

ABSTRACT

Young people in South Africa are increasingly turning to crime. The majority of those who fall into that trap are between the ages of 16 and 20. This idea is even more disturbing if one considers the impact of rehabilitation in prison and how young people will be equipped to become hardened criminals through institutionalisation with hardened criminals. The literature indicates that certain factors in rehabilitation and family background increase vulnerability to the development of delinquent behaviour, which in turn leads to recidivism.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether rehabilitation is an effective method of intervention for juvenile delinquency with specific reference to juveniles in prison, and to review its impact on recidivism. The results will have implications for our understanding of recidivism and rehabilitation in prison, as well as aid in developing well-equipped rehabilitation centres.

The sample comprises three juvenile offenders who completed the rehabilitation program with the psychologist and who have done the life skills course. The Phenomenological method of analysis was used on the data.

In accordance with previous literature findings, it was found that rehabilitation in prison is not 100 percent effective and as such, certain aspects need to be attended to. In addition the study found that improper rehabilitation does have an impact on recidivism, as all participants had prior arrests for different crimes.

It is recommended that if prison rehabilitation programs are to be successfully implemented, issues like the strict allocation of prisoners in accordance with age and type of offence committed, as well as language in which programs are presented and good training for warders based on rehabilitation and redeployment, need to be considered.