

Research Article

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An analysis on the effectiveness of rehabilitation and re-intergration programs in Zimbabwe prison services: A case of Midlands Correctional Centres

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Abstract: The research aimed to explore the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs in Zimbabwe prisons and correctional services with case studies of Midlands Correctional Centers. The objectives of the study were to understand the various types of rehabilitation programs offered by Midlands correctional institutions, the challenges faced in ensuring effective rehabilitation programs among correctional institutions in the Midlands and to find possible solutions and strategies to improve rehabilitation thereby reducing the rate of recidivism. The study focused on three prisons and correctional institutions in the Midlands province which are Whawha Medium Prison, Whawha young offenders, and Shurugwi Female Prison. For this study, the sample comprised twenty (20) research participants who comprised of correctional rehabilitation officers, inmate's relatives, former inmates, and serving inmates so as to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation and reintegration programs in the Midlands province. Data was collected through qualitative research using semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The analyzed data revealed that prison and correctional institutions in the Midlands province provide various programs such as academics, Psychosocial support, moral guidance and spiritual support, and sports and recreation. The research indicated that correctional institutions suffer from a shortage of rehabilitation officers, a lack of proper funding, and shortage of academic books for the institution's academic section, and negative attitudes from prison officers and other members of the public. The findings of the study will guide in reshaping policies to improve rehabilitation and reintegration efforts in the prison and correctional setting.

Keywords – Analysis, Effectiveness, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, Prisons and Correctional Services

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally the prison and correctional system has gone under immense and significant transformation. This is because the prison system was mostly punitive as alluded to by Mubanga (2016) and did not provide inmates with a chance to undergo rehabilitation. Looking at Zimbabwe, one can note that the prison system got introduced as a colonial

tool to suppress the Black people and inmates were not accorded rights, in fact, the African person was treated as a non-human being (Ndlovu–Gatsheni, 2013; Choto, 1990; Munochiveyi, 2014). With the independence of Zimbabwe, the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ) saw the need to change the correctional system and ensure that all inmates undergo rehabilitation and reintegration. According to Allen (2010), the Zimbabwean government introduced rehabilitation and reintegration in all Zimbabwean prisons to ensure that inmates' mindset can be transformed by the prison institutions, so as not to continue living criminality lifestyles. Since the inception of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Zimbabwe, there have been studies conducted to assess their effectiveness. Such studies include one done by Kusada (2014) who focused on the effectiveness of rehabilitation at Chikurubi prison, while Magadzire (2018) focused on the effectiveness of prison and correctional rehabilitation at Chikurubi female prison. Despite the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in correctional settings, there is a notable knowledge gap regarding their effectiveness within Midlands province correctional centers. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the efficacy of rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives in correctional institutions within the Midlands province, shedding light on best practices and areas for improvement to inform evidence-based policy and programming.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The prison and correctional systems in Zimbabwe were established during the colonial rule. It was meant to punish offenders, which was retributive in nature. Following Zimbabwe's independence, the newly established government embarked on a process of decolonization, removing remnants of the colonial era and initiating efforts towards rehabilitation and transformation. This marked a significant shift towards reclaiming and redefining the country's identity, institutions, and systems, with the aim of promoting social, economic, and political development. The major turning point came in 2005 when the Zimbabwe and correctional services introduced the rehabilitation and reintegration department. Notwithstanding the efforts towards rehabilitation and reintegration in Zimbabwe's prison system, there exist divergent views regarding their efficacy. The persistently high rates of recidivism have raised concerns and sparked debate about the effectiveness of these initiatives, prompting this research to investigate the outcomes and impact of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Zimbabwe's correctional facilities.

3. RESEARCH FOCUS

To contribute towards empirical evidence, this research intended to gain insight into this identified gap from the respondents' perspective guided by the following objective, to explore the effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation and reintegration programs in the Zimbabwe prison with special reference to Midlands correctional centers.

4. RESEARCH AIM

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration programs offered by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service (ZPCS) to inmates, with a specific focus on the Midlands province correctional centers, spanning the period from 2005 to the present. The research sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue by examining the perspectives of both the program implementers and the beneficiaries, thereby gaining insight into the strengths, weaknesses, and impact of these initiatives on successful reintegration and reduced recidivism

5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research were to:

- Explore the rehabilitation and reintegration programs offered by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services in the Midlands province.

- Analyze the effectiveness of the rehabilitation and reintegration programs offered by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services in the Midlands province.
- Outline the challenges faced by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services in the provision of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in the Midlands province.
- Provide recommendations for the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Zimbabwe's Prisons and Correctional Services.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the rehabilitative and reintegration programs offered by Zimbabwe and prison and correctional services within the Midlands Province?
- How effective have the rehabilitation and reintegration drive within the Zimbabwe prison and correctional services within the Midlands province in achieving their mandate?
- What are the challenges faced by the Zimbabwe prison and correctional institutions in the Midlands province towards achieving effective and efficient rehabilitation and Rehabilitation programs?
- What strategies can be implemented to improve the rehabilitation and reintegration drive within the Midlands prison and correctional centers?

