

Research Article

Makale Gönderim Tarihi: 21.05.2022

Makale Kabul Tarihi: 04.06.2022

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION
SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICESGENÇ YÜKÜMLÜLERİN VE DENETİMLİ SERBESTLİK UZMANLARININ
DENETİMLİ SERBESTLİK SİSTEMİNE İLİŞKİN DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ¹Münevver ERYALÇIN
¹Veli DUYAN

CORRESPONDENCE

¹Research Assistant, Ph.D
University of Ankara, Faculty of
Health Sciences, Department of
Social Work / munevergoker@
gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-
4177-1381

²Prof. Dr., University of Ankara,
Faculty of Health Sciences,
Department of Social Work /
duyanveli@yahoo.com, ORCID ID:
0000-0003-4316-5756

DOI: 10.54467/trjasw.1119675

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to examine the views of juveniles and probation specialists on the probation system and to put forward some suggestions on effective social work practices in the probation system. In this qualitative study the phenomenology design was used. The study group of the research determined using purposive sampling method comprises 30 juvenile justice involved aged between 19-25 and 20 probation specialists. Five sub-themes were identified as: getting consultancy services, meeting psychosocial needs, development of cognitive and behavioral skills, raising awareness about substance use, changing of friend circle. According to data from in-depth interviews, the probation system is considered a system that generally meets some basic psychosocial needs of young people; provides cognitive and behavioral awareness of the effects of substance abuse but cannot fully touch the lives of young people. The education and improvement programs in the probation system should be revised in accordance with the needs of the youth.

Keywords: Probation practices, young probationer, probation specialist, effectiveness, social work

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, genç yükümlülerin ve denetimli serbestlik uzmanlarının denetimli serbestlik sistemine ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesi ve denetimli serbestlik sisteminde etkili sosyal hizmet uygulamalarına yönelik bazı önerilerin ortaya koyulmasıdır. Nitel çalışma olarak planlanmış bu çalışmada fenomenoloji deseni kullanılmıştır. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenen araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 19-25 yaşları arasında çocuk adalet sistemine dahil olan 30 genç yükümlü ve 20 denetimli serbestlik uzmanı oluşturmaktadır. Danışmanlık hizmeti alma, psikososyal ihtiyaçların karşılanması, bilişsel ve davranışsal becerilerin geliştirilmesi, madde kullanımı konusunda farkındalık yaratılması, arkadaş çevresinin değiştirilmesi olarak beş alt tema belirlenmiştir. Derinlemesine görüşmelerden elde edilen verilere göre, denetimli serbestlik sistemi gençlerin bazı temel psikososyal ihtiyaçlarını karşılayan; madde kullanımının etkilerine ilişkin bilişsel ve davranışsal farkındalık sağlayan bir sistem olarak kabul edilmekte ancak gençlerin hayatına tam olarak temas edememektedir. Denetimli serbestlik sistemindeki eğitim ve iyileştirme programlarının gençlerin ihtiyaçlarına uygun biçimde revize edilmesi gerekmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Denetimli serbestlik uygulamaları, genç yükümlüler, denetimli serbestlik uzmanları, etkililik, sosyal hizmet

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

The probation system, which aims to ensure social justice, provides an important mechanism in the process of providing social justice, which is one of the main purposes of social work (Canton, 2011). Probation includes many of the social work skills such as case management, planned intervention, group work, risk assessment and management. Social work intervention methods in probation include a process that supports young probationers to gain new ways of thinking and behavior and to enhance their self-determination capacity.

Social workers have the responsibility to provide competent and effective services to their clients in this process. This situation brings with it some questions that need to be answered, such as "How do social workers know that the services they provide are effective, competent and that the clients benefit from it?" (Farley et al., 2009). The effects of probation system for youngsters involved in the juvenile justice system have been a critical concern among social workers, psychologists, policy-makers, and researchers. Most of the justice-involved adolescence are also included in the probation system. Probation system serve as a gateway to formal treatment services for juveniles (Belenko et al., 2017). The probation system refers to social work interventions in which sanctions and measures that take into account the specific risks and needs of juveniles and young offenders; training and improvement programs are carried out by the risks and needs of young people; control and improvement mechanisms are carried out in a coordinated manner to prevent recidivism.

In accordance with their criminogenic risks and needs, young probationers participate in training and improvement programs such as individual interviews, psycho-educational group work and seminars. Group works consists of 10-12 week treatment program that comprises psychoeducation, cognitive-behavioral approaches as well as motivational interview techniques.

Probation practices are based on the Risk, Need and Responsivity model (RNR), which are associated with significant reductions in recidivism. The risk principle states that the intensity of an intervention matches the level of risk; the need principle states that an effective intervention must take criminogenic needs into account; the responsivity principle suggest that interventions that should be sensitive to young people's individual learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths (Dowden and Andrews, 2004; Andrews and Bonta, 2010).

