

Parole Supervision and Rehabilitation of Adult Male Parolees in Lahore
Division-Pakistan

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Abstract

Parole is a form of community supervision that works under the umbrella of criminal justice system to play its role in rehabilitation and community reintegration of offenders conditionally released as parolees. The study aimed to know association between parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees in Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan. Sample of 56 parolees as respondents was selected through lottery sampling from Lahore Division. Results of study showed that association between parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees was positive. Moreover, the study concluded that parole supervision was effective to rehabilitate and reintegrate parolees into society with satisfactory self-esteem. The prisoners who qualify the conditions of parole may be granted pre-release on parole as a chance of their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society as law abiding citizens. This would reduce prison overcrowding and provide a valuable human resource to the community as well.

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INTRODUCTION

The criminal justice system is consisted of police, courts and corrections—prisons and community-based corrections (probation and parole). These components are highly integrated and have greater interdependence on each other (Imran et al., 2024; Waldron et al., 2009). Criminal justice system is an apparatus of social control (Seigel, 2011), thus parole is an organized plan in criminal justice system of reentry of prisoner into the society (Schmallegger, 2012). It is different from probation in term of purpose and implementation (Barton-Bellessa, 2012; Schmallegger, 2012). Probation is a judicial order and policy which allows convicted offenders to stay inside community under the supervision of probation officer (Macionis, 2017), whereas, parole is a form of conditional release granted to the prisoner after they served a portion of their sentence in prison (Khalid, 2014).

Parole is executive order or quasi-judicial because it is issued by small group (parole board) who have authority to grant parole (Martinson & Wilks, 1977). Parole offers non-institutional treatment programs which are least expensive and more rehabilitative (Aulakh, 2011). Parole is not just hypothetical rehabilitative system but many studies (Gottfredson et al., 1982; Petersilia, 2002; Sathoo et al., 2021; Wan et al., 2014) have also proved it significance in term of rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in society. However, there is a serious abate of researches to check the effectiveness of parole system in Pakistan.

The figure of parolees in Division Lahore is (158) in relation to the total population (5414) of prisoner in Division Lahore and it is quite alarming, raises many questions about parole system. This study is aimed to check the effectiveness of parole in criminal justice system which is one of the most important questions. In parole supervision, parole officer performs three basic tasks (i) supervision and rehabilitation of offenders placed on parole (ii) visit jails and arranges interview of good conduct prisoners with the Assistant Director R&P department (iii) consult history tickets, remission sheets, warrants etc. of prisoners. The present study is limited to supervision and rehabilitation of offenders placed on parole, the other two may be studied in future studies in Pakistani context.

Rationale of the Study

Prisons are punitive in nature and schools for criminal that turn new prisoners into hardened criminals (Clarkson & Munn, 2021; Khokhar et al., 2019; Wozniak, 2016). It is commonly assumed that offenders benefit from community supervision like parole, much more than if they were incarcerated. However, rigorous amount of empirical evidence is needed in Pakistani society to shift policies to alternatives of imprisonment. Although parole works as parallel intervention to prison system in Pakistan but it has not been the interest of researchers. This is the reason that a little amount of literature is available about parole supervision as component of criminal justice in Pakistan. The present study is a scientific and empirical attempt to check the association between parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees. This study has specific objectives:

Objective of the Study

- To examine the extent of parole supervision in Lahore Division- Pakistan
- To examine the extent of rehabilitation of parolees in Lahore Division- Pakistan
- To analyze the association between parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees

Hypotheses

H₁: There is an association between supervision under parole system and rehabilitation of offenders

H2: There is no association between supervision under parole system and rehabilitation of offenders

Data and Methods

Methodology is essential in collecting and managing data for statistical analysis. The population of the study consisted of male adult¹ parolees of Division Lahore, Punjab. Sampling frame was consisted of 158 parolees and it was obtained from Directorate of Reclamation and Probation Punjab, Pakistan and a sample of 56 parolees was selected through lottery sampling.

