FACTORS INFLUENCING MORE BOYS INTO CRIME THAN GIRLS IN NYAHURURU
DISTRICT, LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA

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The world is grappling with the issue of juvenile crime as millions of children are involved in crime. Studies show that 90% of juvenile crime is committed by male child offenders, which points to gender imbalance. There is need to investigate why boys are more likely to commit crimes as compared to girls. The objectives of the study were; to document the number of boys and girls involved in juvenile crime in Nyahururu district in the year 2011, to identify differences in crimes committed between boys and girls in Nyahururu district, to investigate the factors predisposing boys to crime within Nyahururu district and to suggest strategies that can reduce juvenile crime in Nyahururu district. The study focused on child offenders and their respective parents/guardians and professionals handling the former within Nyahururu district. The study was guided by the Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency as propounded by Hagan (1985) and Gillis and Simpson (1987) and correlational research design. It established that there were 94 child offenders, 83 were boys and 11 girls, which meant that in every 10 child offenders, 9 are boys and only 1 is a girl. Stealing was the most common crime in Nyahururu district among both boys and girls with 23 out of 94 incidences, boys commit more offences than girls the reason was because boys have more freedom. Peer pressure and family related problems were dominant factors predisposing boys into crime. Within the family unit, lack of satisfaction of basic needs was one of the reasons that cause children to be involved in crime. Most respondents indicated that there was a link between child neglect and juvenile crime. Three quarters of child offenders had been influenced by their peers into crime and that drug abuse and prevalence in crime are synonymous. Suggested strategies to that can address the issue of juvenile crime include unconditional positive regard for children, counseling, positive role modeling and promotion of talent among children. The study has drawn some conclusions; crime is dominated by males as compared to females, stealing is the most common type of crime among both boys and girls, most of the crimes committed by girls are done within the domestic sphere while those by boys are both within the home and outside the home, there is a relationship between child neglect and juvenile crime, most child offenders come from
nuclear families. Some of the recommendations from the study are; there is need for urgent intervention to save boys from crime, gender analysts need to develop different approaches for the two sexes when handling them in the juvenile justice system and also during planning of intervention measures, restructuring in the socialization process within the family is necessary, it is suggested that there is need for establishment of an academic discipline in parenting studies, making basic needs more accessible is a multi-pronged strategy to prevention of juvenile crime.