

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK



**THE EFFICACY OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAM IN CURBING RECIDIVISM
RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE.A CASE OF MANDIPA HOPE
REHABILITATION CENTRE, HARARE.**

B200532B

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN
SOCIAL WORK.**

MAY 2024

PLAGIARISM REPORT

WAYNE KATSIDZIRA FINAL DISSERTATION.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

7 %	5 %	2 %	2 %
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1 %
2	"Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2014 Publication	1 %
3	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	<1 %
4	etd.uwc.ac.za Internet Source	<1 %
5	"International Handbook of Juvenile Justice", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2017 Publication	<1 %
6	www.coursehero.com Internet Source	<1 %
7	www.judcom.nsw.gov.au Internet Source	<1 %
8	educationdocbox.com Internet Source	<1 %

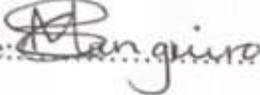
APPROVAL FORM

Supervisor

I, DR. MANGWIRO V.P., hereby declare that I have supervised **Katsidzira Wayne** in their research on the topic. 'The efficacy of Pre-trial diversion program in curbing recidivism rates among child offenders in Zimbabwe. A case of Mandipa Hope rehabilitation Centre, Harare'.

I confirm that **Katsidzira Wayne** has completed this research under my guidance and supervision and that the research has been conducted in accordance with the ethical and academic standards of Bindura University of Science Education.

I declare that I have reviewed and approved the final draft of this research and that it is ready for submission and examination.

Signature:  Date: 13/06/2024

Chairperson

I,....., Chairperson of the Department of Social Work, hereby declare that the research proposal submitted by **Katsidzira Wayne** on the topic "The Efficacy of Pre-Trial Diversion Programs in Curbing Recidivism Rates among Child Offenders in Zimbabwe" has been approved.

I confirm that the proposal has been reviewed and found to meet the department's academic and ethical standards.

Signature.....Date.....

DECLARATION

I, **Katsidzira Wayne**, hereby declare that this research on "The efficacy of Pre-Trial Diversion program in curbing recidivism rates among child offenders in Zimbabwe" is my original work and has been completed under the supervision of **Dr. V.P. Mangwiro**.

I confirm that I have conducted this research in accordance with the ethical and academic standards of Bindura University of Science Education and that I have properly acknowledged all sources of information and assistance.

Signed: Date:

Katsidzira W.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, **Stephen Masamvu** for the unwavering support through my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, **Dr. V.P Mangwiro**, for their exceptional guidance, support and expertise throughout this research journey. Their unwavering commitment to my academic growth and development has been a constant source of inspiration and motivation. Their insightful feedback, probing questions and encouragement have helped shape my ideas, refine my methodology and strengthen my arguments. I am grateful for the countless hours they devoted to our supervision meetings, always willing to lend a listening ear and offer sage advice.

I am also deeply indebted to **Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre** for providing me with the opportunity to conduct this research at their facility. The insights and experiences gained from working with the center's staff and participants have been invaluable, offering a unique window into the world of pre-trial diversion programs and their impact on child offenders. I appreciate the trust placed in me and the access granted to conduct this research, which has greatly enriched my understanding of the topic.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to **Dr. L. Zinyemba**, the dissertation coordinator at Bindura University of Science Education, for their oversight and guidance throughout the dissertation process. Their expertise, wisdom and patience have helped navigate the complexities of the dissertation journey, ensuring that I remained on track and met the required standards.

I would also like to thank my family member for their unwavering support, encouragement and patience. Their love and belief in me have been a constant source of strength and motivation, helping me push through the challenges and setbacks that inevitably arise during a research project

of this magnitude. Their sacrifices, understanding and enthusiasm have meant the world to me, and I am forever grateful.