The data was collected through a structured interview schedule. Previous literature on parole system helped in devising the instrument. The parole officer from Division Lahore was approached by the researchers and requested to arrange an interview meeting of the researchers with the respondents. As most of the respondents were illiterate and interview schedule was developed in English language therefore the researchers filled interview schedules through arranged meetings with the respondents by explaining the questions in Urdu and Punjabi. The collected raw data was entered into SPSS-21 to apply statistical tests for confirming the association among variables.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data was analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-21). Response variables were interpreted by making simple frequency tables and chi-square was used to examine association between two variables of the study: parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees.

Parole Supervision

Parole supervision increases public safety or improves re-entry transitions (Solomon et al., 2005). Parole supervision is used as both a surveillance tool and a social service mechanism which ideally serves a deterrent role in preventing new crimes from occurring. Parole supervision can function as a tool of monitoring and sanctioning for those who violate conditions of release, potentially averting more serious reoffending (Rhine et al., 2017). Parole supervision can also act as a social service mechanism by using rules and incentives to engage ex-prisoners in positive activities, such as work and drug treatment, and to place ex-prisoners in programs that may help reentry transitions (Harding, 2022; Petersilia, 2003). Table 1 depicts the picture about frequency of parole supervision.

Table 4: Descriptive Data On Parole Supervision

Parole Supervision				f (%)				
Item scale				SA	A	U	D	SD
Parolees remain within notified jurisdiction				42 (75.0)	09 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	05 (8.93)	0 (0.0)
Parolees are visited by the parole officer				29 (51.79)	16 (28.57)	0 (0.0)	08 (14.29)	03 (5.36)
Parolees obey all rules and regulations of parole supervision				12 (21.43)	26 (46.43)	09 (16.7)	03 (5.36)	06 (10.71)
Parolees are provided gainful employment				09 (16.7)	17 (30.36)	06 (10.71)	19 (33.93)	05 (8.93)
Parolees abstain from association with persons with criminal records				18 (32.14)	28 (50.0)	02 (3.57)	05 (8.93)	03 (5.36)

¹ Above 18 years of age



Parolees perform community service efficiently	13 (23.21)	22 (39.29)	10 (17.86)	08 (14.29)	02 (3.57)
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SA : Strongly Agree A: Agree U :Undecided: D: Disagree SD : Strongly Disagree

Table 1 highlights key strengths and challenges in the current system. A notable majority of respondents (75%) strongly agreed that parolees remain within their notified jurisdiction, indicating effective enforcement of geographic restrictions, which is critical for reducing technical violations and enhancing public safety (Petersilia, 2003). Similarly, 80.4% affirmed that parole officers regularly visit parolees—an essential aspect of relational supervision. Regular field visits, as emphasized by Taxman and colleagues (2004), improve outcomes by balancing surveillance with support. Furthermore, 82.1% of respondents agreed that parolees abstain from associating with individuals with criminal backgrounds. This is a promising indicator of positive social reintegration, as supported by Visher and Travis (2003), who found that reduced exposure to criminogenic peers significantly lowers the likelihood of reoffending.

However, perceptions of parolees’ overall compliance with supervision rules were less consistent. While 67.9% agreed that parolees obey rules and regulations, 16% disagreed, and 16.7% were undecided. This suggests potential variability in enforcement or in how compliance is observed and interpreted. As Solomon and colleagues (2005) point out, the effectiveness of supervision is closely tied to the quality of the officer–parolee relationship. When supervision is overly punitive or inconsistent, compliance tends to decline. Community service performance also received a mixed response—only 62.5% agreed that parolees performed it efficiently, while 35.7% were undecided or disagreed. This may reflect poor coordination, lack of monitoring, or unclear expectations on structural issues within community service programs in Pakistan (Abbas & Ahmed, 2016).

The most significant weakness identified was in employment support: only 47% of respondents believed parolees were provided with gainful employment, while 42.9% disagreed. This points to a major gap in the rehabilitation process. Employment is a known protective factor against recidivism, yet barriers such as stigma, lack of vocational training, and poor coordination with employers remain prevalent (Western, 2018). Justice Project Pakistan (2019) also found that the absence of job placement services and reintegration programs severely limits parolees’ chances of successful reentry into society. These findings underscore the need for a more holistic and rehabilitative parole model in Pakistan—one that not only ensures compliance but also addresses socio-economic vulnerabilities through structured support and community engagement.

