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THE ROLE OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES IN CURBING RECIDIVISM IN ZIMBABWE PRISONS: A COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY PERSPECTIVE.

Itayi Samanyanga

Lecturer

Zimbabwe Open University

Matabeleland South Regional Campus, Gwanda

Zimbabwe

isamanyanga@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The research study explores the role of rehabilitation programmes in curbing recidivism in Zimbabwe prisons. The purpose of the study was to examine the application of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) in empowering prison inmates to adopt positive attitudinal and behavioural changes to reduce recidivism in Zimbabwe prisons. The researcher used the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to address cognitions, attitudes and beliefs of offenders. Twenty respondents composed of ten prison officers and ten ex-offenders were purposively selected through snow balling technique to participate in the study. The researcher used the interview schedule and questionnaire to collect data. The study recommends that the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services should employ specially trained officers and or equip prison officers with rehabilitation and correctional skills through staff development courses and in-service training in order to manage the needs of offenders under rehabilitation treatment programmes. The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is not fully applied in Zimbabwe prisons rehabilitation programmes hence the need for specialist services.

Keywords: Correctional Counselling, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Recidivism, Rehabilitation, Offenders

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Globally, the prevalence rate of recidivism is high in prisons. The current prison population in the United States is pegged at 52%, Chile has 50%, with France having 46% (Fazel & Wolf, 2015; UNDOC, 2014). The Zimbabwe prisons system is facing challenges of recidivism estimated to be very high though official figures are not known, over population of prisoners and lack of resources for rehabilitation programmes. Offenders continue to commit criminal activities upon release from Zimbabwe prisons and hence prisons are overcrowded. Prison populations are increasing with the large number of offenders being recidivists or repeat offenders. Rehabilitation programmes through the application of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy can help in reducing recidivism in correctional centres. Offenders need empowerment through engagement in rehabilitation programmes in order for them to lead sustainable livelihoods in post prison life. Standard rehabilitation programmes would properly transform offenders to reintegrate into society. The problem of recidivism in Zimbabwe prisons needs to be addressed as it strains the social and financial resources of the nation.

In Zimbabwe prisons, offenders are released from prison after serving their prison terms, paying fines for their criminal offences, paying bail and or granted Presidential amnesty. However; upon release from prison, offenders are confronted with a range of



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challenges such as finding employment and shelter, lack of family and community support (Clear, 2007) and thus they recidivate and are re-incarcerated (Travis, 2004). This implies that failure to address those challenges impedes the chances of successful return to society by offenders. Recidivism refers to an offender released from incarceration relapsing into criminal behaviour, reconvicted and re-imprisoned for a new offence (McKean & Ransford, 2004). Recidivism therefore refers to the act of an individual who repeats an undesirable behaviour after having been treated or trained to extinguish the criminal habits.

Convicts are released into the community when they are inadequately equipped to deal with socio-economic needs. When released from prison, ex-convicts face the same unmet needs which force them to commit other crimes as they attempt to meet their socio-economic needs (Muchena, 2014). This implies that prisoners may not be fully prepared in prison with effective rehabilitation programmes to assist them in building a positive life upon release. Specific programmes for rehabilitation and treatment are lacking in the Zimbabwe prison system and thus offenders are released when they are not prepared to deal with the outside world. Prison officers serving in the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services (

ZPCS) system still lack specialised training in correctional services (Muchena, 2014; Tenibiaje, 2006; Rupande & Ngoro, 2014; UNAFEI, 2007) and these include such programmes as correctional counselling and cognitive behaviour therapy. Offenders need psychological services in order to enhance their mental health and emotional well being (Diesel, 2007) and thus promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. It is very important that offenders have to be empowered through education, career guidance, rehabilitation programmes in order for them to engage in productive livelihood upon release from imprisonment.

