



Analysis of Personality Types among Female offenders in Lang'ata Women Prison in Kenya



Jane W. Ndung'u¹, Pamela Musira Lunjalu², Dennis Nyongesa Wamalwa^{3,4,*}

¹The Department of Peace and Conflict Studies School of Humanities, Africa Nazarene University, Kenya

²Department of Psychology, The University of Nairobi, Kenya

³Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

⁴MA Counselling Studies, The University of Manchester, UK

*Email: wamalwadenniss@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeml.2.1.50-57>

ABSTRACT

The world is faced with emerging and urgent issues regarding gender, one of them being the involvement of women in criminal activities. The main purpose of this study was to establish the influence of personality types on criminal tendencies amongst female offenders. The study was conducted in Lang'ata Women's Prison, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design, where a sample size of 240 inmates and 3 prison staff (respondents) were selected using simple random sampling procedure. Personality types were measured by use of Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI) which is a self-test standardized psychometric test questionnaire for offenders while relevance of personality type knowledge was measured by a self-administered structured interview questionnaire for prison staff. The study instruments proved reliable with Cronbach's Alpha above 0.7 across all dimensions while, content validity was used from expert view of the supervisors for validation. The collected quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0 while qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis by use of verbatim. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic information as well, to measure the personality types of women offenders in Lang'ata Women's Prison. Analyzed quantitative data was then presented using percentages and summarized in tables and figures. Openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism were found satisfactory in explaining criminal tendencies in female offenders in Kenya. The study recommends the use of personality psychometric test in criminal justice system to aid increasing the awareness of offenders' personality types to promote informed decision making and effective treatment of criminals through offenders tailored rehabilitation programs.

Keywords: Personality type, Female offenders, Lang'ata Prison, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Crime has been as a serious challenge in almost all cities throughout the globe. Crime and the dread of crime are severe threats to personal, social, economic and national stability and social environment of the towns, to sustainable social-economic progress, the quality of life, as well as human rights improvement (UN-Habitat, 2005). Heiskanen and Lietonen (2016) assert that the trends show that crimes that are committed by males are on the decline whereas those that are committed by females are on the increase. In spite of these, the level of criminal engagement by females is much lower compared to criminal activities by males.

Campaniello (2014) observes that there are gender gaps existing in the crime market although there is a higher number of females who engage in criminal activities. These incidences are somewhat associated with the existence of decreasing socio-economic gender gaps. Where the present-day women are experiencing additional freedom compared to the women in the past. As a result, the scenario increase prospects for women to commit a crime. Notwithstanding the growing social equality, the police and the justice structures tend to lean more towards leniency with female than with male criminals. Inclinations in female crime compared to male crime are more compound. Some authors claim that female criminality has been increasing faster than male measured by the proportion of female arrests. Huber (2015) indicated that

statistics of a study conducted by Reform International indicated that more than 625,000 female offenders are apprehended in jails everywhere in the world. He adds that the sum of female convicts is rising speedily compared to the rate of their male colleagues, having a 40 percent increase in the rate of female convicts between the year 2000 and 2013.

An analysis of the UN survey data on crime tendencies for six nations with adequate data between 1980 and 2006 displays that the criminal involvement gap is shared by various countries, where the trend in female criminality for all the nations indicates an upward trend (Campaniello, 2014). These trends of data indicated an increase in the global rate of male as well as female convicts from samples of 48 countries. Statistics indicated that between 2004 and 2013, the proportion of male convicts improved by 15 percent, with an average yearly alteration of 1.5 percent, while the proportion of female convicts improved more swiftly 2004 by 18 percent, having an average yearly alteration of 1.9 percent (Heiskanen & Lietonen, 2016). In Africa, the case was no different, although, the data of confined female lawbreakers in Africa rests statistically inconsequential compared to the males. This perhaps being one of the core explanations of why the attention of female delinquency in Africa is an overlooked research emphasis area. Irrespective of the insignificant statistics in the degree of female criminal behavior equated to the males, the number of females confined in Africa, as somewhere else in the globe has amplified over time (Prisloo & Hesselink, 2015).