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

The study shall be significant to correctional and rehabilitation officers. This is because exploring the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration program, shall help to outline the challenges faced and this will help in producing strategies and solutions to overcome the challenges towards ensuring effective rehabilitation of inmates. Thus, it will help correctional and rehabilitation officers map new ways of improving rehabilitation and reintegration programs targeted toward inmates within the midlands province.

The study will also assist the correctional institutions within the midlands province –Zimbabwe. The study will reveal the challenges faced by the institutions towards effective correctional institutions. The assumption is that this will lead to prison reforms meant to remove and reduce the bottlenecks within the institutions and systems to achieve effective and efficient rehabilitation of inmates within the Midlands correctional centers.

This study shall also be of significance to rehabilitation partners such as non-governmental organizations and others who assist in the rehabilitation drive. The examination of challenges faced in the rehabilitation drive, will assist other stakeholders in the rehabilitation drive to know when and how to chip towards assisting correctional institutions in this province to achieve effective and efficient rehabilitation.

8. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globally prisons and correctional institutions have turned to rehabilitation and reintegration towards making an ex-convict or inmate become a changed person and for him/her to be able to positively participate in society instead of engaging in criminal elements (United Nations Report 2012). The changes are a result of moving away from a retributive system which was formerly used by most correctional institutions and it was punitive in nature. According to scholars such as Chua (2016) and the United Nations Report (2012), the retributive justice system hardened prisoners and this led them to easily revert back to a life of crime. In addition, society itself saw convicted people as people worth to die behind prison walls and never being given an opportunity to change their behaviour. Upon realization that the retributive justice system was not helpful in any way in reducing crimes, global institutions such as the United Nations and other multilateral institutions decided to use the restorative justice system. This was meant to assist inmates and society to work together towards ensuring a better society as well as changing the perspectives and views of both inmates and society that a person convicted of a crime can be able to change if taught and loved. This saw the introduction of rehabilitation and reintegration services in prison and correctional

institutions as a means of assisting the inmate to become a better person who can be able to contribute positively to society. To achieve this aim, the society had to be roped in as well as family members towards ensuring change in the convicted person. The United Nations and other agencies established international laws and protocols such as the Mandela Rules, the International Convention on civil and Political Rights, the Minimum Rules for the administration of Juvenile Justice, and Bangkok rules to be adopted towards rehabilitation. These laws were adopted by various continents and subcontinents. Thus Europe, Asian, American, and African countries ratified these laws to achieve rehabilitation, and this saw them changing the way they treated inmates from seeing them with a negative attitude to a position where they saw inmates as humans and people capable of changing. One of the countries that changed its laws to facilitate effective rehabilitation and achieve better rehabilitation and reintegration services is Norway.

Norway is one of the European countries which had a retributive justice system. The prison buildings were designed in such a way that showed that they were meant to keep inmates under lock and key all the time as punishment for infringing on the rights of the people. Not only buildings but the laws were harsh. The First Step Alliance (2022) noted that during the 1990s' Norway realized that its prison system was too harsh as the punitive imprisonment system led to 70% of its released prisoners recommitting crime. This led the prison and correctional department to change its format from a punitive to a restorative system which concentrated on reshaping an inmate to a better person. As a result, the prisons in Norway were successful in terms of rehabilitation because they decreased the rate of re-offending.

The literature highlights the effectiveness of correctional facilities in European settings rather than in Zimbabwean ones, so the authors would like to investigate the extent to which Zimbabwe has been able to successfully rehabilitate inmates in accordance with its correctional mandate, paying particular attention to correctional facilities in the midlands province.

Through Score, skill-training programs have been implemented in Singaporean prisons. As a result, many prisoners have received certificates and are practicing skills like baking. In addition to offering vocational training, Score also helps prisoners find employment. Tan and Tan (2020) state that Score has helped over 10,000 ex-offenders find employment and trained over 200,000 prisoners. The SCORE project stands out for the way it uses job placement data to determine which skills to teach prisoners. In addition, SCORE arranges for employers to visit prisons and interview prospective employees. Thus, the Singaporean prison system has advanced significantly in terms of rehabilitation.

According to Ogundipe (2010), prisons in Nigeria were established because of colonialism, and the system was retributive in nature, with inmates having no rights at all. However, with Nigeria's independence, the prison system changed from a retributive to a restorative system, with the goal of restoring a person back to society as a citizen with dignity while also contributing to the community's development objectives. According to Marshall (1999), the retributive system did nothing but harden inmates, resulting in high rates of re-offending (Mubanga, 2016). The adoption of a rehabilitation and reintegration drive within the Nigerian prison system led to some progress in terms of dealing with crimes.