The RNR model guides probation specialists to assess the risk for recidivism, and to match young probationers to evidence-based treatment programs based on assessed criminogenic needs. The RNR model guides justice agencies to engage young people in more or less intensive interventions appropriate to their risk of recidivism (Schwalbe, 2019). In Turkey, probation interventions with young offenders are based on individualized risk needs assessment and supportive intervention programs. "Development of an Effective Risk Evaluation System for Children in Turkish Probation Services Project" co-funded by the European Union, the Republic of Turkey and UNICEF started on 2015. The overall objective of the Project is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the juvenile justice system in Turkey through the development of a more effective, preventive and rehabilitative probation system. In the process called reform within the scope of the project, semi-structured individual interviews are conducted with the youth. Within the reform, risks and needs regarding criminal history, family, education and employment status, general health status, social environment and peer relations, substance use, attitudes and behaviors of juveniles are determined and appropriate interventions are determined. There are also effective communication, conscious awareness and anger management practices for young probationers (Department of Probation, 2017). However, there is not a full understanding of whether sanctions and interventions are facilitating in order to keep young people on probation away from recidivism (Mulvey et al., 2004, Mulvey and Schubert, 2012).

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

The Views On Probation Practices

Little examined is the direct effect of probation system on justice-involved youths. There is not enough study in the literature on how probation intervention programs can affect young peoples' life. Some studies have shown that the probation system is a support system that allows maintaining ties with the family and social environment and an advantageous model that contributes to the development of positive thoughts and behaviors (Applegate et al., 2019; Ada and Peker, 2012; Çınar, 2015; Ertan and Demez, 2018; Uluğtekin, 2012). In the study of Brinson (2013), probation specialists considered the system to be a second chance for probationers. According to the qualitative studies conducted with probation specialists, they exhibit an approach focusing on both accountability and improvement (Schwalbe and Maschi, 2010). Professionals' positive attitudes towards youth probationers and positive leadership perception increase the sense of professional achievement (Schaefer and Williams, 2018).

However, young people have myriad needs besides the needs met by the probation system. Maschi et al (2008) stated young people who are included in the justice system have a higher rate of unmet psychosocial service needs than other young people. Thus the probation system is criticized for lack of resources to deal with specific problems, focusing on a single area of need, and lack of the resources to address complex issues (Lee and Taxman, 2020). Fine et al (2019), suggests that attention should be paid to the youth's beliefs about and perceptions of probation; the youth themselves should likely be a part of this process. This is an important requirement for the client's right to self determination in social work practices.

With this study, we aim to examine what the effects of the probation system on the rehabilitation of young probationers from the perspective of both young probationers and professionals. Understanding the young probationers and probation specialists' experiences and beliefs about probation is one of the foremost strengths of this paper.

To the authors' knowledge, no study so far has attempted to explore probation specialists' and young probationers' views of probation. This study aims to comprehensively examine and understand the views of young probationers who were once involved in the Turkish justice system as a juvenile and continue to be in this system during young adulthood and of professionals working in the probation system on the probation system. The research results emphasized the opinions and needs of young people, and probation specialists about the probation system. Overall, it aims to evaluate young probationers' and professionals' views on the probation system. Based on the general purpose of the research, the research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the impacts of the probation system on the young probationer's rehabilitation process?
- 2) What are the opinions of young probationers and probation specialists about the effectiveness of the probation system?
- 3) What are the needs of young probationers?

METHOD

Research Design

The research method is the qualitative method, and the phenomenology pattern forms the basis of the study. There are few qualitative studies examining the views of professionals regarding the probation system and its practices. It should be emphasized that while determining the model of the research, the characteristics of the study group and the discussions about the reliability of the results of the existing quantitative studies are also decisive. Therefore, it is assumed that the studies conducted with these groups using the quantitative method are more superficial due to the some dynamics such as; concerns about inclusion in the judicial system and mandatory volunteering.

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

According to Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (2016), qualitative research can be utilised to examine individuals' perceptions, experiences, and inferences about a particular phenomenon. It is also valuable for disclosing existing barriers to change in a system. For all these reasons, the qualitative method is preferred in this research in order to examine the opinions and feedbacks of professionals on the effectiveness of probation practices with an in-depth understanding. The phenomenology pattern forms the basis of the research. The phenomenology design focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). According to phenomenology, reality is a phenomenon that is not only socially constructed but also personally constructed, and can be understood in the context of the meaning people ascribe to reality (Krysiak and Finn, 2015). The phenomenology design was used because it is an appropriate design to explain how the young probationers and probation specialists perceive probation services and what the system means for them.

