162	.197*	.219*	-.182

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

The results (Table 1) show that age and rank were good predictors of correctional attitudes. Consistent with other studies (Jackson & Annen, 1996; Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Lariviere & Robinson, 1995; Toch & Klofas, 1982), the present study found out that age was actually correlated with support for counselling ( $r = .301$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ). Older officers showed more support for counselling. The study further established that rank was inversely related to social interaction with inmates ( $r = -.179$ ;  $p \leq .05$ ). The officers in low ranks enjoyed the company of inmates than those in higher ranks. This result contradicts Reising & Lovrich (1998) who found out that as rank increased so did the level of satisfaction in social interaction with inmates. This can be explained by the fact that the officers in lower ranks had more contact hours with inmates and were charged with the day to day management of inmates and hence more interaction as opposed to high ranked officers who were mainly charged with administrative duties.

The bivariate correlation also showed that correctional officers' rank was the only characteristic that showed a relationship with the officers attitude towards the retention of their occupation ( $r = -.284$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ). The officers in lower ranks felt that they would wish to remain in their present occupation if the working conditions were improved. Furthermore, the officers in lower ranks did not perceive their job as honourable ( $r = -.230$ ;  $p \leq .05$ ). These results can be explained by the fact that the officers in lower ranks had very poor working conditions for instance poor housing facilities, overload, poor remuneration, poor motivation strategy and lack of promotion on merit. The implication of the results therefore, is that the working conditions of the correctional officers at the lower ranks need to be improved so as to equip them with the right attitude for better performance. The findings seem to be in agreement with Reising & Lovrich (1998) who argued that high-ranking officers are more comfortable with their occupation because they generally earn higher wages than their subordinates. Rank of the correctional officers was found to be the only positional characteristic related to training attitudes. The necessity for training was inversely related to rank ( $r = -.220$   $p \leq 0.05$ ). The lower the ranks, the more the officers felt that there was need to train in inmate rehabilitation. This can be explained by the fact that most of the lower ranking officers were not given adequate training opportunities as opposed to the higher-ranking officers. The implication of these results is that there is need to train the lower ranking officers in rehabilitation skills if the current rehabilitation efforts are to succeed.

#### **4. Conclusion**

It can generally be concluded that the majority of correctional officers believe that Correctional counselling is an indispensable tool for rehabilitating inmates through behaviour change. Although most officers favour counselling to punishment, a significant number believe that counselling helps rehabilitate but would prefer punishment to counselling. The implication of this finding is that there is need to impress on the correctional officers on the significance of correctional counselling. The study further revealed that the majority of the correctional officers derive satisfaction from social interaction with inmates, meaning that they hold affirmative attitude towards inmates. It is further observed that a significant number of correctional officers believe that inmates do not have much to copy from them. This is consistent with the fact that more than half the officers do not consider the profession honourable. In spite of this, most of the officers agreed that they have a serious responsibility to society and the next generation. One of the encouraging findings was that most of the correctional officers had a positive attitude towards training in inmate rehabilitation, agreeing that every correctional officer should be trained in inmate rehabilitation. It is evident from the findings that for a full revolution from punitive approaches to corrective approaches in correctional facilities, correctional officers must hold affirmative attitudes towards inmate rehabilitation through correctional counselling.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The following are recommendations based on the research results and conclusions.

- i) Correctional counselling should be embedded in correctional training so as to inculcate correctional officers with the requisite skills, Knowledge and attitudes for inmate rehabilitation using behaviour change approaches.
- ii) There is need to improve the working conditions of correctional officers in correctional facilities for example, terms of service so as to avoid demoralization and poor work from the staff.
- iii) There should be opportunities for further training and in servicing so as to boost staff motivation and enhance better services. The environment in correctional facilities should be that of co-operation among staff rather than that of fear of authority.

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