Rehabilitation of Parolees

Parole has been continued to spread rapidly as a major adjunct to the rehabilitation philosophy that dominated corrections in these years (Rangi, 2025). This rehabilitative ideal assumes that criminal behavior has its roots in the environment and psychosocial aspects of the life of offender and that can be correct through corrections such as parole (Cromwell et al., 2002). Table 2 presents descriptive data on rehabilitation of parolees.

Table 2: Rehabilitation of Parolees

Rehabilitation of Parolees	f(%)				
Item scale	SA	A	U	D	SD
Assistance by parole officer helps in rehabilitation of parolees	24 (42.9)	28 (50.0)	0 (0)	4 (7.1)	0 (0)
Period of parole supervision is helpful in re-	20	30	4	2	0

integration of offenders	(35.7)	(53.6)	(7.1)	(3.6)	(0)
Self-esteem of parolees remains satisfactory when they are on parole	30	18	6	2	0
	(53.6)	(32.1)	(10.7)	(3.6)	(0)
Parolees are not stigmatized for their offence	32	18	2	2	2
	(57.1)	(32.1)	(3.6)	(3.6)	(3.6)
Parolees avail equal opportunities in compare with the members of society	6	20	0	18	12
	(10.7)	(35.7)	(0)	(32.1)	(21.4)
Parolees remain involved in decision making process of their families	34	18	0	2	2
	(60.7)	(32.1)	0	(3.6)	(3.6)

SA : Strongly Agree A: Agree U :Undecided: D: Disagree SD : Strongly Disagree

Table 2 reflects respondents' perceptions of parole supervision in relation to their rehabilitation and reintegration experiences. In response to the question regarding the assistance of parole officers, 42.9% of parolees strongly agreed, and 50% agreed that the support from their parole officer was beneficial in their rehabilitation journey. Only 7.1% disagreed, indicating minimal dissatisfaction. This highlights the pivotal role parole officers play in post-incarceration recovery. The second question focused on the helpfulness of the parole period in aiding reintegration into society. In this regard, 35.7% of respondents strongly agreed and 53.6% agreed that the parole period was effective in preparing them to re-enter the community. A small percentage remained undecided (7.1%), while only 3.6% disagreed. These findings align with Bonta et al. (2014), who found that parole supervision contributes to reducing recidivism and reintegrating offenders through structured monitoring and support. Similarly, Hannah-Moffat (2004) noted that parole serves dual purposes: public safety and offender transformation through risk management strategies.

In exploring self-esteem levels, 53.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 32.1% agreed that they maintained a satisfactory level of self-worth during parole. Only 10.7% were undecided, and a minor segment (3.6%) disagreed. This reflects a generally positive self-concept among parolees, which is crucial for successful reintegration and avoidance of future offenses. The fourth question addressed stigmatization of parolees in society. A majority (57.1%) strongly agreed and 32.1% agreed that they had not experienced social stigma due to their status as parolees. However, 3.6% each remained undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed, indicating that while most felt accepted, some still encountered negative societal attitudes. These results support the argument by Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat (2009) that parole supervision can mitigate social stigmas and ease transitions into communities, despite the challenges that accompany a criminal record.

When asked about equal opportunities in society, the responses were more divided. Only 10.7% strongly agreed and 35.7% agreed that they had access to the same opportunities as others, while 32.1% disagreed and 21.4% strongly disagreed. This indicates that many parolees perceive a disparity in social and economic opportunities, possibly due to criminal history-related discrimination. In contrast, regarding their involvement in family decisions, 60.7% strongly agreed and 32.1% agreed that they continued to play a vital role in family matters, even during incarceration. Only 7.2% (3.6% disagreed and 3.6% strongly disagreed) felt excluded. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining family ties and identity roles during and after imprisonment, which are often linked to better rehabilitation outcomes.