Participants

The researcher has carried out the study with youth probationers involved in training and rehabilitation programs in probation offices in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir and probation specialists working in these offices. The participants of this research were determined by using purposive sampling method and comprised thirty young people who were dragged into crime under the age of 18 and are currently between the ages of 19-25, and 20 probation specialists serving these youth probationers participated in the study. Accordingly, the sampling criteria were that the participants must be youth probationers, who were pushed to juvenile delinquency and involved in the justice system under the age of 18, be between the ages of 19-25 at the time of data collection, have a Juvenile Probation File (JPF), and be in an ongoing probation process. Among the participating young, 25 were males, and 5 were females, and their mean age was 19.4. Most of the participating youth probationers were involved in the probation system due to substance use. Sixteen of the probation specialists were females, and 4 were men. The mean age of the specialists was 38.

Research Instruments

Structured Interview Form

The structured interview form for the youth probationers included questions about their socio-demographic characteristics. On the other hand, the structured questionnaire for the probation specialists included questions about their socio-demographic characteristics, educational attainments, specialty, their experience in probation, their in-service training, and professional practices they carried out.

Semi-structured Interview Form

The semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher was used in accordance with qualitative data collection methods in the study. The semi-structured interview form was developed by an expert researcher from the field of juvenile probation by examining the relevant literature. A total of 18 questions were arranged in the semi-structured interview form for the young probationers and 17 questions were arranged for professionals.

The semi-structured interview form prepared for juvenile probationers consisted of questions aimed at; determining the young probationer's experiences in education and improvement activities; changes in the emotions-thoughts-behaviors of young probationers, positive and negative experiences during the probation period; the relationship between the youth and probation specialists.

At the same time, the semi-structured interview form prepared for probation specialists consisted of questions aimed at;

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

determining their thoughts on the impact of training and rehabilitation programs on the rehabilitation of youth probationers; their views on probation programs meeting the needs of young probationers; the views of the specialists on the participation of the youth probationers' families and their views on prevent recidivism.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The necessary permission and approval was provided by the Ministry of Justice's probation department to conduct study. Before data gathering, participants gave verbal and written consent for both voice recording and participation in the study. The participants were informed that their personal and professional information would be kept confidential. Afterwards, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants with the questions in the data collection tools. Interviews with the youth probationers lasted approximately 1 hour, and they lasted 1.5 hours on average with the probation specialists. When the data acquired from the interviews with the participant youth and professionals were repeated, different themes and findings were not revealed in the new interviews, the data collection process was terminated, considering that data saturation was reached.

The data obtained from the in-depth interviews were transferred to a computer and analyzed with the NVIVO 12 program. The researcher deciphered and conceptualized the data with descriptive analysis and revealed themes that could describe the phenomena.

Data analysis was carried out according to the following steps:

After deciphering data, In the coding process, it was returned to the data set over and over again. The data were conceptualized and themes were described by descriptive analysis.

Themes are divided into subthemes covering different similarities and differences. The quotes to be used in the text have been identified and direct quotations from in depth interviews were shared.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

As a strategy to increase the credibility of the research results, different data sources were used by data triangulation (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2013) and theoretical variation (Glesne, 2015). The data triangulation technique was used to investigate the internal validity of the study. In this study, multiple data collection sources (probation specialist and young people in the probation system) and multiple theoretical frameworks were used to collect data. There is no concern about the generalizability of the results obtained due to the use of qualitative design. In this context, there has been a discovery process that examines the views of young individuals and professionals on the probation system. In the process of coding, checking the suitability of the themes, data analysis and interpreting, the support of two professionals working in the field was received.

RESULTS

Major Themes

The data obtained from the interviews with the young people in the probation system were separated into themes and coded. Afterwards, the themes were revealed by examining the relationships between the codes. In the research, a total of 2 major themes have been created. These themes are the impacts of the probation system on the rehabilitation of young probationers and the views of the young probationers and probation specialists' on the probation system. Probation programs make important contributions to the treatment of antisocial behaviors of young people and to improve their psychosocial well-being.

The Impacts Of The Probation System on the Rehabilitation of Young Probationers

The views of both young people and probation specialists on the effects of the probation system on the rehabilitation

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

of young probationers were examined. According to their views, five sub-themes concerning the main theme of the impact of probation system on young probationers' rehabilitation were identified as: getting consultancy services, meeting psychosocial needs, development of cognitive and behavioral skills, raising awareness about substance use, change of friend circle.

The profiles of the youth probationers suggested that some of them were mandatory volunteers, closed to contact, resistant to change; some of them were willing to open themselves over time and to change; some of them were the ones who could not be contacted or bonded in any way, had low self-esteem, cognitive capacity, and communication skills, and had introverted and reactive traits. But, on the other hand, the probation specialists stated that most of the youth probationers were the ones who were unheard of, non-respected, unable to establish a sufficient love bond with their family and immediate environment and pushed into loneliness. The probation specialists observed that as young people got used to the guidance and counseling culture, their responsiveness decreased and their skills, such as public speaking and time management, improved. At this point, making efforts according to their needs and providing guidance and space for self-expression, and listening to what they say make it easier for them to feel valued and adapt to the system.