Conventionally, in Kenya, there has not been heightened interest in the area of female offenders in the nation owing to the fairly insignificant population of female offenders as equated to their male colleagues. Nonetheless, there has been an observed speedy growth in the number of female offenders stimulating the necessity for promising structures for the handling of female offenders in Kenya as in other parts of the world. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2017) indicates that the rate of offenses that have led to imprisonment in females is on the rise. Where the year 2011 showed 9.9 % rate for females of all the committed offenses, 9.7% in 2012 which is a slight decline, 10.25% in 2013, 9.6% in 2014 and a sharp increase of 14% in 2015 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Olivia and Onyango (2012) adds that, women are getting gradually involved in crimes that formerly were male-controlled. Although a number of reasons are highlighted to explain why females engage in criminal activities, it is worth noting that dynamics involving criminal engagement are constantly changing, hence the need for a sharpened understanding of these issues.

The study was underpinned on Eysenck's personality theory as well as Women's liberation theory. Eysenck postulates that criminal behavior is an expression of deviant traits such as impulsiveness, aggressiveness, sensation seeking and hostility, and criminals differ from law-abiding citizens due to personality type differences. Women's liberation theory is the proposition that female's participation in criminal behavior will become closely similar to that of males as disparity in gender is reduced.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research carried out in Langata women prison which is the largest of Kenya's maximum-security female institution (Craig, 2013), and utilized a descriptive research design. The target population was female offenders in Kenya whose current figures indicate to be approximately 13 percent of the total convicts' population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2017), where during the study period Langata Women's prison was hosting a population of 600 inmates (information from Lang'ata prison administrative staff).

The research adopted a simple random sampling approach where 240 respondents were selected from a study population. Yamane's formula (1967) was used to determine the number of respondents for the study, $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$ where, n = the sample size, N = the size of the population, e = the precision error of 5 percentage points at 95% confidence level. Therefore, $n = 600 / \{1 + 600(0.05^2)\} = 240$, a sample size determined at 5% error and 95% level of confidence. Further, the researcher had a sample of three prison officials.

The researcher adopted the use of questionnaires as a means for data collection, where standardized psychometric test questionnaire which is the Big Five Personality Inventory by (John, Danahue, & Kentle, 1991) was used in addition to a self-administered structured interview questionnaire for prison staff. The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a self-report inventory designed to measure an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality by Goldberg (1993). Further, the researcher utilized secondary sources of data to help capture data on the forms of crimes committed by the convicts in Lang'ata prison.

To verify the usability of the test instruments in the actual data collection period, the researcher undertook a preliminary study composed of at least 10% of the total sample size where 25 respondents were drawn from Thika Women's prison as they were not part of the study population. The questionnaires were

administered proved reliable after yielding a Cronbach’s Alpha above 0.7 on each dimension. The validity of study instruments was determined through content-related evidence through the engagement of expert view from supervisors.

The researcher summarized the data using descriptive statistics to enable a meaningful description of scores distribution in tables, charts, and graphs, and was presented in percentages. As well, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were done to analyze the relationship between crime and personality types. The qualitative data was analyzed using verbatim while quantitative data used statistical computations of SPSS version 21.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the study was to analyze Personality Types among Female offenders in Lang’ata Women Prison in Kenya. The results are shown below:

Demographic Data

The demographics considered by the study included; age, marital status, highest education level, and occupation before imprisonment and the crime that was committed.

Age

To establish the age of the study respondents, the researcher categorized their age in five categories to include: below 20, 21-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and above 50 years as shown in Figure 1.

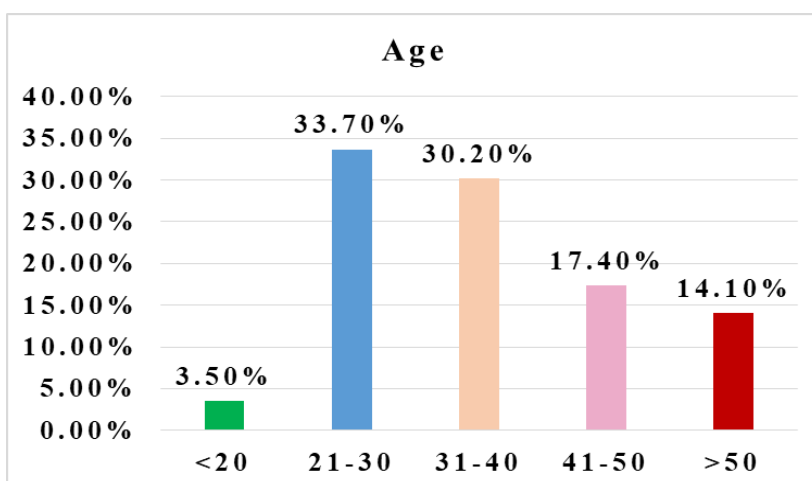


Figure 1. Age bracket the respondents

As shown in Figure 1, slightly more than a third (33.7%) and (30.2%) of the respondents who took part in the study were between 21-30 and 31-40 years old respectively. This was followed by less than a quarter (17.4%) and (14.1%) of the 41-50 and above 51 years. Only 3.5% of them were 20 years and below. Thus, a majority of the inmates that took part in the study were young adults below 40 years.

