

Barriers to Pottery Production in Kenyan Prisons

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper was to investigate barriers to pottery production in Kenyan prisons. Descriptive research design guided the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse data in the study. Areas of study were Lang'ata, and Kisii women prisons. A total of 486 respondents formed the population of the study which included inmates, Officers-in-Charge of prisons and illustrators. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 2 Officers-in-charge, 4 illustrators and 30 inmates who engaged in pottery, thus leaving a total of 450 inmates who did not engage in pottery. From 450 inmates, Krejcie and Morgan's table was used to get a sample size of 205 inmates who were selected by use of simple random sampling technique. The study found out that pottery is confronted with barriers such as negative attitude towards pottery, inadequate facilities and resources, inappropriate teaching methods and lack of refresher training for illustrators. The study recommended that authorities concerned should ensure adequate allocation of funds and illustrators to undertake refresher training so as to equip them with modern mode of production for transmission of relevant skills to the inmates to assist them with reintegration.

Keywords: Pottery, Techniques, Education, Production, Inmates

INTRODUCTION

In the past, people used clay objects and its demand was high because it was used on a daily basis. However, its use is decreasing because its function has been taken over by modern amenities such as refrigerators, rice cookers, aluminum tins and plastic containers. Traditional pottery production faces various challenges such as lack of capital, training, promotion as well as lack of official attention compared to businesses that have incorporated modern mode of production (Arifin, 2015).

Arthur (2013) acknowledges that in most of the world, women are the potters and the global change from low-fired pottery to metals and plastics continue to have a dramatic economic and social impact on women's lives with potters facing daily decisions concerning how to produce and distribute their wares to compete against the influx of industrial goods. The fact that pottery is facing numerous challenges necessitated this study to find out if the same scenario is experienced in Kenyan prisons.

It is emphasized by Mbogoria (2016) study on traditional technologies on conservation of natural and cultural heritage in Kenya among the Somalis, Kwale and Kilifi potters emphasized that conservation of pottery is made

difficult by the hectic nature of the processes involved and the modern disregard of traditional beliefs due to Christianization and formal education. The African child is socialized to be ashamed of traditional values, as a result, the traditional technologies like pottery making, are now left in the hands of the elderly. Consequently, master potters have no one to pass the skills to, leaving the craft without successors. Though the above study was done in Kenya, it was among different communities with different ethnic backgrounds whose choice of varied ethno linguistic groups was to validate that the pottery making issues are similar despite the differences in ethnic backgrounds while the current paper was done in prisons to find out barriers in pottery making.

A study by Amollo (2007) observed that pottery which is an old-age craft is eroding along with its skills and technologies. The researcher highlighted the fact that pottery as a small-scale production referred to as Jua kali industry which mainly involves craft production, has become a common phenomenon in urban areas but has far received little attention in the numerous researches carried out on the Jua kali sector and it is looked upon as diminishing traditional craft of ethnic communities. Amollo's study focused on Jua kali industry and not in prisons like the

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present study. The present study is an effort to fill this gap in research which is relatively under researched.

Statement of the Problem

Globalization has dramatically affected potters' lives around the world with steady stream of metal and plastic items, which have introduced competition to the detriment of pottery sector. Some potters have stopped the craft due to the impact of industrial wares resulting in a reduced demand. Pottery making, are now left in the hands of the elderly. Consequently, master potters have no one to pass the skills to, leaving the craft without successors. Studies have failed to investigate pottery in prisons as an effective tool for self-expression and a means to self-reliant. Pottery in Kenyan shows is notably few compared to other crafts such as carpentry, weaving and bead making. The existing studies on pottery in Kenya do not focus on inmates. It is upon these that the researcher was inspired to look into barriers to pottery production in prisons in Kenya.

Research Question

What are the barriers to pottery production in Kenyan prisons?