Last but not least, I thank **God** for his divine guidance, wisdom and grace which have seen me through the ups and downs of this research. His presence has been a constant source of comfort, peace and inspiration, enabling me to stay focused, resilient and committed to my goals. This dissertation would not have been possible without the contributions of these individuals and institutions and I am forever grateful for their support, guidance and trust.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe, using the Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre as a case study. A qualitative study employing a quasi-experimental design was conducted with 13 participants, including 10 juvenile offenders and 3 key informants. Data was collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The findings suggest that pre-trial diversion programs are effective in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. Specifically, counseling and life skills training were identified as crucial services in fostering positive behavior change and addressing the underlying causes of delinquency. These results highlight the importance of providing targeted support to young offenders to promote rehabilitation and reduce recidivism rates. Four key objectives guided the research and these are; to identify pre-trial diversion services in Zimbabwe, to investigate the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe in reducing recidivism among child offenders, to explore the challenges faced by Mandipa Hope rehabilitation and to determine the measures that can be put in place to reduce recidivism among child offenders. However, the study acknowledged challenges like resource constraints, legal hurdles and a lack of public awareness. Additionally, the study drew upon labeling theory and reintegrative shaming theory, likely to explore the potential impact of the program on how juveniles are perceived by society and the importance of reintegration without permanent stigmatization. The study's recommendations included increased stakeholder collaboration, legal reforms, improved resource allocation and public awareness campaigns. Decentralizing services and enacting the Child Justice Bill were also highlighted as crucial steps. Overall, this research found that pre-trial diversion programs, when implemented effectively and

informed by a rights-based approach, can be a valuable tool for rehabilitating juvenile offenders and reducing recidivism rates among child offenders in Zimbabwe.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
CBT	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
JSC	Judicial Service Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
PO	Probation Officer
PTCS	Pre-Trial Community Service
PTD	Pre-Trial Diversion
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
VFU	Victim Friendly Unit
VOM	Victim-Offender Mediation
ZHRC	Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission
ZNCWC	Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children

ZNCWC

Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children

ZRP

Zimbabwe Republic Police

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

PLAGIARISM REPORT	i
APPROVAL FORM	ii
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xviii
CHAPTER 1.....	18
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	18
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	18
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	2
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	6
1.4 AIM.....	7
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	7
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	8

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS	8
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	9
1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	10
1.10 DELIMITATIONS	11
1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	11
1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE	12
1.13 CONCLUSION	13
CHAPTER 2.....	13
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	13
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	14
2.2.1 THE REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY	14
2.2.2. THE RELEVANCE OF THE REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY	16
2.2.3 LABELING THEORY.....	18
2.2.4 THE RELEVANCE OF THE LABELING THEORY	19
2.3 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES OFFERED TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM	20
2.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM.....	25
2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY REHABILITATION CENTERS DEALING WITH CHILD OFFENDERS	29

2.6 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS.....	35
2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	40
CHAPTER 3.....	41
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	41
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	41
3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	41
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	42
3.4 TARGET POPULATION	43
3.5 SAMPLE SIZE.....	43
3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	44
3.6.1 Purposive sampling	44
3.6.2 Convenience sampling	45
3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	46
3.7.1 Face to face interviews.....	46
3.7.2 Focus group discussions.....	47
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION.....	47
3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	50
3.9.1 Informed consent.....	50
3.9.2 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.....	51

3.9.3 Voluntary participation	51
3.10 ASSUMPTIONS	51
3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	52
3.12 DELIMITATIONS	53
3.13 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	53
3.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY	54
CHAPTER 4.....	55
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....	55
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	55
4.2 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	55
4.3 QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION	59
4.4 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE.....	59
4.4.1 Counselling.....	60
4.4.2 Therapy.....	61
4.4.3 Individualized treatment plans	61
4.4.4 Reparation or compensation.....	63
4.4.5 Mediation	64
4.4.6 Police cautions.....	64
4.4.7 Community service	65