The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services released over 3 000 convicts who were granted Presidential amnesty (The Newsday Zimbabwe, 26 May 2016). Within two (2) months after prisoners were granted Presidential amnesty, already over sixty (60) ex-offenders have been rearrested. The engagement in new crimes and re-incarceration of ex-convicts shows the effectiveness of the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services system with regards to efforts to rehabilitate and reform prisoners. This implies that imprisonment has done little or no effect in terms of offenders desisting from crime. The ICRC report April (2009) cited in Muchena (2014) points out that the Zimbabwean prisons have a high rate of recidivism. The high rate of recidivism is contrary to the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services whose main focus is to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders into society. This shows the inadequacies of the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services system in equipping prison inmates with survival skills for post prison life as the offenders continue to reoffend.

The rehabilitation programmes in Zimbabwe prisons such as maize production, poultry, vegetable gardening and cattle ranching are mostly agriculturally oriented (Muchena, 2014; UNAFEI, 2007). Other rehabilitation programmes include academic education, technical courses such as carpentry, motor mechanics and welding. There is shortage of learning material and stationery for educational activities (Parliament of Zimbabwe Report, 2011) and therefore it is difficult to empower prison inmates educationally. Prison inmates fall behind with regards to their education as the prison conditions are not favourable for educational activities. The successful transition of offenders to society is possible through adequate provision of resources for rehabilitation and the lack of those resources hinders proper rehabilitation of offenders.

Diesel (2007) asserts that in most African prisons, rehabilitation programmes are focused on spiritual development, vocational training and educational development rather than behavioural and psychosocial aspects of rehabilitation. This is due to lack of professionals for psychosocial services and this impedes proper rehabilitation of prisoners and hence compromising the quality of rehabilitation. There are provisions for schooling, training or work opportunities for rehabilitation of offenders, yet no other psychosocial services are provided for (Diesel, 2007). The inadequacy of psychosocial services such as correctional counselling makes it difficult for prison inmates to obtain employment, maintain a stable residence (Clear, 2007) and hence they recidivate upon release from incarceration. Given this background the study would explore further on the following:

- What do prison inmates gain from rehabilitation programmes?
- Which procedures are followed when providing rehabilitation services in prisons?
- Are psychosocial services provided in prisons?



1.1 Statement of the problem

The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services provides various rehabilitation programmes to prison inmates in order to empower convicts to lead sustainable livelihood upon release from prison. Despite the involvement of offenders in rehabilitation programmes; still ex-convicts continue to commit new offences after incarceration and are rearrested, reconvicted and re-imprisoned for new offences, thus the rate of recidivism is rising.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study reviews literature related to rehabilitation programmes provided in correctional centres.

2.1 Gains Obtained from Rehabilitation Programmes in Prisons

Education is a vital tool in rehabilitating criminals and introducing them back into society (Austin & Hardyman, 2004). However, there is shortage of learning material and stationery for educational activities in prisons and thus it is difficult to empower prison inmates educationally (Parliament of Zimbabwe Report, 2011). The researcher views it vital that education and training programmes should be properly funded in order to effectively reduce recidivism among prisoners. It is vital that prison inmates are properly informed about vocational and educational activities (Tenibiaje, 2006) and thus they are enlightened on the value of vocational skills for self-sustenance as well as productive employment. Therefore, education is an important tool in transforming offenders from immoral behaviour to functional and productive persons upon release from prison.

Agriculturally oriented rehabilitation programmes such as maize production, poultry, vegetable gardening and cattle ranching, and technical courses such as carpentry, motor mechanics and welding are offered to prison inmates (Muchena, 2014) in an attempt to promote positive value system of prisoners to minimise recidivism (Samanyanga, 2005). Farm labour may serve as deterrence to recidivism as imprisonment in hard labour (Diesel, 2007); though it does little to change criminal behaviour as farm labour does not serve the purpose of rehabilitation. Prison inmates need to be trained in farming skills and receive farming certificates in order to transform and reintegrate them into society.

2.2 Procedures Followed When Providing Rehabilitation Services in Prisons

The Singapore Prison Service has an assessment framework conceptualised and designed to guide the prison in the assessment processes for prison inmates throughout their incarceration. The information gathered through assessment is used for educational, vocational, prisoner management and rehabilitation planning (Clear, 2007; Leo, 2014), hence appropriately matching prison inmates to suitable rehabilitation programmes. The assessment process identifies specific risk of reoffending, skills, abilities and behaviours that the offender will need to make a successful transition back into community (Andrews, Bomta & Wormith, 2006; Leo, 2014) and thus providing relevant treatment and management of offenders. The assessment process also ensures that quality is maintained through monitoring rehabilitation programmes in order to effectively reform and reintegrate ex-convicts into society.