Objective of the Study

Main objective of this study was to establish the barriers to pottery production in Kenyan prisons.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Vygotsky's Art and Creativity Theory as informed by Lindqvist (2003). The major tenet of this theory is that creativity is the foundation of art and it helps people advance within society by releasing aspects that are not expressed in everyday life.

Vygotsky regarded the psychology of art as a theory of the social techniques of emotion and made analysis that reflects the artistic process. When the artist creates his art, he gives realistic material an aesthetic form, which touches upon the emotions of the readers and makes them interpret the work of art and bring it to life by using their imagination. An artist works with forms and techniques that have been developed historically and "turned into" art. The connection between art and life is a complex one, essentially, the aesthetic emotion, brought about by art, creates new and complex actions depending on the aesthetic form of the work of art, which has pedagogical potential has the power to influence people in the long run. Art is

the antithesis of everyday life and the opposite of morality. Art releases aspects that are not expressed in everyday life, and it is important tool in the struggle for human existence. Vygotsky developed his view on the creative consciousness process, the relation between emotion and thought and the role of imagination. He discussed the issues of reproduction and creativity as two aspects that relate to the entire scope of human activity. Vygotsky claimed that all human beings, even small children, are creative and that creativity is the foundation of art as well as for science and technology. The creative ability called imagination is the basis of every creative action: "It manifests itself in all aspects of cultural life, making scientific and technical creativity possible". Reproduction on the other hand, means that people repeat certain behavioral patterns that were created and shaped much earlier such as found in art. Creativity is essential to the existence of humanity and society and it is not only a question of artistic creativity, but also something that is necessary for the process of consciousness.

This theory has important implications for art in prison and may help further goals of art and creativity. The theory will be used in this study to show how pottery offers a fertile ground in fostering creativity among inmates. The theory was applied in the study, by using pottery as a trigger to inmates' creative potentials, that allow flow and realization of their creative abilities, and thus enhance positive self-esteem. Art and creativity in this study is understood in terms of abilities that are involved in creative expression in production of artistic pottery work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arifin (2015) observes that in the past, demand for traditional pottery was always high because it was used on a daily basis. However, the number of users is decreasing because its function has been taken over by modern amenities like refrigerators, rice cookers. Traditional pottery production faces various challenges including lack of capital, training, promotion as well as lack of official attention compared to businesses that have incorporated modern mode of production.

Djurichkovic (2011) study on art in prisons reviewed the philosophies and impacts of visual Arts programs in prisons in Australia indicated that some custodial staff was reported as being openly verbally hostile to inmates and the artists involved in the arts program. Inmates observed

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that some custodial staff obstructed the smooth running of the arts program by deliberately delaying escorts of inmates to workshops. The staff believed that inmates used art to play the game and not for motives of self-improvement, and that art activities were a luxury that criminals did not deserve. A view shared by Tegel (2012) who noted that according to the inmates, there have been several attempts to shutter the workshops and corrupt officials charge to let raw materials such as clay into prison and finished products out to the market. Sullivan (2013) study on art education in prisons in Florida found out that inequality of funding between prisons with similar roles is a key barrier to raising standards of pottery in prisons. Inmates of a particular institution may be denied the chance to expressive abilities simply because management cannot be convinced of the effectiveness, or necessity of creativity. Although the above studies were carried out in prisons like the present study, none of them was done in Kenya as is the case with the current study. It was important to find out if creativity in pottery was encouraged in prisons in Kenya.

Arthur (2013) study on pottery of Southwestern Ethiopia asserts that globalization has dramatically affected potter's lives around the world with the steady stream of metal and plastic containers replacing low-fired pottery for household use. The impact of industrial wares on potter's lives and how they have adapted varies, as some potters have begun producing pots to sell to tourists and others have stopped their craft. Arthur further points out that potter's skill can be tested if resources are not available, such as proper clay, room to store and dry her pots, and finding materials for firing. The scholar asserts that one of the issues facing potters' is population growth and its effect on the expansion of potential agricultural land. Potters face daily decisions, concerning how to produce and distribute their wares to compete against the influx of industrial goods. It is clear from the above study that technological advancement is causing major constraints on potters. It was important to find out if the same was the case in Kenyan prisons.