4.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS IN ZIMBABWE IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS	66
4.5.1 Attitude and behavior change.....	66
4.5.2 Skills development	67
4.5.3 Fostering optimism.....	68
4.5.4 Addressing underlying causes of criminal activities.....	69
4.5.5 Family reconciliation.....	69
4.5.6 Equipping children with tools for positive change.....	70
4.5.7 Awareness raising	71
4.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY MANDIPA HOPE REHABILITATION	72
4.6.1 Navigating Program Structure and Expectations	72
4.6.2 Psychological Barriers to Self-Disclosure	73
4.6.3 Reintegration and social support.....	73
4.6.4 Programmatic and resource constraints.....	74
4.6.4.1 <i>Limited trust and rapport</i>	74
4.6.4.2 <i>Lack of coordination</i>	75
4.6.4.3 <i>Infrastructure and material resources</i>	75
4.6.4.4 <i>Limited diversion options</i>	76
4.6.4.5 <i>Ineffective monitoring and evaluation</i>	77
4.6.4.6 <i>Lack of co-operation</i>	77

4.6.5 Technological challenges	78
4.6.6 Legal uncertainties	78
4.6.6.1 Unavailability of Identity Validation Documents.....	78
4.6.7 Misconceptions.....	79
4.6.7.1 Beliefs and Perceptions about Juvenile Delinquency and its Causes	79
4.6.7.2 Lack of knowledge.....	80
4.7 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE.....	81
4.7.1 Post-Program Support Services.....	81
4.7.2 Mentorship Programs	82
4.7.3 Family Involvement and Therapy	82
4.7.4 Religious support.....	83
4.7.5 Providing thorough assessments	83
4.6.6 Enhance collaboration and communication:	84
4.7.7 Collaboration and Co-operation.....	85
4.7.8 Allocating resources to stakeholder	86
4.7.9 Expediting the process of harmonization and enactment of Bills into Law	86
4.7.10 Raising Awareness	87
4.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	87
4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY	99

CHAPTER 5.....	101
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	101
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	101
5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	101
5.2.1 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE.....	101
5.2.2 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS IN ZIMBABWE IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE.	102
5.2.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY MANDIPA HOPE REHABILITATION	104
5.2.4 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE.....	105
5.3 CONCLUSIONS.....	105
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	106
5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	109
REFERENCES.....	110
APPENDICES.....	114
APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM	114
APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH LETTER	115
APPENDIX 3: APPROVAL LETTER.....	116
APPENDIX 4: INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILD OFFENDERS	117
APPENDIX 5: INDEPTH INTEVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS.....	117

APPENDIX 6: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDE	118
---	-----

LIST OF TABLES

4.2.1 Table 1. A table presenting the total count of individuals who participated in the research.	56
4.2.2 Table 2. A table showing experiences of the participants	57

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Pretrial diversion is a way of assisting young people who have committed crimes. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines a child as any human being under the age of 18, unless the child reaches majority earlier under the relevant legislation. Similarly, Zimbabwe's Children's Act (Chapter 5:06) of 1972 defines a child as a person under the age of 18. Therefore, instead of going to court and facing criminal charges, children, under this program,

are referred to special services that can assist them in getting back on track. These services include counselling, job trainings and education. Zimbabwe's pre-trial diversion program for juvenile offenders began in 2009 as a pilot initiative supported by the United Nations International Children Emergency Funds (UNICEF) and Save the Children Organization. This pilot program prepared the way for the program's formal nationwide debut in 2016. According to the research by ational Association of Pretrial Service Agencies (NAPSA), pretrial diversion can be an effective way to reduce recidivism which is the rate at which young people commit new crimes after being released from custody. According to the reports by UNICEF in 2018, young people who were diverted were less likely to recidivate than those who were not. Pretrial diversion can help young people avoid the negative consequences of a criminal record, which is one of its advantages. A criminal record can make it difficult to obtain employment, housing or education. As a result, pretrial diversion can assist young people in remaining connected to their families and communities. Overall, pretrial diversion appears to be a promising strategy for reducing recidivism among young offenders. It is important to note that the effectiveness of pretrial diversion can vary depending on the specific program and the characteristics of the young people involved which is why this research is so important.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Globally, Pre-Trial Diversion programs for juvenile offenders are experiencing recognition and implementation as countries recognize the importance of addressing juvenile delinquency through rehabilitative rather than punitive interventions. These programs, which differ in structure and approach across countries, all have the same goal, which is to divert young people away from the traditional criminal justice system and toward appropriate support services that promote rehabilitation, reintegration and the prevention of future criminal involvement. Pre-Trial Diversion