Marital Status

Marital status of respondents was categorized as; single, married, divorced and widowed as displayed in Figure 2 that showed half (50.0%) of the respondents that took part in the study were single. The married were about a quarter (23.3%) of respondents. The remaining percentage of them were either divorced (9.3%) or widowed (17.4%) respectively. This is an implication that a majority of the female that has been caught in criminal tendencies are single.

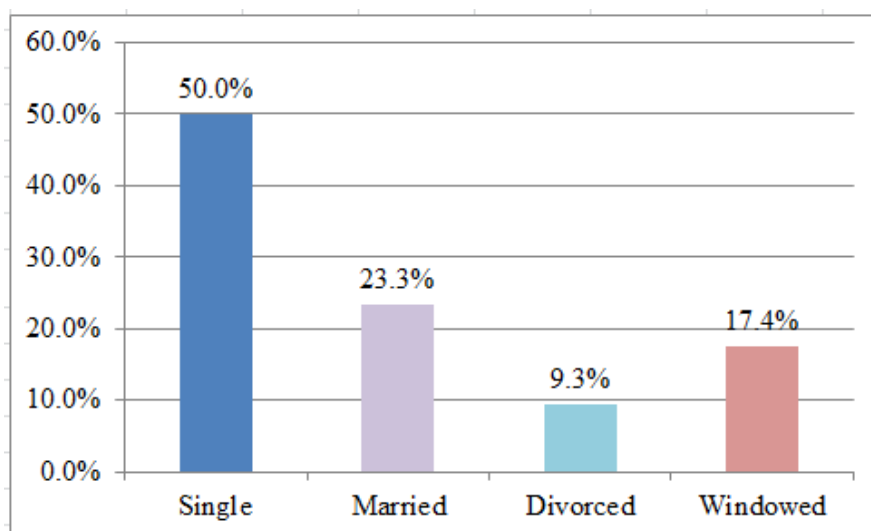


Figure 2. Distribution of Respondents' Marital Status

Highest Education Level

The respondent's level of education was established along the following categories primary, secondary and college and presented as shown in Figure 3.

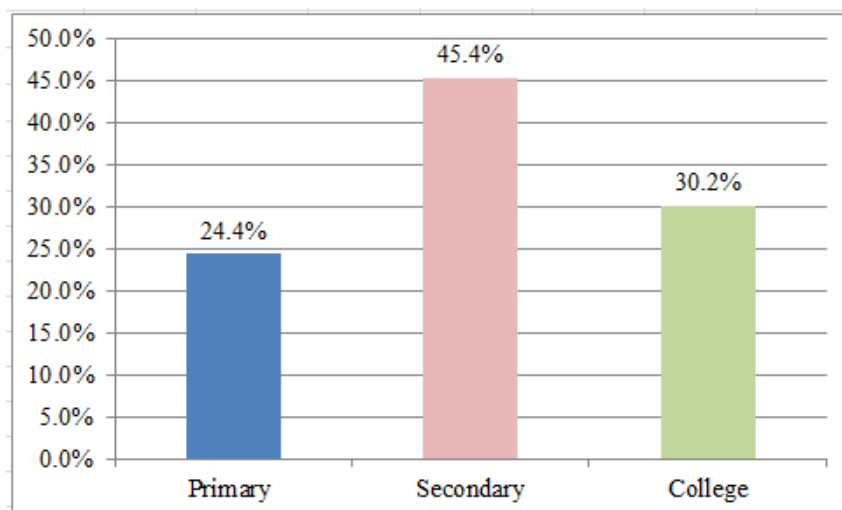


Figure 3. Distribution of Respondents by Highest Education Level

As shown in Figure 3, about a half (45.4%) of the respondents that participated in the study had attained secondary education. This was followed by a third (30.2%) of them having college level of education while the other considerable percentage (24.4%) of them had a primary level of education as their highest education level. This implied that a majority of respondents had the basic knowledge needed for responding to the data collection tools.

Occupation before Imprisonment

To establish the economic status of respondents before imprisonment, they were requested to indicate their occupation before imprisonment yielding results as indicated in Figure 4.