Asante, Adjei and Opoku (2013) observed that pottery plays a very important role in the indigenous culture of the various ethnic groups in Ghana. However, the rich theoretical and cultural components of the art have not been fully documented, and are not well understood and appreciated. The study which used qualitative research method involved describing

and understanding phenomenon from the participants' perspective. They did not employ quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis that's achieve higher degree of reliability and validity as is the case in the present study which was done in Kenya.

Matanda (2011) study that examined the role of prior knowledge and entrepreneurial orientation on access to new markets in Kakamega, Bungoma and Kisumu in Western Kenya found out that Kenya's potters have the mindset of being proactive, aggressive but lacking the information needed to tap into new markets. Higher level of education, membership into business associations and attending trainings improved access to new markets. The study concluded that training and innovation influence access to new markets, so potters need training to understand the market better. It was important to find out whether or not illustrators needed further refresher courses or not to enable them be more innovative in order to impart relevant skills to inmates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design and the target population comprised 486 respondents. The researcher purposively selected Lang'ata and Kisii prisons since these facilities engage in pottery production. Morgan's table was used to select 250 inmates who do not take part in pottery while purposive sampling was used to select 2 Officers-in-Charge, 4 illustrators and 30 inmate potters. Proportionate sampling technique was then used to determine the sample size for each prison. In Lang'ata prison out of 270 inmates a sample of 123 inmates was selected. In Kisii prison out of 180, a sample size of 82 inmates was selected. Simple random sampling was used to select a total of 205 inmates from the two prisons. Data collection instruments used was; questionnaire, interview schedule and observation schedule. Reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study and validity was conducted through a panel of experts who assisted in validating the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were employed in the study. The use of both methods provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both approaches by complementing each other. Data presentation was done in form of tables, figures and frequency distribution. The

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objective sought to find out barriers to pottery production in Kenyan prisons.

It was important to find out non potter inmates' views in regard to pottery

Table1. Pottery uptake in Prisons N=202

Response	f	%
Indicate why you did not take pottery course?		
I considered it dirty and tedious	32	15.8
I had no interest	71	35.1
It was not popular among inmates	99	49.1
Total	202	100.0

From the findings, (49.1%) of the inmates' responses showed that they were not interested in the pottery course. Despite the voluntary enrollment in pottery, majority of the inmates did not find pottery to be popular, this trend tend to suggest that pottery in prison is on the decline. A view supported by Mbogori (2016) who observed that an African child is socialized to be ashamed of traditional values, as a result, the traditional technologies like pottery making, are now left in the hands of the elderly. This is consistence with Kaneko (2013) who observed that farmers and a few potters' husbands

consider pottery inferior activity because, in their cultural context, it constitutes "dirty work" as it involves working with clay. A view further shared by Kayamba and Kwesiga (2016) who opines that with the introduction of Christianity which ushered in Western Education, the pottery craft and the use of pottery in homes, other than for cooking, was despised and associated with paganism. There is need to empower inmate potters with the relevant skills and knowledge which can be a catalyst for changing prison pottery in Kenya, in terms of inmates' self-expression and as tool for reintegration.

