

BACHELOR THESIS REVIEW

Type of review: *thesis supervisor*

Author: Taya Maged Fahmy AbdelRazek Gomaa

Title: Juvenile Justice: The United States vs Egypt

Supervisor: Tereza Trejbalová, Ph.D.

Reviewer: JUDr. Šárka Špeciánová

Please explain the reasons for your evaluation (especially reservations and criticisms) according to the criteria listed below.

1. Is the aim of the thesis (research question) clearly stated and do the conclusions correspond to it? Is the thesis appropriately structured?

Comments: Taya has significantly improved her thesis. The research questions are stated clearly, and their aim is discussed throughout the thesis. The conclusions correspond to the research question to a certain extent. The main limitation is Taya's lack of answer to sub-question 1b, "How effective are the existing rehabilitation methods on juvenile offenders?" There is no operationalization of effectiveness and no discussion on recidivism rates, which are oftentimes used as a measure of the effectiveness of interventions. This also applies to a component of the research question that focuses on the conditions in juvenile facilities in the two countries – those are not addressed in the analysis of the articles that were included in the systematic literature review. If no studies that would speak to the conditions were identified, Taya should have noted that. Taya also asks "What are the current conditions, and rehabilitation methods of juvenile detention centers in Egypt and the United States, and **how do they compare to each other?**" The comparison is not addressed in the text. I appreciated Taya's attention to CBT, which is an evidence-based correctional intervention, and her discussion on how it could be utilized instead of incarceration. The thesis structure has limitations, especially as it relates to the literature review, and several sections need further elaboration to form the argument Taya is trying to make properly. Additional issues that affect the conclusions are related to the relevancy of some of the peer-reviewed studies that Taya included in the analysis; these will be discussed in the subsequent questions.

2. Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?

Comments: To an extent. The research and literature are relevant, but many sources still need to be included, as outlined below. Further work on integrating the information, making assertions about what the literature is saying, and building the argument is needed. The information is accurate, and the extent of the information is especially appreciated as it relates to law in Egypt. The "Literature Review" section would benefit from re-organization, proofreading, less reliance on direct quotes, and elaboration.

The review of relevant literature and background related to the legal frameworks of both countries should be more robust. In connection to the USA, the student covers a broader timeline and focuses on relevant acts that are related to juvenile justice, but this section does not cover the age of criminal responsibility in the US as covered in the section on Egypt. The age of criminal responsibility in the USA is referred to in “Comparison of the Legal Framework of the Juvenile Justice Systems in the US and Egypt,” but no citation is provided. More citations are missing in this section as the student speaks to the compliance monitoring system. It is also unclear how were juveniles in the system processed before 1996 in Egypt, which is covered for the USA. The numbered list of policies in the USA section does not contribute to the flow and oversimplifies an extensive context that could be elaborated on to provide a larger picture of the juvenile justice system in the country. While both sections on the legal framework should cover similar bases, they do not in this instance and read disjointed. The extent of the legal framework in Egypt is generally excellent and provides rich information, except for the omission of what system was in place prior to 1996.

Following up on the aforementioned omission of citations, this is a crucial aspect that needs to be addressed in the section on “Treatment of Juvenile Offenders.” Many statements about the purpose and goals of the juvenile justice systems are included, but none are supported by any literature (p.16). As the review progresses to the treatment of juveniles in the US, it is noted that Ortiz-Miskimen (2021) found that juveniles are frequently punished for petty crimes, but this assertion does not connect to the rest of the paragraph that highlights overcrowding, racism, and the lack of access to education as some of the main issues in the system. The way Ortiz-Miskimen’s work is cited is also incorrect. It would have been helpful to interpret Chaudhary’s (2019) findings and to make a statement about what these mean for the treatment of juveniles in detention in America, as in its current shape; this section reads as the beginning of an argument that is not fully formed. The same applies to the continuation of the topic regarding Egypt. It would have been helpful to note how these realities seem to be in direct contrast with what the countries are identifying as the systems’ goals.

Some concepts seem to be conflated, in the sections on “conditions” and “treatment” some topics overlap without any explanation as to how these areas differ and why they are separated. This lack of clarity is a key area for improvement. In the section on “Conditions in Juvenile Detention Centers,” the issue of missing references is again encountered. The student mentions programming that is available in juvenile detentions in America, but it is not noted where this information is from. The issue of overcrowding is brought up several times, but no citation is provided to any literature that speaks to this issue.

The “Discussion” section should also include commentary on how the reviewed literature corresponds (or does not) with Taya’s findings.

3. What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the sample method, data collection and data analysis appropriate?