"The young have learned about guidance for the first time in their lives. They meet the guidance culture on an individual level. Someone asks them how they're doing, and they are telling how they are for the first time. They are starting to learn this" (S4, Psychologist).

"We can observe the changes from the very first session through and the last session. I don't just mean clients who have quit the substance. I also mean differences in their perspectives of the system, entering without slamming the door, not being late, gaining time management, asking to speak, expressing themselves, and not struggling to be there" (S5, Social Worker).

According to the young probationers, their psychosocial needs, such as self-expression, appreciation, being listened to without judgment, and being in an accepting and supportive environment, are met in probation system.

"I needed a little more attention in this process. I needed to be understood and supported. When I came here, the teachers listened to and tried to understand me" (P2, 19).

Considering justice-involved youths' high involvement in substance abuse it is important that their experiences in structured drug treatment program (SAMBA) in probation are considered in research. The youth probationers expressed that they gained cognitive awareness of the causes, triggers, and harms of substance use and risky situations during rehabilitation and improvement programs.

"I got a more positive perspective after I was involved in the probation. I used to be more pessimistic. I used to look at everything from opposing sides. Now, I am hopeful" (P4, 19).

"I became more disgusted with the substance. I saw people using it and was disgusted. I understood better how substances polluted my brain and body once I came for supervision" (P8, 19).

"I now think about the harms of substance use. I can control myself and say "No." I can also control my anger" (P6, 19).

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

The most apparent reason for substance use among the participating youth is the circle of friends. Smoking and marijuana use is widespread in almost all such processes. Many youth probationers said that they could limit or ultimately end their friendship relationships after being involved in the probation system to avoid the self-harming effects of the social environment that could encourage them to commit crimes again.

"It made me decide not to meet with friends again. Furthermore, it positively affected my thoughts and helped me be decisive in not using the substance again, even if I had a desire" (P7, 18).

"I started using marijuana at the age of 15. I knew many drugs except heroin-cocaine in the circle of friends. I couldn't say no. Now I try to stay away from social circle. The fewer friends, the more comfortable you are" (P10, 19).

The Views On The Effectiveness Of The Probation System

The views of both young people and probation specialists on the effectiveness of the probation system were examined. According to their views, four sub-themes were identified as: therapeutic effect, interventions involving the social environment, getting stuck between responsibility and obligation, parental involvement in probation system. In the interviews, some of the young probationers reported that group work is not productive and they are bored for reasons such as conducting group work as if having a class, their inability to actively participate to group work.

"I think it is the teacher who comes to the class called specialist. He comes and teaches his lesson. The teacher-student relationship does not contribute to me. He take the register and then he starts the lesson" (p12, 22).

Young individuals shuttle between institutions face various obligations that they have to fulfill in the probation system. In this process, in case of refusal or violation of any obligation, there may be a sanction such as closing the file and sending him back to prison. This situation, which creates pressure and anxiety on young individuals, hinders the establishment of a therapeutic relationship. The youth probationers, who continue their education or working during the probation process, were found to have problems obtaining leave from their schools or employers to fulfill their obligations to participate in training and rehabilitation programs. The sanctions of the 'probation' process put an extra burden on them while balancing their lives.

"We were dragged from place to place after probation, so nothing happened. We come and go here for nothing. I can't continue both my probation and my outside life together. My mental health has deteriorated" (P11, 19).

"Of course, there are also negativities. For example, I had to quit the job because of probation conditions. These conditions are also what made me quit my previous job. After taking time off from work twice a month, the employer thought I had lied to him and fired me. For example, the employer does not permit me to attend the probation programs. Instead, S/he forces me to quit the job. So, if I don't follow the probation programs, the more considerable trouble waits for me, the prison" (P9, 21).

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

As mentioned above, such obstacles might have made the rehabilitation process more difficult and hinder the young offender's adaptation process. For some young people, probation creates a temporary and superficial change. Both young people and professionals think that the probation system should be able to prevent interactions with risky peer groups that cause access to drugs and to intervene directly in the criminogenic dynamics in the social environment.

"It is important for us to do studies so that we can get rid of drugs. I just think it would be useful that way. If we can still have access to the drugs when we go out, it doesn't matter what is done here" (P4, 19).

"Think of it as the leg of the table, family, friends, socioeconomic status and probation process. Sometimes the family is very good, giving importance to education however, there may be a social environment and a friend circle where crime rate is high. How effectively can you intervene if you cannot change where you live? (S6, Sociologist).

Similarly, a young person states that the treatment process could not be carried out effectively due to substance use and his experience of relapse continues as follows:

"I was treated so I went to the hospital or something, but it was insufficient. So I didn't see much benefit. My urge to use drugs continues. I get better from time to time, I feel good but I can be unstable" (P10, 21).