The Botswana Prison Services trains and rehabilitates all classes of sentenced prisoners in skill and behaviour so that there is improvement in their social resettlement into the community upon release (Frongpon, 2001 cited in Diesel, 2007). The Kenyan Prison Services legislation states that every convicted prisoner is obliged to engage in useful programmes so that they learn new skills that can enable them to gain employment. Diesel (2007) states that Kenya Prison Services rehabilitation programmes are aimed at training, counselling and reforming prisoners. However, both the Botswana Prison Services and Kenya Prison Services do not state how they engage prisoners in rehabilitation programmes. The researcher observes that there are no assessment processes involved in rehabilitating prisoners, hence there are no monitoring instruments to quality assure the rehabilitation programmes. This is contrary to Zambia Prison Services where upon admission into prison, an offender is classified, allocated appropriate accommodation, assessed for form of training and labour (Report of the Auditor General on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Prisoners, 2014). The prison inmates are engaged in vocational skills training in order to reduce repeat offending and assist them to secure employment.

The ZPCS system lacks assessment of the rehabilitation programmes and thus the skills, abilities and behaviours of the offenders are not assessed in order to prepare them for reentry into society. There is no formal assessment done to appropriately match the needs of the offenders to the rehabilitation programmes available in the correctional centres (Samanyanga and Chigunwe, 2015). This calls for the support of the ZPCS system through standard practical activities (Rupande & Ndoro, 2014) to promote rehabilitation of offenders.

2.3 Psychosocial Services Provision in Prisons

The provision of psychological services in prisons helps enhance prison inmates' well-being and thus promoting rehabilitation and reintegration (Diesel, 2007). Psychosocial therapeutic programmes include behaviour modification, follow-up of offenders after



release to check how they are coping and home visits before they are released in order to reconnect with their families upon release (Diesel, 2007). Psychosocial services assist in moulding positive behaviour of inmates. Correctional counselling assists offenders balance their important relations, understand and overcome their internal and external conflicts through developing more accurate social cognitions about themselves and others (Sun, 2005). The provision of correctional counselling services in prisons focuses on assisting offenders deal with interpersonal conflicts, adjustment disorders and depression due to loss of freedom through being thrust into a threatening environment. Hence psychosocial services focus more on rehabilitation and less on punishment (Gatotoh, Omulema & Nassiuma, 2011; Wendy, 2014). Punishment breeds hardcore criminals (Roberts, 2008) and thus rehabilitation aims to reduce recidivism, targeting criminogenic offender characteristics by equipping offenders with survival skills for post prison life.

Counselling is an important tool for rehabilitating an offender through behaviour change (Gatotoh, et al., 2011; UNDOC, 2012). Counselling assists prison inmates to establish and maintain healthy family relationships (Austin & Hardyman, 2004), and thus offenders understand the thinking processes associated with their criminal behaviour. Counselling services assist prison inmates to effect change in their behaviour processes through acquiring ability to enhance their functioning, live a more productive and self-satisfying life. Counselling is an educative tool as offenders are taught about the importance of rehabilitation programmes, explaining fully the aims of rehabilitation programmes prior to prison inmates taking part (Makarios, Steiner & Travis, 2010). Correctional counselling helps restore hope and confidence among prison inmates as they engage in rehabilitation programmes.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a counselling strategy which aims to bring behavioural change by addressing cognitions, or ideas, attitudes and beliefs and values of an individual (Clark, 2010; Milkman & Wanberg, 2007). The programmes based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy involve cognitive skills training, cognitive restructuring, social skills training, anger management, life skills training, moral development and relapse prevention (Lipsey, Landenberger, & Wilson, 2007; Tenibiaje, 2010). The CBT addresses the offender's distorted social cognition, disturbing behaviour, that led to their violation of the law, which tend to regulate their antisocial behaviour (Milkman & Wanberg, 2007; Sun, 2005). The CBT addresses the offender's criminal actions; hence it is useful in breaking defense mechanisms in order for the offender to develop practical and more fulfilling options to deal with his or her challenges. Therefore, the CBT approach is useful to rehabilitate offenders in order for them to develop positive attitudes towards rehabilitation programmes and thus transforming and equipping them with survival skills. The training of correctional officers through incorporation of correctional counselling helps equip them with requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes for prison inmates through use of CBT (Gatotoh, 2011). The CBT perspective is that behaviour is learnt and therefore it can be unlearned.

4. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a descriptive research design to collect data using questionnaire and interview schedule. The researcher used a descriptive research design to gather respondents' views on the role of rehabilitation programmes in curbing recidivism in Zimbabwe prisons. The study used purposive sampling and snow balling methods to collect data from prison officers and recidivists.

5. ANALYSES OF RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 1: Distribution of recidivists by times they have been imprisoned (N=10)

Times they have been imprisoned	Frequency	Percentage %
1	2	20
2	6	60
3	2	20
Total	10	100

Table 1 indicates that twenty percent (20%) of the recidivists were imprisoned once, sixty percent (60%) had been imprisoned twice and twenty percent (20%) had been in jail three times.



Table 2: Distribution of recidivists by engagement in rehabilitation programmes (N=10)

Engagement in rehabilitation programmes	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	4	40
No	6	60
Total	10	100

Table 2 indicates that forty percent (40%) of the repeat offenders had been engaged in rehabilitation programmes while the majority sixty percent (60%) had not been engaged in rehabilitation programmes. These study findings clearly show that most of the ex-convicts were released from prison without having been rehabilitated and thus they have high chances of repeating criminal activities.

Table 3: Distribution of prison officers by considerations taken when enrolling prisoners in rehabilitation programmes (N=10)

Considerations taken	Frequency	Percentage %
Assess prisoners' abilities	7	70
Counsel prisoners to realise the benefits	1	10
Length of sentence being served	2	20
Total	10	100

The majority of prison officers 7(70%) stated that they assessed prisoners' abilities before enrolling them in rehabilitation programmes. However, the interview results show that prison officers randomly selected offenders to engage in rehabilitation programmes. There were no clear criteria used in the selection of prison inmates to engage in rehabilitation programmes. Offenders were handpicked and are not matched to suitable rehabilitation programmes due to lack of proper assessment. The prison officers did not use standard assessment instruments when engaging prison inmates in rehabilitation programmes as those instruments do not exist in the Zimbabwe prison system. Counselling activities aimed at assisting prisoners realise the benefits of rehabilitation programmes 1(10%) are very minimal. 2(20%) of the prison officers stated that they considered the length of sentence being served by the prisoners. These findings reveal that counselling as an educative tool is minimally used to teach offenders about the importance of rehabilitation programmes, prior to prison inmates taking part in the rehabilitation programmes (Makarios, Steiner & Travis, 2010). Furthermore, Tenibiaje (2006) points out that it is vital that prison inmates are properly informed about vocational and educational activities and thus they are enlightened on the value of vocational skills for self-sustenance as well as productive employment. Offenders need to be informed about the existing rehabilitation programmes in order for them to make well informed choices on the skills training areas they would engage in.

Table 4: Form of training prisoners were engaged in (N=10)

Form of training	Frequency	Percentage %
Moral development	2	20
Maize production	3	30
Vegetable gardening	5	50
Total	10	100

Very few prisoners 2(20%) were engaged in moral development. 3(30%) of the recidivists were engaged in maize production while 5(50%) were engaged in vegetable gardening. These research results show that the form of training the convicts were engaged in is more agriculturally oriented; and thus do not cover other skills training areas such as cognitive behaviour management, welding, motor maintenance, carpentry and other vocational skills training areas. The responses obtained from the interviews held with respondents indicate that the rehabilitation programmes vary from one prison station to another prison. The results concur with Samanyanga & Chigunwe (2015)'s research findings that the rehabilitation programmes provided in Zimbabwe prisons are unique for each prison; and



thus they are not standard across the nation. The researcher observed that most prison officers are in the general section and so they do general duties; and hence they are not specially trained in rehabilitation treatment programmes.