Table2. Inmates Potters' Experiences towards Pottery

	Response	f	%
Do you have hard time doing pottery	No	16	59.3
	Sometimes	11	40.7
	Total	27	100.0
Do you wish to pursue pottery once released	Yes	27	100.0
Have you benefited from the skills and expertise of others in pottery	Yes	27	100.0

The findings revealed that majority of inmate potters do not have hard time doing pottery as reported by majority of the study participants 16(59.3%). However, the other 11(40.7%) of the inmate potters indicated that they sometimes had difficulty doing pottery. All potters reported to have benefited from the skills and expertise of others 27(100%). On a positive note, the entire inmate potters 27(100%) reported that they would wish to pursue pottery once released from prison. The fact that majority of inmates did not have hard time doing pottery and all of them reported to have benefited from the skills and expertise of others, with the entire inmate potters reporting that they would wish to pursue pottery once released from prison, is a clear indication that despite the various barriers experienced in pottery section, its impact is felt among the inmates. It can be said that the creative activities involved in pottery resulted to intrinsic motivation among inmate potters. The findings is in agreement with Asante, Adjei and Opoku, (2013) who reiterated that the whole practice of the craft, from clay winning to firing, is encapsulated in a tradition and belief system that unites humankind and the environment.

Trade in pottery thus provides opportunity for the people to project their culture and also raise the standard of living for the women in particular and ultimately, helping to reduce household poverty and transmission of cultural beliefs to the next generation. A view shared by Kaneko (2013) who supports the findings by stating that unlike architecture and the products of the artistic problem-solving design, handmade pottery provides person-to-person intimacy. The hand of the artist reaches through the object to touch the hand of the user, creating a bond of friendship, caring and aesthetic gratification that nurtures human life and fortifies it against indifferences. It is an avenue for artistic expression which means inmates are able to express themselves and create pots from personal feelings and experiences without fear in the confines of dehumanizing and restrictive prison environment. The fact that all the potters indicated that they have benefited from others' skill is a positive move towards enhancement of their creativity, which is considered as a primary component of art. The willingness to share knowledge and skills acquired show that pottery has added value to the inmates' lives such that

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they would wish to continue with it once out of prison. It can be concluded that empowering inmate potters with the relevant skills and knowledge therefore can be a catalyst for changing pottery in Kenyan prison. Pottery has been used in this case to trigger inmates' creative skills.

Inmate potters were asked to rate quality of facilities within pottery section as shown below.

Table3.Quality of Facilities in Pottery section N =27

Response	f	%
Very good	0	0.0
Good	0	0.0
Fair	0	0.0
Poor	21	77.8
Very poor	6	22.2
Total	27	100.0

From the findings, it emerged that the quality of facilities in pottery section in Kenyan prisons was generally poor as reported by the respondents, who either considered them poor 21(77.8%) or very poor six (22.2%). This shows the extreme low quality of pottery facilities, which has a strong bearing on production, and is one of the major factors that affect the training of pottery skills. The study findings confirm the work of Sullivan (2013) who found out that inequality of funding between prisons with similar roles is a key barrier to raising standards of pottery in prisons. Inmates of a particular institution may be denied the chance to expressive abilities simply because management cannot be convinced of the effectiveness, or necessity of creativity. Similarly, Christ offense (March, 2019) states that Artifacts enshrine the wealth of a nation, through the combined efforts of intricate design-often breathtaking craftsmanship and eloquent portrayals. Sadly, the survival of cultural artifacts is often dogged by lack of proper record keeping or depositories for the items. All the prisons did not have adequate storage space. Given pottery's delicate nature, there is need to set up a section specifically for pottery items. The extreme low quality of pottery facilities as shown in figure I below of poorly lit workshop with items placed under the tables as storage area, while the same tables are used as working surfaces for pottery making at Lang'ata prison is a show of lack of interest. Pottery offers various possibilities such as enabling climate for inmate potters and can be effectively used a means to self-reliance once inmates are released.