Considering the views of the specialists on the participation of the youth probationers' families, who are an essential part of professional practice, in the probation system, most of the youth probationers manage the probation process alone, most of the families follow the procedure as outsiders, and the families do not actively engage in the system effectively. Therefore, the specialists need to make home visits to ensure families' participation and access to specific resources, such as staff, infrastructure, and technical equipment.

"Equipment in rural areas needs to be enhanced. Professionals invite the family all the time, but it is impossible to interview if the family does not attend. Staff and equipment numbers and budget need to be improved, and the process regarding home visits should be encouraged" (S9, Social Worker).

It is argued that the probation system alone cannot be sufficient to prevent recidivism and the most effective fight against recidivism can be achieved by changing social environment and protective preventive interventions.

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

“Unless you make radical changes in the person's social environment, it is not possible to prevent the recidivism. Because the juveniles come from a criminal subculture” (S10, Social Worker).

“Probation is already the last part of the execution system. So there is the prison process before. You see the same person over and over again. Probation alone is unlikely to be effective in preventing recidivism” (S12, Social Worker).

Most of the probation system-involved young people are the individuals that the society cannot protect; It is stated that these young people constitute a vulnerable group against criminogenic risks as they cannot be protected in the society. It can be said that all responsible intermediary mechanisms for the unprotected youth cannot fully fulfill their functions.

DISCUSSION

The present study tried to explore the views and evaluations of the youth probationers and the professionals on the probation system. Young probationers state that rehabilitation works contribute to the development of positive thoughts and behaviors and that they see probation as a support system. The probation system positively affected them in changing their erroneous cognition and perception, raising awareness, and developing their self-control and problem-solving skills.

In the studies conducted with young individuals in the probation system, young people state that individual interviews help them to take responsibility, adapt to the social process, feel self-confident and increase their level of knowledge about their social rights. (Dızman, 2019; Ertan and Demez, 2018; Çınar, 2015).

Considering the needs of the youth probationers are met in the probation system, most of them stated that they were introduced to the counseling culture offering an accepting and supportive environment. They had the opportunity to be heard, understood, and express themselves without being judged programs. In some studies, probation specialists and young people define their relationship as positive, warm, compassionate, helpful and supportive. (Springer et al., 2009; Schwalbe, 2012; Schwalbe and Maschi, 2010). Probationers prefers to interview probation specialists who were respectful, non-judgmental, trustworthy, reliable, flexible, honest, supportive and encouraging (Appleton, 2010). Building genuine relationships between probation officers and the probationers is crucial. Effective communication between both parties is required in order to facilitate probationers identify their needs (Robinson et al., 2014).

The findings revealed that one of the most critical risk factors in juvenile delinquency was the risky and disadvantaged social environment. In parallel with this finding, the studies in the literature showed low socio-economic level, non-pro-social peer network, substance use, and social environments carrying the risk of delinquency as the leading factors for the young to tend to substance use, substance pushing, robbery, and other related criminal behaviors and maintaining a lifestyle adopting criminal behaviors (Bartollas and Schmallegger, 2017; Dızman, 2019; Uluğtekin, 2012). The process of rehabilitation and desisting from crime has increasingly been seen as intrinsically linked to the offender's social setting and with opportunities to lead a more conformist life (Farrall et al., 2010). Therefore, the youth probationers think that they need to move away from the risky social environment to make a natural and radical change in their lives. When considered based on the ecological system, the situation urges to generate macro-level interventions and actions that can provide structural changes in the social environment, which is one of the most notable dynamics affecting young people psycho-socially.

The findings regarding the effects of the probation system on their rehabilitation process, some of the youth probationers indicated that they achieved positive gains, such as moving away from the inappropriate peer environment, developing a conscious of the harms of substance use, and developing functional cognitive and behavioral skills. According to Drozdova

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

(2021), delinquent adolescents tend to choose to form friendships with other delinquent youths, thus stable and homophilous friendships of delinquent adolescents may have deleterious consequences due to modeled and reinforced problem behaviors. In the some studies, it is stated that probation system enables young people to quit risky behaviors and their everyday routines that can be seen as 'criminal' behavior (moving away from criminal friends, thinking before taking action, etc.) and young people tend not to communicate with their criminal peer group after treatment (Uluğtekin, 2012; Farrall et al., 2010).

In some studies, the young considered the probation to be a system providing significant and positive behavior acquisition and raising awareness about the harms of substance use through training and rehabilitation programs (Çınar, 2015; Ada and Peker, 2012; Dizman, 2019). Caudy et al (2014) stated that probation had a suppression effect by reducing both recidivism and substance use behaviors for many, but not all, offenders. In the study of Bilici et al., (2017), no substance use was detected in the urine tests of the participants in the structured treatment program (SAMBA) applied during the treatment process. Thus, it can be stated that the program affects compliance to treatment positively.