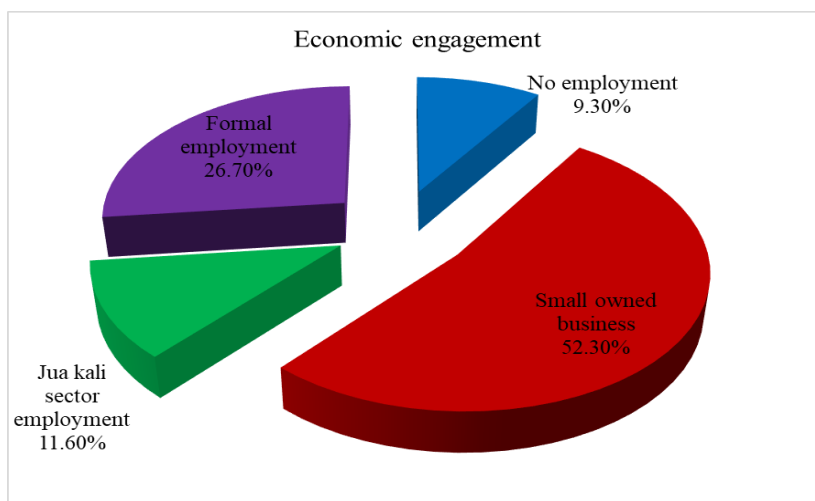


Figure 4. Distribution of the respondents by their occupation before imprisonment

Figure 4 indicates that a majority (52.3%) of study informants were running small businesses before imprisonment. This was followed by slightly more than a quarter (26.7%) of them indicating that they had been in formal employment before being imprisoned. On the other hand, 11.6% of them were employed in Jua-Kali sector while only 9.3% of them were unemployed before imprisonment. This shows that majority of the female inmates in Langata Prison had informal jobs which are a contributory factor that led them to commit various offenses in exchange for money.

Descriptive Statistics Measurement of Personality Type

This section set out to analyze the respondent’s level of agreement to statements concerning diverse personality types including extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness along a scale of 1-5. Level 1 refers to disagree strongly, 2= disagree a little, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree a little, and 5= agree strongly. For interpretation purposes, agree strongly and agree a little were grouped together to agree, disagree strongly and disagree were grouped together as disagree.

Measurement of Extraversion Personality

The descriptive statistics for the responses given on extraversion are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic for Extraversion Personality Type

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly	Mean	Std. Dev
Extraversion	11.40%	14.66%	5.82%	24.18%	43.94%	3.746	1.405

As shown in Table 1, a majority of respondents 68.12% established that they are extraverts, 26.06% disagreed that they are extraverts while 5.82% neither agreed nor disagreed. Further, a majority agreed to the extraversion statements shown by a mean of 3.746 and a standard deviation of 1.405 indicating that the responses varied but with a low variation. This implied that the majority of the respondents who are women offenders in Langata women’s prison are extraverts.

Measurement of Agreeableness Personality

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Agreeableness

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly	Mean	Std. Dev.
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-------------	------------------

Agreeableness	47.68%	19.78%	7.44%	7.68%	17.44%	2.7	1.43
---------------	--------	--------	-------	-------	--------	-----	------

Table 2 revealed that a majority of respondents (67.46%) disagreed that they possess agreeable personality, 25.12% agreed that they are agreeable while 7.44% neither agreed nor disagreed to the agreeableness statements. A mean of 2.7 on agreeableness statements indicated disagreement on most of the respondents. As well, a standard deviation of 1.43 showed varying responses. This implied that the majority of the respondents who were female offenders in Langata Women's Prison were low in agreeableness.

Measurement of Conscientiousness Personality

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Conscientiousness Personality

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly	Mean	Std. Dev
Conscientiousness	37.63%	28.42%	10.21%	12.09%	11.63%	2.74	1.29

Table 3 indicated that most respondents (66.05%) disagreed with conscientiousness, 23.12% agreed with conscientiousness while 10.21% neither agreed nor disagreed. A mean of responses was 2.74 indicating that most of the respondents disagreed with most statements on conscientiousness. As well, a standard deviation of 1.29 indicated varying responses. This implied that the majority of female offenders in Langata Women's Prison had a low dimension of conscientiousness.