programs in various nations are based on restorative justice principles which emphasize repairing harm, promoting accountability and addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior. These programs seek to address factors such as substance abuse, mental health issues, family dynamics, and educational deficiencies that may contribute to delinquency by taking a more holistic and unique approach to juvenile justice. The United States has led the way in implementing Pre-Trial Diversion programs for juvenile offenders. For instance, Juvenile Diversion Programs and Teen Courts provide alternatives to formal court proceedings by allowing young offenders to participate in community service, counseling, and educational programs. Participation in these programs has been shown in many studies to reduce recidivism rates and improve outcomes in terms of educational attainment, employment and overall well-being (Mulvey et al., 2013).

Countries in Europe, including Netherlands, Germany and Sweden, have also adopted Pre-Trial Diversion strategies for young offenders. Community-based interventions, educational programs, counseling and restorative justice practices are frequently used in these programs. Evaluations of these initiatives have shown positive results, such as lower recidivism rates and improved reintegration into society (Junger-Tas et al., 2015). Through its conventions and guidelines, the United Nations has played a significant role in promoting the use of Pre-Trial Diversion programs for child offenders on a global scale. For example, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines) emphasize diversion as a key principle for avoiding unnecessary involvement of children in the criminal justice system. The aforementioned guidelines encourage member countries to develop and improve diversionary measures, emphasizing the significance of individualized interventions and restorative justice approaches.

Regionally, Pre-Trial Diversion programs for child offenders have shown promise in reducing recidivism and promoting rehabilitation in a number of African countries. While the implementation and efficacy of these programs varies by country, there are notable examples of successful diversion initiatives on the continent. Pre-Trial Diversion programs have been implemented in South Africa in order to address the needs of child offenders and reduce their involvement in the formal criminal justice system. Diversion is emphasized as an important principle in the country's Child Justice Act of 2008, which promotes the use of community-based interventions and restorative justice approaches (Skelton & Sekhonyane, 2016). A study by Steinberg in 2011 which was titled "Diversion in the South African child justice system", have shown that these diversion programs have been effective in reducing recidivism rates among young offenders in South Africa. Similarly, the "Criminal Justice Diversion and the Importance of Program Retention" study (2022) highlighted the importance of program retention in reducing recidivism rates among diverted youth. Assessments of these programs have revealed positive results, such as lower recidivism rates and better reintegration into society (Skelton, 2010). Kenya has also acknowledged the significance of diversion in juvenile justice. Diversionary measures and alternative sentencing options are provided for child offenders under the Children's Act of 2001. In order to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, the country has implemented programs such as the Juvenile Diversion Program, which focuses on counseling, family support, and educational programs. According to Mulongo (2016), research evaluating these initiatives has shown promising results in terms of reduced recidivism rates and improved social outcomes for participants. Diversion programs were also developed in Uganda to meet the needs of juvenile offenders and promote their reintegration into society. The Juvenile Justice Act of 2003 in the country offers diversion as a means of avoiding formal court proceedings for minor offenses

committed by children. Community-based interventions, counseling and skill development programs are frequently included in these diversion programs. Favorable results have been demonstrated in evaluations, including lower reoffending rates and improved educational and vocational outcomes for participants (Wakida, 2017). While implementation and effectiveness vary by country, successful examples from South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, and other African countries show the potential of diversion initiatives. Therefore, African countries have the capacity to reduce recidivism rates, promote successful reintegration, and ensure the well-being of young offenders in their justice systems by addressing the specific needs of child offenders, providing appropriate interventions and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