On the other hand, some of the participants stated that they had difficulty balancing the obligations offered by the system and their responsibilities in their lives. In some studies, the youth probationers see the probation as a system adversely affecting daily routines and work and school-related processes, which supports the finding in this study (Çınar, 2015; Dizman, 2019).

Some participating probationers thought that the system did not have an effective structure to offer permanent solutions. According to probation specialists, training and rehabilitation programs are more based on information and awareness raising. In a similar study, Uluğtekin (2012) stated that the probation system could not solve some severe problems of the young probationers. The change remained superficial and could not be internalized. Waller and Beall (2003) stated that with the lack of efficient and accessible services, probationers will most likely continue to experience problems in their daily functioning and tend to continue to engage in criminal activity.

In case of violation of the obligations, the closing their case creates pressure and anxiety on the responsible young people, which also hinders the establishment of a therapeutic professional relationship. According to Brinson (2013), making goals compulsory may cause the young to see probation specialists as intrusive and regard the process as meaningless. In this context, it is vital to address the fundamental and unsatisfied needs of the young, mobilize related resources, and structure a motivational interview to maintain the process efficiently. Canton (2011) emphasized that it was essential to engage youth probationers in the planning process and to allow them to express their views on criminal behavior. Fide et al (2019) noted that youths' perceptions of probation may affect their behavior while they are under probationary supervision. Therefore, If youth don't believe that they are given the opportunity to participate to process, they are more likely to perceive the probation process as inefficient.

The probation specialist stated that participation of the youth probationers' families in the probation process was somewhat limited. They thought that the families should be considered protective and involved in the system. In parallel with this finding, parental involvement and support are essential in the process of young probationers' compliance with the probation system, developing pro-social behaviors and reducing the drug use (Vidal and Woolard, 2017; Uluğtekin, 2012; Bluthental et al., 2006; Fagan et al., 2011; Schwalbe, 2019). It is also critical to involve the family in the probation system as a vital mechanism for the change of youth probationers and develop a family-based intervention program (Schwalbe and Maschi, 2010; Coastworth et al., 2002; Henggeler and Sheidow, 2012).

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Young probationers and professionals state that the probation system has important contributions to the socialization process of young people, such as gaining cognitive awareness, supporting self-efficacy, providing social support, and being accepted without judgment.

Considering the aspects of the probation system that need to be developed, it is seen that the individual, social environment and familial risk and protective factors are not adequately considered during the treatment process of young probationers. Both young probationers and professionals emphasized that the rehabilitation programs should be tailored to the individual and social needs. It is seen that the services provided only on an institutional basis and which do not take into account the dynamics of the social environment of the youth are ineffective.

Both participating probationers and specialists voiced that the social environment of the young in the probation system in Turkey was among the leading criminogenic risk factors. Accordingly, the young tend to dropout of the school, develop non-pro-social interactions in the risky social environment, become involved in alcohol and substance use, and develop criminal behavior. In this context, it is invaluable to carry out effective programs, such as family and social environment-based interventions, pro-social peer modeling and school social work interventions so that the probation system can effectively address criminogenic risks in the social environments of the young. Probation services cannot directly interfere with change in the aforementioned social environment and access to social resources. Due to the lack of ecological perspective orientation, they can only respond to these needs at a limited level. Therefore, the probation system is not sufficient to reintegrate juvenile probationers into society and to prevent recidivism. Accordingly, collective efforts of all relevant ministries, local administrations, and non-governmental organizations are deemed necessary in addressing the criminogenic risks and needs of the young.

According to the views of probation specialists, the family is not actively involved in the probation system. In this respect, home visits should be made especially for the participation of families in the high-risk group. Home visits provide an opportunity for probation specialists to have quality contact with the juveniles in their personal environment. In addition, it is essential to support the personnel in terms of quantity and quality and provide the necessary infrastructure and technical equipment.

The psychosocial needs, such as self-expression, appreciation, being understood, being listened to without judgment, receiving acceptance and support, were prominent among the youth probationers. The probation system ensures that the young are introduced to the counseling culture and are engaged in an accepting and supportive environment with the help of several training and rehabilitation programs. The system offers desirable gains to the young in developing positive cognitive and behavioral resources, improving social and vital skills, raising awareness of substance use, and limiting non-pro-social peer relationships. Besides, the system is considered a process whose philosophy cannot be grasped and internalized by the young, who are resistant to change, forcing them to balance their obligations and daily responsibilities. It can also be considered a file to be closed and sent to prison administration in breach of duties. It seems essential to restructure the system to focus on the young's unsatisfied needs and increase their motivation for change.

Ethical Approval

The study's ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Ankara University, dated 08/01/2018, and the 23 approval number.

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Much appreciation is owed to the social workers and juvenile probationers in the probation offices in Turkey, for participating in the study and for sharing their unique experiences with us.