Measurement of Neuroticism Personality

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Neuroticism Personality

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly	Mean	Std. Dev
Neuroticism	14.98%	9.46%	13.10%	25.28%	37.21%	3.60	1.22

Table 4 showed that most respondents (62.49%) agreed with statements on neuroticism, 24.44% disagreed while 13.10% neither agreed nor disagreed to the statements. A majority indicated support with statements on neuroticism with a mean of 3.6 of responses and a standard deviation of 1.22 showing varied responses across the scale. This implied that the majority of the female offenders in Langata Women's Prison measured high in neuroticism.

Measurement of Openness Personality

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Openness Personality

	Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly	Mean	Std. Dev.
Openness	36.29%	21.97%	10.21%	20.29%	11.24%	2.7	1.37

Table 5 revealed that 58.26% of respondents disagreed with statements on openness personality, 31.53% agreed to the statements while 10.21% did not agree or disagree. A mean of responses was 2.7 indicating that most of the respondents disagreed with most statements on openness. As well, a standard deviation of 1.37 indicated varying responses. This implied that most of the female offenders in Langata Women's Prison measured low in openness.

Types of Personalities in Female Offenders in Lang'ata Women's Prison

The findings as seen in Figure 1, revealed that slightly more than a third (33.7%) and (30.2%) of the respondents who took part in the study were between 21-30 and 31-40 years old respectively. This was followed by less than a quarter (17.4%) and (14.1%) of them between 41-50 and 51 years and above. Only 3.5% of them were 20 years and below. Thus, a majority of the inmates that took part in the study were young adults below 40 years. So, age is one notable factor associated with female criminal engagement. This

might be explained by the role responsibilities and the expectations to be economically productive resulting in more status anxiety, increasing the tendency for engaging in criminal activities.

The findings as seen in Figure 2, showed that half (50.0%) of the respondents that took part in the study were single. The married presented somewhat less than a quarter (23.3%) of respondents, while the remaining percentage were either divorced (9.3%) or widowed (17.4%) respectively. This implies that marital status is a significant factor associated with criminality. According to Andersen, Andersen, and Skov (2015), marriage is a major control for criminal behavior, moderates antisocial and illicit acts. This implies that antisocial actions are a result of weakened social ties as marriage institution strengthens the social fabric as well as acting as a mediator of social norms. Thus, it might be of great help to have empowerment programs to support the single in order to reduce the incidence of criminal acts among the singles.

A study conducted in China agrees that being single acts as a factor in crime establishing that some single rural individuals engaged in criminal actions for instance gambling, prostitution, and human trafficking (Li, 2016). Caribbean Development Bank gave itself to empower offending youths aged up to 30 years, aiming at diversion and rehabilitation as well as reintegration into the workforce and society. The goal was to raise their standard of living plus employability skills through directed psychoeducation and training. This is in response to a drastic increase in the sum of crimes committed by young people in Grenada, having a 30% increase between 2010 and 2014. They will also be given the opportunity to (Caribbean Development Bank, 2016).

The findings as seen in Figure 3 showed that slightly more than half (52.3%) of the respondents who took part in the study were running small businesses before imprisonment. This was followed by slightly more than a quarter (26.7%) of them indicating that they had been in formal employment before being imprisoned. On the other hand, 11.6% of them were employed in Jua-Kali sector while only 9.3% of them were unemployed before imprisonment. This shows that majority of the female inmates in Langata Prison had informal jobs which might have been a contributory factor to criminal engagement. This implies that female economic marginalization and increasing female economic responsibilities following the changing gender roles might have led women to commit various offenses in exchange for money or to promote their economic status. Therefore, there is a need for economic empowerment as it may work to bring down the incidence of female criminal involvement.

The study revealed that female offenders in Lang'ata women prison displayed the full range of the big five personalities as developed primarily by Costa and McCrae (1985; 1992) which include neuroticism (emotional stability), extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. Burger (2011) asserted that personality is categorized in terms of traits which are dimensions of personalities used to classify individuals according to the degree in which specific characteristic manifests. This implies that for each of the personality types established in the study population, the traits varied in term of degrees of manifestation. This means that each of the personality types is composed of some specific traits with varying degrees, established in percentage.