Comments: The quality of the data and other sources is average/good. The “Methodology” section includes valuable information about the selected method and outlines it well. The figure that contains the search summary is much appreciated and well done. I commend using PRISMA guidelines and clearly discussing inclusion and exclusion criteria. The sampling method, data collection, and data analysis are appropriate in theory, but again, the section would highly benefit from the inclusion of references. The relevancy of some of the included articles is questionable and elaborated on below.

In terms of peer-reviewed articles that were actually included in the systematic literature review, it is unclear why Hosny et al.'s (2007) article is included as it does not relate directly to treatment and conditions within detentions. Further discussion on the relevancy of the study by Reingle et al. (2013) is warranted, given the studied population and setting. If the argument is that rehabilitation efforts have failed due to the incarcerated youth's continued use of alcohol and marijuana after incarceration, there should be more justification. The same applies to the Campistol et al. (2017) study – the setting and population are different from what the student is interested in based on her research questions. The country where Kupchik (2007) conducted their study is not disclosed in the text. The results of Kupchik's (2007) study should be elaborated on more, which would be preferred rather than paying extensive attention to how their study was conducted. Explaining whether the Harzke et al. (2012) study included more than just the prevalence of mental health disorders is needed – since this thesis is concerned with treatment and conditions in juvenile detentions, the reviewed studies should speak to treatment and conditions in juvenile detentions rather than solely the composition of the population.

Some sections of the “Findings” section are confusing. For example, on page 36, it is noted that “The effects of correctional facilities on juvenile rehabilitation varied. While adult facilities seemed to offer a wider array of institutional services, they were perceived by juveniles as lacking in fostering positive staff-inmate interactions”. Does this mean that incarcerated juveniles commented on what happens in adult facilities? How are juveniles and young adults distinguished in this study?

4. Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?

Comments: The findings are somewhat relevant to the research question, with the main limitation being the inclusion of articles that may not be as relevant to the research question as appropriate. This could perhaps be addressed by further elaboration; however, in the current state, that is missing. The discussion on the use of CBT in both countries is well done, despite the fact that a description of what CBT entails and targets needs references added. The table on “Differences between the United States and Egypt” helps to summarize the information and findings; however, I am not sure why it also includes the legal rights of juveniles as that is not a research question.

Like my reservation in the previous question, the discussion includes Harzke et al.'s (2012) prevalence rates of psychiatric disorders, while the composition of the juvenile detention population is not a part of the research question. This article might have been suitable for the literature review to comment on the need for services, but it is not suitable for the purpose of a systematic literature review.

The strength of the arguments could be enhanced by ensuring a clear and logical flow. Currently, the strongest argument in the thesis is Taya's assertions about CBT and her recommendations for its further implementation, which are well supported by the research and articulated properly. However, it is essential to ensure that the other arguments in the thesis are equally strong and logically connected to each other.

5. Are the author's thoughts distinguished unambiguously from the borrowed ideas?

Comments: To an extent. Throughout the review, I have noted many statements and sections that are missing citations. This to me seems to be an issue of not fully knowing when and what to cite

rather than having the intent of portraying borrowed ideas as Taya's own.

6. What is the quality of style and other formal requirements?

Comments: The style could be significantly improved. The thesis would benefit from a thorough proofreading and style revisions. For example, many paragraphs consist of two sentences, which is not sufficient. The flow of writing is an additional concern – at times the writing gets convoluted and especially in the analysis Taya focuses too intensely on irrelevant parts of the analyzed articles rather than on sections and findings that speak specifically to her area of interest.

7. Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.

One additional strength that should be noted is Taya's interest in a juvenile justice system that is traditionally overlooked in the literature (Egypt). An additional weakness is Taya's lack of communication when consulting her thesis. I was consulted twice with the second time being her sharing the completed thesis for the first time only a few days before the deadline, leaving very limited time for me to leave feedback and for her to incorporate the revisions, which resulted in submitting work that requires additional work.

8. What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?

I suggest that the defence focuses on conditions in the juvenile detentions in the two countries and why that discussion was omitted from the analysis. I would also recommend discussing how juvenile detention can vary across different states in America and how Taya approached that in her analysis and conceptualization of the topic. Finally, a discussion on what it means for rehabilitation methods to be effective would be fitting, seeing its omission in the thesis.

9. I declare that I have checked the result of the originality check of the thesis:

Theses Turnitin Ouriginal (Urkund)

Comment on the result of the check:

There are no concerns with plagiarism; I reviewed the report and found no alarming copying of information.

Overall evaluation of the thesis:

I recommend this thesis for defence. This thesis is significantly improved, the methodology is well thought out, and the extent of covered information is substantial. However, there are also severe limitations that are noted in this review.

Proposed grade: *D*

Date: 12th June, 2024

Signature: Tereza Trejbalova