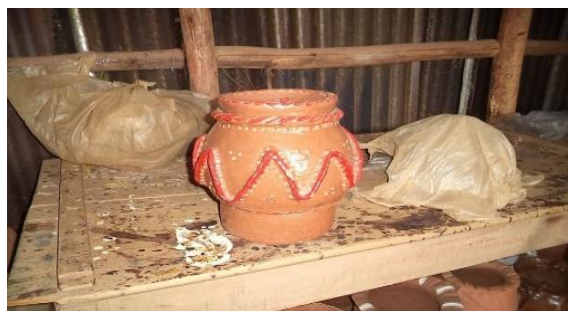


Figure1.Pottery Workshop at Lang'ata prison

Barriers Experienced by Officers in Pottery Section

Pottery illustrators and the Officers-in-charge were asked if they encounter any challenges in sourcing for clay materials and if there are problems the institutions face that could impede pottery's effectiveness respectively.

During the interview with the illustrators, one of them said that:

“.....Sourcing for clay takes long and that most times the clay is not enough for the entire period. There is lack of space to dry and pack wares as well as difficulties in acquisition of firewood for firing” (Pottery illustrator from Kisii prison).

The above findings revealed clearly that there was difficulty in sourcing of firewood for firing, this could ultimately affect production of pottery wares. Other materials can be used successfully for firing instead of wood such as banana stems from the vast banana plantations that are locally available in Kisii County. Scarcity of raw material (clay) as reported by the illustrators may be one of the overriding reasons for few number of inmate potters, low quality standards of pottery and few pottery items exhibited in Kenyan prisons compared to other items like carpentry, woven baskets and jewelry. The most important raw material for pottery making is clay, its crucial for successful skills training in pottery, its availability at the right time would ensure more practice and encourage more creativity and imagination in pottery production in prisons.

Access to Funding

Funding can influence uptake of pottery in prison. Thus, the researcher sought information from Officers-in-Charge on the status of funding for pottery section.

The findings indicated that lack of funding has contributed to significant challenges in pottery in prison. This was indicated by the Officers-in-Charge during the interviews who said that

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pottery in prison was affected significantly by poor funding mechanisms. Specifically, one of the Officers-in-Charge said that:

“Inadequate allocation of funds for pottery section has led to lack of resources in the pottery department, thus affecting the quality and quantity of pottery products. The workshop is also in poor state, this could discourage inmates from taking up pottery”
(Interview:Officer-in-Charge)

Arifin (2015) observed that traditional pottery production faces various challenges including lack of capital, training, promotion as well as lack of official attention compared to businesses that have incorporated modern mode of production. A similar view is shared by Sullivan (2013) who points out that inequality of funding between prisons with similar roles is a key barrier to raising standards of pottery in prisons. Inmates of a particular institution may be denied the chance to expressive abilities simply because management cannot be convinced of the effectiveness, or necessity of creativity and that art in prison is best seen to keep people occupied, and at worst a total waste of time. Lang’ata prison had dilapidated workshop while Kisii had no workshop. Based on the foregoing argument, it can be concluded that there is need to revitalize pottery facilities in prisons so that inmates have the necessary materials and enough working space to be able to execute and hone their skills in order to accelerate pottery skills necessary for self-improvement in prison and a more creative life after release. Poor state of pottery workshop as shown in figure 1 above corroborated with report by one Office-in-charge that poor state of pottery workshop is detrimental in the uptake of pottery, thus the dire need for more up-to-date workshop.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

In view of the above findings, it was evident from the study that there was low number of inmate potters compared to the total number of inmates in the prisons that offer pottery. This implies that illustrators trained in pottery may soon have no student inmates to train in pottery. One strong factor that came from staff was lack of resources due to underfunding. If this trend continuous then the few prisons that engage in pottery may decide to do away with pottery completely. One possible way of promoting the sector is availing of adequate funds on time, to assist towards pottery’s stability and continuity

in prisons and as a means to community reentry. Pottery in prison provides an opportunity for self-improvement, a better life, and a means to self-employment, thus contributing to attainment of Kenya’s vision 2030.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

- Pottery section be adequately funded to facilitate improvement of infrastructures and refresher training for illustrators, these were the most considered factors in improving pottery in prisons so that barriers arising due to underfunding can be eliminated.

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