In the context of Zimbabwe, Pre-Trial Diversion is governed by the Children's Act (Chapter 5:06), which defines it as the process by which a child offender is diverted from the criminal justice system and referred to a community-based rehabilitation program. The Act further outlines the criteria that must be met by a child offender in order for them to be eligible for Pre-Trial Diversion, that is, if a child offender meets all of the eligibility criteria, the police or the court will then refer them to a Pre-Trial Diversion program. The Pre-Trial Diversion program will then develop a rehabilitation plan for the child offender, which may include counseling, educational programs and job training. Pre-Trial Diversion aims to reduce recidivism by providing child offenders with the support and resources they need to address the root causes of their criminal behavior (National Institute of Justice, 2019).

Currently, there is a growing body of research indicating that Pre-Trial Diversion can be an effective way to reduce recidivism rates among child offenders. According to a 2019 study conducted by the United States' National Institute of Justice, Pre-Trial Diversion programs are associated with a 25% reduction in recidivism rates when compared to traditional criminal justice

processing. The study also discovered that Pre-Trial Diversion programs were especially effective for child offenders who had mental health issues. Despite the evidence of its effectiveness, Pre-Trial Diversion is not widely used in Zimbabwe, according to a 2022 study conducted by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, which found that only 5% of child offenders were diverted to Pre-Trial Diversion programs in 2021. As a result, this dissertation will investigate the effectiveness of Pre-Trial Diversion in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. The dissertation will draw on a variety of sources such as empirical research, government reports and expert interviews to come up with a valid conclusion.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recidivism, or the re-offending of people who were previously convicted of a crime, is a major issue in Zimbabwe with child offenders. The rate of recidivism for child offenders is 45%, according to a 2021 report by the Zimbabwe Prison and Correctional Services (ZPCS). This is higher than the general population's recidivism rate of 30%. Furthermore, a study conducted by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds (UNICEF) in 2022 discovered that more than 70% of Zimbabwean child offenders repeat their crimes within two years of their release (UNICEF, 2022). Therefore, child offending and recidivism is a significant social and legal issue because it affects not only the lives of the children involved but also has broader implications for public safety, juvenile rehabilitation and the use of scarce resources within the criminal justice system (Mangwiro & Chitereka, 2021).

Pre-trial diversion is a program designed to reduce recidivism by diverting juvenile offenders away from the formal criminal justice system and into rehabilitation programs. It typically combines counseling, education and vocational training. In Zimbabwe, the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders is not yet clear since there is no

comprehensive research concerning this issue. The Zimbabwe National Council for Children (ZNCC) discovered in a 2020 study that pre-trial diversion programs were effective in reducing recidivism among child offenders (ZNCC, 2020). However, because the study was limited in size and scope, more research is needed to determine its effectiveness.

Despite the introduction of various pre-trial diversion initiatives and programs aimed at diverting juvenile offenders away from traditional court processes, there is a lack of comprehensive research to determine the impact on recidivism rates among child offenders. As a result, the purpose of this research is to look into the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe, with a focus on their ability to reduce recidivism rates among child offenders. It will look at the various pre-trial diversion initiatives that are currently in place, their goals, implementation and overall impact on the reintegration and rehabilitation of child offenders into society. Therefore, this study seeks to provide useful insights into whether pre-trial diversion is an effective method for addressing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe by conducting a thorough examination of existing programs and their outcomes.

1.4 AIM

The main aim of the study is to examine the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders in Zimbabwe.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the Pre-Trial Diversion Services in Zimbabwe.
2. To investigate the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders.
3. To explore the challenges faced by Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation.

4. To determine the measures that can be put in place to reduce recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research is going to be guided by the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe and the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing it?
2. What are the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe?
3. What are the recommendations for improving the implementation of pre-trial diversion in Zimbabwe?
4. What types of pre-trial diversion programs are most effective in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe?