The study established the fact that no individual fits in one personality type and that it is only the degrees that vary from one traits dimension to another. This is in consensus with the movement from the type to trait approach (typology approach) that assumes that every individual fits into one personality type and that all persons within the category are essentially similar as well as assuming that people's behavior in one category is different from those in other types (Branon, 2008). For this reason, the study revealed that a good proportion of female inmate had an extraversion personality with 68.12% agreeing that they are extraverts, 26.06% disagreeing that they are extraverts while 5.82% neither agreed nor disagreed. The study also indicated clearly that the 67.46% disagreed that they possess agreeableness personality, 25.12% agreed that they are agreeable while 7.44% neither agreed nor disagreed. The largest percentage on conscientious personality had 66.05% who disagreed with the conscientiousness, 23.12% agreed with the conscientiousness while 10.21% neither agreed nor disagreed. The study further found out that (62.49%) agreed to the statements on neuroticism, 24.44% disagreed while 13.10% neither agreed nor disagreed. Finally, on openness personality, it was evident that 58.26% disagreed, 31.53% agreed to the statements while 10.21% did not agree or disagree.

Extraversion dimension places extreme extravert in one end and extreme introverts in the other. Extraverts are sociable individuals with lots of energy, optimism, friendliness, and assertiveness while introverts are asocial and lack energy. This was evident in the responses given in the study. Most of the respondents scored highly on the openness aspect accepting that they had an active imagination, willingness

to contemplate new concepts, divergent thinking, and intellectual inquisitiveness. This supports the assertion of Burger (2011) that people with high openness are eccentric and independent thinkers while the opposite of this prefers accustomed circumstances. The same was evident in agreeableness and conscientiousness aspects showing higher scores on variables indicating individuals that are helpful, trusting and sympathetic and on the extreme end with those who tend to be hostile and cynical and also those that are organized, plan oriented and determined alongside the opposite end of those who tend to be careless, easily distracted from tasks and undependable respectively (Burger, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The study established that female offenders in Langata women's prison had high levels of extraversion and neuroticism, and reported low levels of agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. The study recommends that the government need to provide sufficient resources and funds to promote the use of psychological technologies such as psychometric tests in diverse application spheres as they may help create a psychologically informed and restraint generation. These can be implemented in homes, schools, and churches to avert the challenge. Psychometric tests are to help raise individual awareness of self. Psychometric testing should be used at all levels of the criminal justice system from courts to prisons since the understanding of individual personalities may aid in decision making and informing treatment strategies of criminals. Hence, rehabilitation programs should be tailored to support the offenders. Future studies need to cover more a heterogeneous sample and a wider scope than included in the current research as well as incorporate more factors influencing criminal tendencies among female offenders in the Kenyan prisons. The scope may involve a national wide sample that includes male offenders as well as wider psychological issues such as personality disorders among others.

REFERENCES

- Andersen, S. H., Andersen, L. H., & Skov, P. E. (2015). Effects of Marriage and Spousal Criminality on Recidivism. *Journal of marriage and family*, 496-509.
- Branon, L. (2008). *Gender: Psychological perspectives*. USA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Burger, J. M. (2011). *Introduction to personality*. Canada: Wardsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Campaniello, N. (2014). Women in crime. *IZA World of labour*, 1-10.
- Caribbean Development Bank. (2016, December 8). *CDB project to prevent youth crime and support youth empowerment in Grenada*. Retrieved from Caribbean Development Bank: <http://www.caribank.org/news/prevent-youth-crime-support-youth-empowerment-grenada>
- Craig, J. (2013, January 24). Day care center opens for Kenya's female prisoners. *VOA*, p. 8.
- Heiskanen, M., & Lietonen, A. (2016). *Crime and gender: A study on how men and women are represented in international crime statistics*. Helsinki: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control.
- Huber, A. (2015). *Women in criminal justice system in Scotland the facts*. UK: Community Justice Authorities.
- John, O. P., Danahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The Big-Five inventory versions 4a and 54*. Berkeley: University of California.
- John, P. O., & Sanjay, S. (1999). *The Big-Five Trait taxonomy: History, measurements and theoretical perspectives*. Berkely: University of California.
- John, P. O., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). *Paradigm shift to the integrative Big Five trait taxonomy*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Kenya statistical abstract*. Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.
- Li, X. (2016, October 11). *China's marriage rate is plummeting- and it's because of gender inequality*. Retrieved from The Conversation: <http://theconversation.com/chinas-marriage-rate-is-plummeting-and-its-because-of-gender-inequality-66027>
- Olivia, L. A., & Onyango, I. (2012). *Institutional treatment of female offenders in Kenya*. USA: UNAFEI.
- Prisloo, J., & Hesselink, A. (2015). A quantitative analysis of female crime trends in Guateeng, South Africa . *Southern African Journal of Criminology* , 67-76.
- UN Habitat. (2005). *The port Moresby insecurity diagnosis report: Towards an urban crime prevention*. Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlement Programme.