Declaration Of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

REFERENCES

- Ada, Ş. and Peker, A. (2012). Examining the effectiveness of treatment and probation practices. *Atatürk University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 16(2), 425-438. Available from: <https://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423871512.pdf>. (accessed 8 March 2021).
- Andrews, D.A., Bonta, J. (2010). Rehabilitating criminal justice policy and practice. *Psychology Public Policy and Law*, 16: 39-43.
- Appleton, C. (2010). *Life after life imprisonment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Applegate, B. K., Smith, H. P., Sitren, A. H., Springer, N. F. (2009). From the inside: The meaning of probation to probationers. *Criminal Justice Review*, 34: 80-95. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016808325036> (accessed 20 March 2021).
- Belenko, S., Knight, D., Wasserman, G. A., Dennis, M. L., Wiley, T., Taxman, F. S., ... & Sales, J. (2017). The Juvenile Justice Behavioral Health Services Cascade: A new framework for measuring unmet substance use treatment services needs among adolescent offenders. *Journal of substance abuse treatment*, 74, 80-91.
- Bartollas, C. and Schmallegger, F. (2017). *Juvenile delinquency*. Ankara: Nobel Academic Press.
- Brinson, A. (2013). Success, defection, and relationships between probation officers and probationers: A social work perspective. *Master of Social Work Clinical Research Papers*. Retrieved Available from: https://sophia.stkate.edu/msw_papers/157 (accessed 20 March 2021).
- Bilici, R., Kültegin, O., Bahadır, G., Maçkan, A., Orhan, N., Tuna, O. (2017). Treatment outcomes of drug users in probation period: three months follow-up. *Psychiatry and Clinical Psychopharmacology*. 28. 1-7. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24750573.2017.1391156> (accessed 27 July 2021).
- Bluthenthal, N. R., Riehman, K., Jaycox, H. L., Morral, A. (2006). Perspectives on treatment from adolescent probationers. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 38: 461- 471. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2006.10400585> (accessed 18 June 2021).
- Coatsworth, J. D., Pantin, H., & Szapocznik, J. (2002). *Familias Unidas: A family-centered ecodevelopmental intervention to reduce risk for problem behavior among Hispanic adolescents*. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, 5(2), 113-132.
- Canton, R. (2011). *Probation: Working with offenders*. Routledge.
- Çınar, A. (2015). Effects of rehabilitation services in the probation system on the re-socialization process of convicts: The example of the Aydın Province. *Master Thesis*. Social Sciences Institute.
- Dowden, C. and Andrews, D. A. (2004). The importance of staff practice in delivering correctional treatment: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 48(2), 203- 214. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X03257765> (accessed 18 June 2021).
- Drozдова, D. A. (2021). Here today, gone t, gone tomorrow: Impacts of friendship stability and ow: Impacts of friendship stability and homophily on justice-involved juveniles' offending and substance use. *Open Access Theses & Dissertations*. Available from: https://scholarworks.utep.edu/open_etd/3242 (accessed 28 April 2021).
- Dizman, Z. (2019). *Qualitative research on family structures and criminal tendencies of young people under probation: The example of Istanbul, Hasanpaşa (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis)*. Maltepe University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul.
- Erdem, G., Tuncer, A.E., Safi, A.O., Cankaya, B., Ergin, M., Aydoğan, R. (2018). The professional experiences and training needs of probation officers in Turkey. *Journal of Social Work*, 1: 1-23. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017318768181> (accessed 22 April 2021).
- Ertan, C. and Demez, G. (2018). The voice inside: probation practices through the eyes of individuals who dragged into