According to Diana (2021), the introduction of skills training as part of the rehabilitation and reintegration drive has produced some results, including the provision of life skills that are critical for self-empowerment. Diana (2021) proposed that inmates have benefited because skills training provides them with a platform to start a new life, and ex-inmates from the Nigerian prison have been able to find employment. This will help to reduce the recidivism rate in Nigeria. According to Diana (2021), ex-inmates are also providing employment opportunities by opening their own businesses or trades, thereby assisting the nation of Nigeria in fighting unemployment, and ex-inmates are contributing to the GDP of the country, thereby assisting in the Nigerian development initiative. According to Mbatha et al. (2016), Diana (2021), and Barreiro and Mogarro (2021), education not only helps to provide employment, but also helps to reshape inmates' mindsets. They argue that education helps inmates to become better civic and responsible citizens.

As a result, they are more aware of their role in society and avoid crime. Thus, correctional services have helped inmates unlearn negative behavior, allowing them to escape a life of crime (Abu, 2016; Dixon & Cassey 2013). The authors of this study are aware that in Zimbabwe, they are studies which have been done in line with this research, Scholars such as Kusada (2014) focused on the effectiveness of rehabilitation with special reference to Chikurubi farm prison, while Magadzire (2018) focused on Chikurubi female prison, while Maphosa (2016) focused on the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration with special emphasis on the youth group, aged between 15-35 years incarcerated at Harare central.

The point of departure from the above studies is that this study is not focused on a certain age group, but rather on examining the effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation and reintegration efforts among Midlands province correctional institutions. The study explores how successful have been the midlands correctional institutions' their challenges and strategies to increase the effectiveness of their rehabilitation programs. This paper examined the rehabilitative and reintegration programs offered by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service (ZPCS) in Zimbabwe, and the effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts by ZPCS, with a specific focus on the Midlands province correctional institutions. This paper also looked at the challenges faced by ZPCS in implementing these programs within the Midlands correctional institutions, and strategies for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of rehabilitation and reintegration programs in Midlands correctional institutions and across Zimbabwe. By exploring these critical issues, this paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement in Zimbabwe's correctional rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives.

9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The study adopted a qualitative research methodology. Creswell (2008) articulates that the qualitative research paradigm allows one to be able to explore a phenomenon in a natural setting. In this study, open-ended interviews were used to gain a full understanding of the effectiveness of prison and correctional rehabilitation and, the challenges faced as well as enquiring from research participant's best alternatives to address the challenges to ensure effective and efficient rehabilitation. A sample of twenty (20) participants was used in this research and the sample comprised of Officer in charge of the three prison and correctional institutions as well as rehabilitation officers from the prisons under research, inmates, former inmates as well and inmate's relatives to be able to understand the topic under study. The research participants were purposively selected. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) attest that purposive selection allows for the selection of research participants who fit the study intentions hence its use. The study did not only rely on gathering data from a single lens such as open-ended interviews but also made use of secondary data such as prison reports, and newspaper articles to gain a better understanding of the topic under research. According to Chidarikire, Chikuvadze and Muza (2021), the use of primary data and secondary data in a qualitative research design allows for a better inductive analysis of responses which allows for patterns, themes, and categories to emerge as supported by (Creswell 2010; Creswell, 2009). After collecting data, the researchers analyzed the data which was gathered from the research field. The data was analyzed thematically. This allowed the researchers to produce a conclusion and recommendation in line with the topic under discussion or research.

10. RESEARCH FINDINGS

What do you understand by the terms rehabilitation and reintegration?

The research participants, who are rehabilitation officers, officers in charge, former inmates, inmates, and relatives highlighted that they understood that rehabilitation and reintegration are based on restorative justice. They further highlighted that rehabilitation, and reintegration are based upon changing the mindset of the inmate who has committed a crime. This is done through various programs such as education provision, counselling, and skills provision. The aim is to change the inmate to become a better person who is law-abiding. This rehabilitation program

is done in collaboration with the family members, community personnel, and prison to achieve fruitful benefits as alluded by Davis, Bahr and Ward (Davis, Bahr & Ward, 2012).

What led the prison and correctional service management to introduce rehabilitation and reintegration services section?

The research participants, who are officers in charge and rehabilitation officers, highlighted that Zimbabwe prison and correctional services introduced rehabilitation and reintegration because this was in line with international protocols. These protocols included the Mandela rules, the Kadoma Declaration on prison rehabilitation, Qugadogou Declaration on prison rehabilitation. Thus, the prison management is acting according to laws and statutes. One of the rehabilitation officers interviewed highlighted that,

“As prisons we also follow the international laws, regional and sub-regional laws and protocols. Hence, we introduced rehabilitation and reintegration in line with the Kadoma declaration, Qugadogou convention on rehabilitation. We also introduced it, as it is in line with our constitution of Zimbabwe (section 227)”.