From a broader criminological perspective, relying solely on imprisonment for all types of offenses is counterproductive. Many incarcerated individuals are convicted of minor

offenses or unintentional crimes, and prolonged imprisonment may expose them to the process of prisonization—a phenomenon whereby inmates internalize prison culture and become more entrenched in criminal behavior (Schmallegger & Smykla, 2017). Therefore, community-based corrections programs are a more effective and humane alternative. These programs, which operate outside of prison walls, provide structured rehabilitation while reducing financial costs, easing prison overcrowding, and minimizing the stigmatization of offenders (Macionis, 2017). Such initiatives align with the rehabilitation model, which maintains that appropriate intervention and treatment can transform offenders into law-abiding citizens (Siegel, 2011). Overall, the findings suggest that parole, when properly implemented, can significantly contribute to rehabilitation, reintegration, and the reduction of recidivism.

Table 3: Association between parole supervision and rehabilitation of parolees

Parole supervision	Rehabilitation of parolees			
	Low	Medium	High	Total
Good	0	0	0	0
Better	4	4	2	10
Best	2	12	32	46
Total	6	16	34	56

P=0.001

Table 3 presents the empirical association between levels of parole supervision and the rehabilitation outcomes of offenders, revealing a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Notably, the data shows that no parolees across any supervision category achieved a “Good” rehabilitation outcome, indicating that this category was not applicable or not utilized within the sample. Instead, parolees were classified as having “Better” or “Best” rehabilitation outcomes, with the quality of rehabilitation increasing with the intensity of parole supervision. Specifically, only 2 out of 6 parolees (33.3%) under low supervision achieved the best rehabilitation outcome, compared to 12 out of 16 (75%) under medium supervision and a remarkable 32 out of 34 (94.1%) under high supervision. This trend suggests a strong positive relationship between the level of supervision and successful rehabilitation. The chi-square test supports this observation, producing a p-value of 0.001, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This statistically significant result indicates that the relationship observed in the sample is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance, thus confirming the presence of a real association between parole supervision and rehabilitation outcomes.

Further analysis of the data reveals that, out of 56 respondents, 34 (60.7%) were under high supervision, 16 (28.6%) under medium supervision, and 6 (10.7%) under low supervision. In terms of rehabilitation success, 46 offenders (82.1%) achieved the best rehabilitation, while 10 (17.9%) achieved better rehabilitation, and none fell into the good category. These figures reinforce the conclusion that intensive parole supervision is associated with more favorable rehabilitation outcomes. Based on these findings, the study accepts Hypothesis 1, which posits a significant association between the supervision of parole officers and the rehabilitation of offenders. Conversely, it rejects Hypothesis 2, which claims there is no such association. The results strongly indicate that increased parole supervision plays a critical role in improving rehabilitation success for parolees.

These findings align with existing research literature on the effectiveness of parole supervision. For instance, Wang and Ooi (2022) found that offenders released under parole supervision were significantly less likely to reoffend than those who were released

unconditionally at the end of their sentence. Similarly, Ostermann (2022) concluded that conditionally released offenders who were supervised by parole officers had lower levels of post-release criminal activity than their unsupervised counterparts. Gamwell (2022) also provided evidence that parolees subjected to more frequent supervision had lower recidivism rates compared to those with limited or no supervision. Furthermore, Drake and Knoth-Peterson (2024) emphasized that well-implemented parole programs are cost-effective and contribute positively to public safety and offender reintegration. Taxman et al. (2024) argued that structured, evidence-based parole strategies, including individualized case planning and consistent oversight, are essential for reducing reoffending rates and enhancing rehabilitation outcomes. Taken together, these findings from both the current study and the broader body of research support the conclusion that the parole supervision system plays a crucial role in promoting the successful reintegration of offenders into society.

Conclusion

In criminal justice system, parole supervision has vital importance to rehabilitate offenders after reforming their attitude for reintegration into society as law abiding individual. This is low cost but more effective and humanitarian than incarceration. Results of the study concluded that there was significant association between supervision of parole officer and rehabilitation of offenders in Lahore Division. Parole supervision was found essential component of criminal justice system in Pakistan for re-integrating the offenders into normal social set up that improves their self-esteem in society.

Recommendations

1. As rehabilitation of offenders is associated with parole supervision therefore the number of parolees may be increased.
2. The process of granting parole may be simple and vigilant, so that the high number of prisoners who are eligible can avail the opportunity.
3. The parole laws may be revisited to support the legitimacy of the functionality of parole supervision in Pakistani society.

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