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

- crime. *Journal of Sociology Research*, 21: 42-70. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.14225/Joh1277> (accessed 22 April 2021).
- Fagan, A.A., Van Horn, L.M., Antaramin, S., Hawkins, J.D. (2011). How do families matter? Age and gender differences in family influences on delinquency and drug use. *Youth violence & juvenile justice*, 9 (2),150-170. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204010377748>. (accessed 29 April 2021).
- Farrington, D.P. (2000). Explaining and preventing crime: the globalization of knowledge the American society of criminology. *Criminology*, 38: 1-24. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00881.x> (accessed 3 July 2021).
- Farley, J.A., Feaster, D., Schapmire, J.T., D'ambrosio, G.J., Bruce, L.E., Oak, C.S., et al (2009). The challenges of implementing evidence based practice: ethical considerations in practice, education, policy and research. *Social Work and Society*, 7: 2-5.
- Farrall, S., Bottoms, A., Shapland, J. (2010). Social Structures and Desistance from Crime, *European Journal of Criminology*, 7(6), 546-570.
- Fine, A.D., Fountain, E., Vidal, S. (2019). Juveniles' beliefs about and perceptions of probation predict technical violations and delinquency. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 25(2), 116-125. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000195> (accessed 7 July 2021).
- Glesne, C. (2012). Introduction to qualitative research. (Eds.: A. Ersoy and P. Yalçinoğlu). Ankara: Anı Publishing.
- Henggeler, S.W. and Sheidow, A.J. (2012). Empirically supported family-based treatments for conduct disorder and delinquency in adolescents. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 38: 30-58. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00244.x> (accessed 10 July 2021).
- Krysiak, J.L. and Finn, J. (2015). Social work research for effective practice. Ankara: Nika Publishing.
- Lee, J.S. and Taxman, F.S. (2020). Using latent class analysis to identify the complex needs of youth on probation. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 115. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105087> (accessed 10 July 2021).
- Loeber, R. and Farrington, D.P. (2003). *Child delinquents: development, intervention, and service needs*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Available from: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/186162.pdf> (accessed 12 July 2021).
- Maschi, T., Hatcher, S.S., Schwalbe, C.S., Rosato, N.S. (2008). Mapping the social service pathways of youth to and through the juvenile justice system: A comprehensive review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30 (12): 1376-1385. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.04.006> (accessed 22 June 2021).
- Mulvey, E.P. and Schubert, C.A. (2012). Some initial findings and policy implications of the pathways to desistance study. *Victims & Offenders*, 7 (4):407-427. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2012.713903> (accessed 22 July 2021).
- Mulvey, E.P., Steinberg, L., Fagan, J., Cauffman, E., Piquero, A.R., Chassin, L., et al (2004). Theory and Research on Desistance from Antisocial Activity among Serious Adolescent Offenders. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 2(3):213-236. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204004265864> (accessed 17 October 2021).
- Nightingale, J.A. (2020). *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography (Second Edition)*. Retrieved from Available from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/referencework/9780081022962/international-encyclopedia-of-human-geography#book-info> (accessed 11 October 2021).
- Swedish Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Assessment of Social Services (S.B.U). (2016). Evaluation and synthesis of studies using qualitative methods of analysis. Stockholm: Available from: https://www.sbu.se/globalassets/ebm/metodbok/sbuhandbook_qualitativemethodsofanalysis.pdf (accessed 17 October 2021).
- Schaefer, L. and Williams, G.C. (2018). The impact of probation and parole officers' attitudes about offenders on professional practices. *Corrections: policy, training, and research*. Retrieved from Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23774657.2018.1538710> (accessed 21 November 2021).
- Schwalbe, C.S. and Maschi, T. (2010). Patterns of contact and cooperation between juvenile probation officers

EVALUATIONS OF YOUTH PROBATIONERS AND PROBATION SPECIALISTS ON PROBATION PRACTICES

and parents of youthful offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 49: 398-416. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2010.499055> (accessed 13 October 2021).

Schwalbe, C. (2012). Toward an integrated theory of probation. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 39: 185- 201. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854811430185> (accessed 21 November 2021).

Scott, C.K., Dennis, M. L., Foss, M.A. (2005). Utilizing Recovery Management Checkups to shorten the cycle of relapse, treatment reentry, and recovery. *Drug and alcohol dependence*, 78(3), 325-338. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2004.12.005> (accessed 22 November 2021).

Robinson, G., Priede, C., Farrall, S., Shapland, J., McNeill, F. (2014). Understanding 'quality' in probation practice: Frontline perspectives in England & Wales. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 14(2): 123-142.

Smith, P., Goggin, C., Gendreau, P. (2002). The effects of prison sentences and intermediate sanctions on recidivism: Age, gender and race. Ottawa, ON: Solicitor General of Canada: Corrections Research Branch. Available from: www.publicsafety.gc.ca. (accessed 22 November 2021).

Springer, N.F., Brandon, K., Applegate, H.P., Smith, P.H., Sitren, H.A. (2009). Exploring the determinants of probationers' perceptions of their supervising officers. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 48: 210-227. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509670902766596> (accessed 2 June 2021).

Taxman, F. S., Pattavina, A., & Caudy, M. (2014). Justice reinvestment in the United States: An empirical assessment of the potential impact of increased correctional programming on recidivism. *Victims & Offenders*, 9(1), 50-75.

Uluğtekin, S. (2012). *Research on Young People Under Probation and Their Families: Needs and Expectations*, Özgeder Press.

Vidal, S. and Woolard, J. (2017). Youth's Perceptions of Parental Support and Parental Knowledge as Moderators of the Association between Youth Probation Officer Relationship and Probation Non-Compliance. *J Youth Adolesc*, 46: 1452-1471. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-015-0368-z> (accessed 17 October 2021).

Yıldırım, A. and Şimşek, H. (2013). *The methods of the qualitative research*. Seçkin Press.

Waller, J. and Beall, J. (2003). The effectiveness of probation in west virginia: a study examining the practices and views of probation officers in west virginia the effectiveness of probation in west virginia: a study examining the practices and views of probation officers in west virginia. 10.13140/rg.2.2.27376.76800.