Another participant highlighted that the introduction of rehabilitation was because the nation of Zimbabwe was and is moving away from a retributive justice system and embracing the restorative justice system and the officer had this to say,

“The reason for embracing the rehabilitation drive is because, the Zimbabwean government is a government of Black people. Hence it is moving away from the colonial system of administration and ensuring that all prisoners are treated with respect and are offered an opportunity to reform and become better people who can do something in society.”

Another prison officer highlighted that,

What forced prison to implement rehabilitation and reintegration is because the punitive system was not giving results. It hardened the inmates and led to increased crime rates. So, the prison leadership realized the need to change the system and rehabilitation, and reintegration drive is working, because the rate of recidivism is extremely low now.

What are the several types of programs offered by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional service towards enhancing Rehabilitation among inmates in Zimbabwe?

Responses from all research participants highlighted that the prison and correctional services offer various rehabilitation programs. Thus, the three correctional prisons used in the study provide various programs for inmates. The programs offered to inmates are explained below.

(i) Academics

The Zimbabwe prison and correctional service provide academic programs to inmates. The research participants, which is inmates, relatives and correctional officers highlighted that inmates are offered academic education. One of the inmates interviewed during the study said,

Ndikapinda mujeri ndisina chikoro. Ndinodaro nokuti ini ndakagumira grade 4. Asi kubudikidza neve Rehab, vakagara neni pasi vakndionesa, ikozvino ndichitaura nemi, ndavakutononyora form 4 yangu. (When I was arrested I was not educated. This is because I had dropped going to school at Grade 4. But upon my incarceration, the rehab officers provided counselling to me and I realized the need to go back to school. As I am speaking to you right now, I am now form 4 preparing to write my ordinary level exams).

We crosschecked with both the correctional officer and the inmate's relatives, and they corroborated with what was said by the inmate. The mother to the inmate highlighted thus,

“Zvechokwadi mwana wangu akanga akagumira grade 4, asi vana sekuru vakataura naye. Ndakazoono vana sekuru vondifonera kuti mwana odakuita zvamabhuku, ndikashamisika nazvo. Asi haaa, ndirikufara, cheromufungiro wake kana mutauriro wake watosiyana. (Indeed, my child had dropped out of school at grade 4. The rehabilitation and reintegration officers provided counselling to him and I was surprised one day when the rehab officers contacted me that my son wanted to pursue education.

I was surprised that my child wanted to go to school, but he is pursuing his education. I am incredibly happy because even his way of thinking has changed, and the way of speaking has totally changed.”)

Another inmate named Brown* who was incarcerated at Young offenders had this to say,

“When I was arrested for stock theft, coming from Gokwe, I had stopped going to school in grade 2, but when I arrived at Whawha young offenders, counselling was provided by rehab officers, and I began enrolling from grade 3. As we speak right now, I managed to produce 5 O’levels and am pursuing my Advanced level, while I am behind the prison walls. Education will give me another chance to seek employment after am released, plus due to education I can now understand that what made me commit this crime, it was due to lack of education and knowledge. With the education and knowledge, I have, I do not think I would like to go back to a life of crime.”

Another inmate by the name Pink * from Young offenders reiterated thus,

“when I was arrested after committing murder, as young person I was placed at Young offenders, the rehab officers encouraged me to pursue education and I managed to write my O’levels passed and wrote my A levels, I passed and now I am pursuing a degree with Zimbabwe open university while I am behind bars”.

Thus, the Zimbabwe prison and correctional service is providing education as a tool for rehabilitation to inmates. Some of the former inmates from Whawha medium and young offenders testified that the prisons and correctional institutions provided them with a solid foundation of starting new life’s as they managed to attain and acquire basic education and some managed to attain professional certificates in various fields, including agriculture, motor mechanic and their lives have changed and are living better lives outside prison walls.

(ii) Psycho-social Support

The Zimbabwe prison and correctional services in its quest to ensure successful rehabilitation of inmates, offers psycho-social support. As one singer popularly known as the queen of Africa, Brenda Fassie, the late once said *“Everyone wants and need to be loved, I need to be loved despite my shortcomings”* so are inmates. The prison and correctional officers highlighted that they offer counselling services. This was alluded by the officer in charge for Whawha young offenders who said,

“As rehabilitation officers we offer counselling service to inmates. The counselling provided will assist to reshape their lives.”

The same sentiments were echoed by three (3) rehabilitation officers interviewed in this research. Even inmates and former inmates concurred with what was said by the young offender’s Officer in charge. An inmate called Green* who was interviewed said,

“As prisoners we are offered counselling, and this counselling is assisting us to have a better view of the world.”