Table 5: Skills gained from rehabilitation programmes (N=10)

Skills gained	Frequency	Percentage %
Farming	5	50
Social	3	30
Life	2	20
Total	10	100

Most of the recidivists 5(50%) gained farming skills. 3(30%) of the recidivists gained some social skills while 2(20%) also gained life skills. These study findings indicate that recidivists gain minimal skills through the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. However, it should be noted that the offenders' distorted social cognition, disturbing behaviour, that led to their violation of the law, are not fully addressed in prisons (Milkman & Wanberg, 2007; Sun, 2005) hence ex-convicts reoffend after release from imprisonment. The findings of this study also noted that rehabilitation programmes focus much on farming which is more inclined to punishment in the form of prison labour than the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy aimed at correcting irrational thoughts of offenders to rational thoughts. The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy helps prison inmates understand the value and benefits of engaging in rehabilitation programmes. However; the study findings do not concur with research findings from (Lipse, Landenberger, & Wilson, 2007; Tenibiaje, 2010), as the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is not fully applied in the Zimbabwe prison rehabilitation programmes. Therefore; prison inmates lack training on cognitive skills, cognitive restructuring, social skills, anger management skills, life skills, moral development and relapse prevention to deal with antisocial behaviour.

Table 6: Prisoners' needs not fully met by Zimbabwe prison system

Needs not met	Frequency	Percentage %
Employment and vocational	8	80
Psychosocial	7	70
Health	7	70
Learning	6	60
Life skills	6	60
Career guidance	6	60

The majority of recidivists 8(80%) indicated that their employment and vocational needs were not met. 7(70%) of the respondents reported that their psychosocial needs were not properly addressed during their engagement in rehabilitation programmes. The health needs of repeat offenders 7(70%) were also not fully attended to by the Zimbabwe prison system. Learning needs 6(60%), life skills needs 6(60%) and career guidance needs 6(60%) were all not fully met. When these needs are unmet offenders are likely to commit new crimes as they attempt to meet their socio-economic needs (Muchena, 2014). These findings reveal that the Zimbabwe prison system puts less emphasis on why recidivists should engage in rehabilitation programmes, the benefits realised through engaging in rehabilitation programmes as well as why offenders should maintain the newly acquired positive behaviours. According to Diesel (2007) offenders need psychological services in order to enhance their mental health and emotional well being. This means that psychological services assist prisoners establish and maintain healthy relationships as well as productive lives. However, psychologically the offenders are not appropriately skilled to manage the challenges in the prevailing socio-economic environment in Zimbabwe as they fail to find employment and thus they commit new crimes. Some offenders do not receive certificates in the skills training areas they were trained in and thus they have limited chances in finding employment. The study established that offenders were now receiving certificates in the various trades they trained in and this enhances the ex-convicts' chances of getting employment after serving prison sentences.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that counselling services are minimally used to teach offenders about the importance of rehabilitation programmes, before they take part in the rehabilitation programmes. The Zimbabwe prison system has no formal assessment



procedure to match the needs of the offenders to the rehabilitation programmes available in the correctional centres. Most prison officers are not specially trained in rehabilitation treatment programmes and thus there is lack of psychosocial services. The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is not fully applied in Zimbabwe prisons rehabilitation programmes. Offenders are not properly trained in cognitive behavioural management skills and thus they are not psychologically prepared to deal with antisocial behaviours.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- There is need to increase counselling services such that they more accessible to offenders and thus assisting offenders to see the value as well as realise the benefits gained from engaging in rehabilitation programmes.
- The Zimbabwe prison system should use standard assessment instruments to match the needs of the offenders to the rehabilitation programmes. This enables the Zimbabwe prison system to quality assure its rehabilitation programmes.
- The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services should employ specially trained officers and or equip prison officers with rehabilitation and correctional skills through staff development courses and in-service training in order to manage the needs of offenders under rehabilitation treatment programmes. The Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is not fully applied in Zimbabwe prisons rehabilitation programmes hence the need for specialist services.
- The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services should rigorously expand its psychosocial services in order for prisoners to mould positive behaviours understand and resolve internal and external conflicts in a productive manner.

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