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

Among other things, there is an assumption that Pre-trial diversion programs are effective in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders. This is a general assumption that is supported by research from other countries. However, more research is needed to confirm the efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe specifically. Another assumption is that Pre-trial diversion programs are implemented effectively in Zimbabwe. This assumption is important because the efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs depends on how they are implemented. Another assumption is that the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe are similar to the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in other countries. This assumption is important because the research on pre-trial diversion programs has identified a number of specific factors that are associated with a reduction in recidivism rates. If the factors

that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe are different from the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in other countries, then the research on pre-trial diversion programs from other countries may not be generalizable to Zimbabwe. In addition, researchers also assume that child offenders in Zimbabwe are willing to participate in pre-trial diversion programs. This assumption is important because pre-trial diversion programs are voluntary. If child offenders in Zimbabwe are not willing to participate in these programs, then they will not be effective in reducing recidivism rates.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research is significant because it provides important insights into the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in reducing recidivism among Zimbabwean child offenders. According to Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (2020), such data is currently limited and the study contributes to closing this research gap. This demonstrates whether pre-trial diversion is an appropriate method for addressing recidivism among Zimbabwean child offenders, thereby informing decisions about resource allocation and the development of new programs and initiatives (ZPCS, 2021). The study's ability to examine the various pre-trial diversion initiatives in place in Zimbabwe, their objectives, implementation, and overall impact on the reintegration and rehabilitation of child offenders into society is also significant. This data can be used to guide policy and practice decisions aimed at improving the juvenile justice system and lowering recidivism rates among juvenile offenders. This means that the study has the potential to improve the lives of child offenders in Zimbabwe while also contributing to the improvement of the juvenile justice system. In addition to the foregoing, this research is significant because it can help enhance the lives of child offenders and their families by providing an in-depth analysis of the factors associated with child recidivism in Zimbabwe, providing insights for policymakers, practitioners,

and stakeholders, thus aiding in the reduction of crime and the improvement of public safety. Finally, the study also gives social workers evidence-based best practices and successful treatments which help them to make well-informed decisions and offer focused treatments to help juvenile offenders in overcoming obstacles and have great life outcomes.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are many limitations to the research of pre-trial diversion's effectiveness in lowering recidivism rates among Zimbabwean minor offenders. One drawback is the absence of research on this issue in Zimbabwe. A few studies have been completed, but additional research is needed to establish the success of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe and uncover the precise characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness. Another drawback is the difficulty in carrying out randomized controlled studies of pre-trial diversion programs. This is due to the unethical practice of randomly assigning young offenders to either a pre-trial diversion program or a standard criminal justice procedure. As a result, researchers must use quasi-experimental designs, which are less stringent than randomized controlled trials. Furthermore, a variety of variables can impact recidivism, including family ties, academic achievement, and drug usage. It can be impossible to control for all of these variables in research studies, making it difficult to separate the effect of pre-trial diversion programs on recidivism rates from all other influencing factors. Finally, it is critical to understand that pre-trial diversion programs are not a one-size-fits-all answer. The efficacy of these programs may differ based on the juvenile offenders' individual needs and the resources available to administer them.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS

Delimitations are the limits that are set around a study, such as the scope of the study, the population being investigated, and the variables being assessed (Creswell (2014)). The limitations of a study are often dictated by the researcher's resources, time restrictions, and the specific research topics that the researcher is attempting to address. The first research restriction is its breadth. This study is confined to Harare Metropolitan Province geographical area. The research focuses on juvenile offenders of a specific age, gender, or criminal category. Finally, the study focuses on a specific collection of data, being recidivism rates, demographic features, and risk factors for recidivism.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Pretrial diversion – West Virginia Senate Bill 191 (2023) defines pre-trial diversion (PTD) as a program in which a person convicted for a certain crime is permitted to take part in a program of supervision and services in a place of prosecution.