Another inmate named Yellow who was interviewed highlighted that counselling gave him an opportunity to view life from another perspective. The inmate said,

“I want to tell you the truth. I really did commit a crime of rape. In the beginning I was in denial and I blamed the girl whom I raped because she was wearing a Minnie skirt. But due to the counselling provided by the rehabilitation officers it has made me realize that what I did was wrong. I need to go and ask for forgiveness to the one I raped, her family, my family as well and to the community.”

Thus, the provision of counselling services is assisting inmates to inmates helps towards behavioral change as alluded by authors (Magadzire, 2018; Mutanana & Gasva, 2014; Mbirriri & Pia, 2024; Baji & Badamasi, 2020)

Moral and Spiritual Rehabilitation

Other rehabilitation programs offered by prison and correctional services are the provision of moral and spiritual counselling to inmates. Through spiritual and moral rehabilitation, it offers an opportunity for behaviour change

among inmates. A former inmate named June * who was interviewed in line with the topic under discussion had this to say,

“Before imprisonment I was a person who loved speaking vulgar language. I was known for speaking vulgar in the community. But when I was imprisoned, I met pastors and chaplains who taught me about seasoned talking in line with the bible. Especially from the following verses, derived from the bible, Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 15:14 and Colosians 4:6. Zvakandishandura zvizhini, chero hama dzangu hadzichanyari neni kana ndichitaura pavanhu. Kare ndanga ndisingagoni kupedza zuva ndisina kutaura zvinyadzi, uye dzimwe nguva ndaiti ndikada kutaura hama dzangu dzaindiyarridza dzichindityira kuti ndaizomoka kutaura. (This has changed me. Even my relatives are no longer afraid that when I open my mouth I will speak vulgar language, relatives used to shy away or stop me from speaking in public due to that. But I am now a better person.”

We crosschecked with June’s relatives on what he said, and the relatives corroborated that indeed he is now a changed person because he used to speak a vulgar language to the extent that one would be afraid to let him speak in public or where there were dignitaries. The relative indicated that June is a changed person as his language has changed and indeed prison has assisted in reshaping the way he speaks to the extent that he is now a marvel within society, thanks to the prison and correctional service rehabilitation programs, as they are leading to positive change among inmates and former inmates. Thus, the provision of moral and spiritual rehabilitation assists in changing an inmate’s life as alluded to by authors (Jang & Johnson, 2022).

Sports, Arts and Culture

Inmates at this institution also participate in sports and culture. According to Musango (2014), Gona, Mugari & Zondayi (2014), Magadzire (2018), Libbrecht, Delhaye and Roose (2024), Zakaria and Larbi (2024), Norman, Sonoda and Ricciaderlli (2024), Woods and Braselin (2023), Adri et al. (2022), Ghram et al. (2021), Papa et al. (2021), Maclean et al. (2023), and Wahl-Alexander and Jacobs (2024) prison offers sports and culture programs as a means of relieving tension caused by imprisonment. Within the Midlands province, performing arts are done, acts such as drama, and music in the form of traditional dance and choirs. In the Midlands province, there is a group called WHASA, meaning Whawha School of Arts and it performs at various programs which include national events such as Independence, Heroes celebrations, and other provincial events. Recently it performed in the Chibuku Neshamwari and it was number 3 and won \$500 (USA) which was paid at interbank rate (Midlands province internal report, 2023).

Not only did inmates participate in the Chibuku Neshamwari competition, but inmates within the Midlands provincial correctional centers participated in a national Chess competition which took place in the Khambi prison complex in June 2023 and this competition hosted prison inmates and civilians at large. Another point to note is that in the Midlands province, there is a tournament dubbed the Officer Commanding’s tournament and, in this tournament, inmates also are given an opportunity to take part in various sports such as football, Chess, and Darts. Inmates also engage in sports activities on Prison Day which is hosted every year in September. Therefore, inmates are accorded an opportunity to participate in sports as part of rehabilitation and reintegration.

Are rehabilitation and reintegration services offered to all inmates or are certain type of inmates who are offered these programs.

The provision of rehabilitation and reintegration services are offered to all inmates within the prison and correctional setting. This is because all classes of Inmates within the prison set up from D (dangerous classes) – to an A class are provided similar services such as counselling, family reunion –programs, contact tracing, and education provision, just to mention a few. According to the United Nations, 2012; Suman, Sigdel, Reshma, Teja, Sandra and Razi (2023), all inmates should be offered rehabilitation and reintegration services in preparation for release. During the research, the rehabilitation officers and officers in charge alluded that all inmates are provided rehabilitative programs. Citing one rehabilitation officer from Shurugwi female she had this to say,

“When looking at the issue of prison rehabilitation, all inmates are provided rehabilitation services, be it D, C, B or A class, all inmates are catered for. The law states and stipulates that all inmates are to be offered rehabilitation services despite their prison class.”

The same statement was echoed by another rehabilitation officer from Whawha young offenders who said, *“At young offenders, we provide rehabilitation and reintegration services to all inmates. At Whawha young offenders, we have D class inmates who are pursuing education and C class inmates who are into Poultry management and B class inmates who are into gardening. As you can see, all these prison classes are not left out in prison rehabilitation.”*

Thus, from the research field, it was clear that no inmates were being left out from participating as well as taking part in prison and correctional service rehabilitation programs.

How successful have inmates been rehabilitated and reintegrated in this province. Do you have some success stories?

The prison and correctional institutions within the midlands province have made some inroads in terms of success stories towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates.

Assisting in the provision of national identity documents.

The prisons and correctional services within the midlands province have made some important strides in ensuring that inmates have access to national identity documents. The following is an explanation of achievements done by Whawha Young offenders and Whawha Medium towards access to identification certificates for inmates in the province

ID and Birth certificate facilitation

The Whawha Young offender’s rehabilitation officers highlighted that they assisted 27 inmates in taking national identity cards. As for Whawha Medium Prison, they are some few statistics, in 2019, it assisted 8 inmates to access identity documents, the rehab officers highlighted that they had managed to assist inmates from 2020 up-to-date, but the unfortunate part was that they could not locate their books and managed to locate a book that highlighted that they had assisted 15 inmates to access birth certificates.

Vocational and skills training

The prison institutions within the Midland’s province have managed and continue to provide vocational and skills training to inmates. It has managed to register the Whawha workshop as a vocational training center when it paid a registration fee of US \$500, according to the (Whawha Workshop Report 2023a, Whawha Workshop Report 2023b). The skills training provided by the prison has reaped some benefits, as according to the Whawha workshop report (2023a) 21 inmates graduated with journeyman class 1, others obtained class 2 whilst other inmates obtained class 3 in various trades in 2022, such as welding, carpentry, motor mechanics to mention just but a few, Of the 21 inmates who graduated in 2022, 3 were from Whawha medium and 18 were from young offenders. In another report, Whawha workshop report (2023b) highlighted that so far the midlands province has managed to successfully have 32 graduates in various trades and 6 of them are self-employed, while 3 are gainfully employed in industries.. During the research, we interviewed some of the inmates, 3 of them, namely, Burge, *, khaki and Cream.*. Khaki had this to say,

“The vocational skills have been helpful because I am gainfully employed, I am employed at a company in Hwange. we also interviewed the parents and they were happy and had this to say our child has been given lifeline by this Program of skills training, he has completely changed as the skill has transformed him, he is always busy in welding, and he is no longer thinking of stilling or doing something bad because he is gainfully employed and we are happy with this change and the community has managed to embrace him as it saw him coming back from prison a changed person”.

Burge * highlighted that,

“Skills training has also assisted him, as he is now self-employed as he was given a starter pack by Child line after he finished his course and upon release, he has managed to use the starter kit to start his business of motor mechanics. His hope is that his business will grow, and he will be able to employ a lot of people, thereby contributing to employment creation within the community and the nation at large.”

Even female inmates are assisted with vocational training. At Shurugwi female prison, female inmates are taught various trades such as hairdressing. During the research, the researcher interviewed an inmate named Mangoe* and she said,

“Here we are taught hairdressing, we have braids, manicures and weaves and they have different prices, which range from 5-7 dollars depending on the choice one needs. We also do manicures at dollar price and most female around Shurugwi come for hairdressing here at Shurugwi female prison, with all this knowledge, I will go and open my business and desist from a life of crime”.

At Shurugwi female prison there is a barbershop and laundry facility where money is paid at the station, and one is provided the service. Some of the money raised will assist the inmates with bus fare, since sometimes the inmate is arrested with no money in their wallets, thus by providing bus fare assists the inmate to go home and not move around within the town center as it may lead her to commit crimes as she looks for money to go home

Education and Professional Development.

The correctional institutions within the Midlands province have managed to ensure that inmates are provided with access to education in line with article number 27 and 75 of the constitution of Zimbabwe. The following diagram highlights the successes made by correctional institutions towards education attainment within the province.

Table 1: Whawha Young Offenders O and A level statistic (2019-2022)

Year	Number of students registered	Number of students passed	Percentage pass rate
2019	33	22	66%
2020	25	19	74%
2021	10	10	100%
2022	36	23	64%

Source: Whawha young offender’s education internal report (2023)

Table 2: Whawha medium Ordinary level statistics (2019-2022)

Year	Number of candidates registered	Number of subject registered	Number of subjects passed	Percentage pass rate
2019	2 candidates	3 subjects	3 subjects	100%
2020	4 candidates	4 subjects	4 subjects	100%
2021	5 candidates	8 subjects	8 subjects	100%
2022	16 candidates	43 subjects	40 subjects	93%

Source: Whawha medium education internal report statistics on pass rate (2023)

The statistic highlights that the institutions within the province are doing well in terms of education province, but the number of inmates who register for academics is quite few. For young offenders, the number in 2019 for registered students was 33, in 2020 the number of registered students dropped from 33 to 25, and in 2021 there were 10 inmates who were able to register, and registration increased in 2022, where 36 inmates registered to write ordinary and advanced levels.

The Whawha medium educational statistics highlight that there are very few students who managed to register to sit for ordinary-level exams. This was explained by one education officer who said,

"Inmates are sometimes forced to write few subjects due to the unavailability of financial resources to register for exams, the inmates may sometimes write 1 or 2 subjects per year not because they want but because of lack of money and financial muscle". the inmates interviewed also highlighted the challenges of lack of financial capacity to write the number of subjects that they would want to and indicated that their parents were not able to register for them the number of subjects they would want due to financial shortages. This explains the reason why there are few inmates who have registered at Whawha Medium Prison, and at Young Offenders, there is a significant drop in the number of inmates registered. This is confirmation of efforts towards ensuring great strides in academic and professional development within the Midlands province. Furthermore, the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Service, midlands province consulted with the Zimbabwe Open University and ZOU and Has begun offering professional courses to Whawha young offenders and inmates at Whawha Medium Prison. Some inmates from Whawha Young Offenders are enrolled with ZOU pursuing a social science degree in Psychology another inmate from Whawha Young Offenders is pursuing a diploma with Gweru Polytechnic College. Thus, correctional institutions are making great strides in the building of human resources.

What are the challenges and constraints to rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates within the Midlands province?

Despite the fact that indeed correctional institutions have achieved some milestones in terms of their mandate, especially fulfilling section 227 of the constitution, that of rehabilitating inmates into society to become lawful abiding citizens, institutions within the midlands province face a plethora of challenges that are negatively affecting these institutions from successfully ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration). The first challenge regarding rehabilitation and reintegration has to do with officer's perceptions of the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. Most officers are skeptical and do not believe in the rehabilitation and reintegration drive.

One of the major challenges is that of shortage of staff - they are very few rehabilitation officers to carry out their duties effectively, looking at Whawha medium, it has 2 rehabilitation officers against 1,300 inmates which means that in such a scenario it becomes difficult for the rehabilitation officers to carry out their duties effectively. Another challenge is that the rehabilitation department is not taken seriously. This is because the major thrust is that of prioritizing security, a notion supported by scholars (Mutingh, 2001; Baffour, 2022; Van Hout, 2023) noting that this hampers the efforts to achieve effective correctional rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Due to lack of prioritization rehabilitation, this constantly leads to rehab officers being multi-tasked therefore compromising their work. The shortage of vehicles and fuel is another hindrance to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of inmates. This affects home visits and after-service provision follow-up on released inmates. Shortage of reading material is another challenge especially on education provision and academics.

11. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The idea of restorative justice is hinged on moving away from a retributive justice system which hardened inmates and did not provide them with an opportunity to change their moral behaviour (Mbatha, 2016; First Step Alliance, 2022). Thus, under restorative justice, inmates /prisoners are being taught to become law abiding citizens through rehabilitation and changing their mindset so as not to commit crimes and become law abiding citizens who will make positive contributions to society once they are released from prison. According to the United Nation (2006), Pointer (2021), Priyana, Assayuti and Ramndoni (2023), Honson, Ghoshal, Banwell-Moore and Ash (2022), Suherman, Sarwirini, Negara, Lufisana, Dharma and Nainggolani (2024), restorative justice is a collaborative process that brings together the victim, offender, and affected community members to address the consequences of a crime. Facilitated by a neutral third party, this approach enables active participation in resolving matters arising from the crime. Restorative justice provides a framework for rehabilitation and reintegration, empowering communities to play a pivotal role in transforming inmates' mindsets and behaviors. By engaging in this process, inmates can develop into

responsible individuals, better equipped to reintegrate into society upon release from prison and make amends for their past actions.

During the research, the researchers asked the research participants about their understanding of the terms rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates. Various research participants that included inmates, former inmates, and prison and correctional officers highlighted that rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates mean that the correctional service is trying to change the inmate's mindset so that the inmate is able to use his/her mental faculties for the better so that he/she will not get back to a life of crime. The views highlighted by the research participants concur with what was highlighted by existing studies (David, Bahr & Ward, 2012; Diana, 2021; UNICRI, 2024; Magnuson, 2023; Dahl & Mogstad, 2020) who stated that rehabilitation of inmates means changing the prisoner's mindset so that he /she changes behaviour so as not to revert to a life of crime.

The study findings highlight that the Zimbabwe prison and correctional service introduced rehabilitation and reintegration services because they realized that the retributive justice was hardening inmates and led to increased cases of prison reentry. This finding corroborates with what was said by Mubanga (2016) and First Step Alliance (2022) who articulated that prison and correctional services were forced to adopt the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates because the retributive justice led to increased cases of prison re-entry. Thus, they had to find a better way of reducing recidivism among prison inmates as well as changing the inmate's mentality. Furthermore, the adoption of rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates goes hand in hand with international laws, protocols, and statutes which Zimbabwe is a signatory. This sentiment concurs with what was said by the authors (Gona et al., 2014; UNICRI, 2024). Thus, rehabilitation and reintegration offered by Zimbabwe prison and correctional services are in line with international statutes on prison administration and management.

The research participants emphasized the significance of counseling in facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates into society. This finding is corroborated by existing literature, including (Diesel, 2007; Magadzire, 2018; Ipaye, 2004; Szmuski, 1988; Mbiriri & Pia, 2024; Baji & Badamasi, 2020) which collectively highlight the pivotal role of counseling in transforming inmates' perspectives. Furthermore, the Zimbabwe Female Support Report (2014) reinforces this notion, underscoring the effectiveness of counseling in achieving successful rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes across various societal contexts. The consensus among these sources underscores the importance of counseling as a crucial component of correctional rehabilitation programs.

The correctional services have also managed to ensure the facilitation of access to birth and national identity documents. This highlights that the prison and correctional services are ensuring that inmates are treated with dignity and are not stateless. In assisting inmates accessing these important documents it means that prisons in Zimbabwe are acting in line with articles 35 and 36 which articulates that any person born in Zimbabwe should be accorded a national identity document as well as acting in line with the African Charter on Children's right article 6 which states that children should be accorded access to identity cards. Thus, young offenders are not left out. This also goes to show that even inmates are not discriminated against. This is in line with article 56 which calls for non-segregation in the right provision of which access to identity is a right on its own.

The research participants highlighted that prison and correctional services affected their performance due to a lack of financial capacity. Especially in areas such as education and conducting home visits. This led to the institutions failing to conduct home visits periodically as well as buying books and other educational requirements needed. The views expressed by the research participants are like findings by (Magadzire, 2018; Gona et al., 2014; Rupande & Ndororo, 2014; Baji & Badamasi, 2020; Priyana, Assayuti & Romdoni, 2023; Kaur, 2024; Hamada, 2023; CFJ Penal Reform, 2023), who articulated that due to financial challenges the institutions have not been able to achieve their rehabilitation and reintegration mandate.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers proffered solutions to deal with the challenges faced by correctional institutions toward achieving effective and efficient rehabilitation and reintegration programs. This will assist the institutions to achieve their goals,

aspirations as well as their mandate. To ensure effective rehabilitation and reintegration there is a need to provide budgetary provisions to curb financial challenges. More research needs to be done in line with this issue. There is a need for seminars and webinars on correctional rehabilitation as a capacity-building mechanism. The province further needs to produce a strategic plan on how rehabilitation and reintegration programs can be executed within the correctional centers within the Midlands province. There is a need to employ a provincial ambassador within the province to spearhead rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Rehab exchange programs with other countries within the region can bolster rehab effectiveness.

13. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research directions could explore the role of sports in prison and correctional rehabilitation in Zimbabwe, examining its potential to enhance rehabilitation outcomes. Additionally, investigating the impact of religion on the rehabilitation process within the prison and correctional services could provide valuable insights, further contributing to the understanding of effective rehabilitation strategies in this context.

14. CONCLUSION

The researchers highlighted that prison and correctional institutions have transitioned from using the retributive justice system to the rehabilitative model. The prison changed because the retributive model was hardening inmates hence the move towards the restorative justice model. It is this restorative justice model that led to the prison and correctional rehabilitation drive. The study further highlighted that the rehabilitation and reintegration programs are offered to all inmates despite their prison classes, which are from D (dangerous inmates) – to A-Classes. All inmates are provided with these programs. The researcher further highlighted that the various programs provided by the correctional institutions within the Midlands province are, education provision, arts and performance, vocational training programs, contact tracing, counselling, and others. Prison and correctional institutions also engage in family visits as a means of preparing the inmates for the outside world. In conducting their duties, prison and correctional services within the Midland province face various challenges such as a lack of vehicles for home visits, staff shortage, and lack of information communication technologies and these hamper the institutions from performing their duties effectively.

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17. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researchers declare no conflict of interest in this study. They have no financial, personal, or professional interests that could have influenced the conduct or outcome of the research, ensuring an unbiased and objective investigation.

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