Recidivism – Recidivism is the act of a person repeating an undesirable behavior or a crime after they have experienced negative consequences of it or have been warned to stay away from it (National Institute of Justice, 2023)

Rehabilitation –rehabilitation is a process that helps people recover from harm or illness and redeem their strength and flexibility.

Child – a child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years according to the constitution of Zimbabwe.

Efficacy- the capability of something to produce the desired result or effect.

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

This chapter presents the study and provides the background information, aim, research questions and research objectives, statement of the problem and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter delivers the relevant literature regarding pre-trial diversion and recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe, a theoretical framework and a conceptual framework strengthening the study. It also indicates on the research gap which the study aims to fill.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter provides the methodology that guided the study. It also focuses on the research design, sampling techniques, data collection methods and tools, data analysis, ethical guidelines, limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis

The chapter is focused on the provision of the research's findings, analysis and discussion of the findings in line with the qualitative method.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

This is the final chapter of the study as it gives the summary, conclusions and offers the measures that can be put in place to reduce recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe.

1.13 CONCLUSION

The chapter has been able to present the research study and hypothesize the study targeting how the pre-trial diversion program is helping in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe and also finding the measures that can be put in place in order to curb recidivism. This chapter also draws on the aim of the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions and the significance of the study for the benefit of the university, government, Non-Governmental Organizations and the private sector, all of whom work with juveniles, policy fraternity and most importantly to the social workers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims to provide a review of the literature on the efficacy of pretrial diversion in curbing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. The process of finding, evaluating, and synthesizing published research articles and opinion pieces relevant to a certain issue is known as a literature review ((Borg and Gall, 1998). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995), a literature review helps the research's theoretical framework become more precise and in-depth by examining the many theories that are relevant to the subject and, where feasible, adopting an

interdisciplinary viewpoint. Furthermore, a thorough understanding of the theoretical foundations of the research enables the researcher to better present the issue being studied. By examining the existing research, the researcher critically analyzes and evaluates the published materials in order to determine current knowledge on the issue at hand and subsequently generate new knowledge. Thus, frameworks that are theoretical as well as empirical will be looked at.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical basis of this study draws from a number of theories, but this study utilizes the Reintegration Shaming and the Labeling Theories as its theoretical framework. According to the Reintegrative Shaming theory (RST) , shame may be a force for good in the community if it is applied in a way that keeps the offender's social ties intact and makes them feel like they belong to that community (Braithwaite, 1989). Programs for pre-trial diversion can be viewed as a means of assisting young offenders in returning to their communities and avoiding the detrimental effects of the criminal justice system. The Labeling Theory offers another foundation for the study. According to this hypothesis, society's reaction to a person's behavior has an important influence on their actions in the future. It clarifies that if the justice system condemns and labels children as criminals at a young age, it could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy that ends up resulting in higher rates of re-offending. These theories are discussed in detail below.

2.2.1 THE REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY

This theory was developed by a well-established sociologist and criminologist, John Braithwaite, in the book “Crime, Shame and Reintegration” which was published in 1989. Braithwaite’s research was mainly focused on how shame promotes integration of offenders into the society and

avoid future crimes. This research had a significant role in influencing criminology and restorative justice practices all over the world.

According to this theory by Braithwaite, it is important to shame child offenders while giving them chances and assisting them to get back into the society rather than just portraying them in a negative view and permanently stigmatizing them. Accountability, societal ties and support in avoiding future crimes are the main focus of the theory. The reintegrative shaming theory suggests that juvenile offenders are less likely to commit crimes in the future if they are reintegrated into the society through processes and services that encourage empathy, support and aftercare (Braithwaite, 1989). Pre-trial diversion according to this theory, is very useful as it reduces recidivism by articulating criticism in the societies for juvenile offenders' behaviors and actions, while still supporting them and give them room for positive change by redirecting them away from the traditional court systems to the rehabilitative services. By addressing the root causes of criminal activities through vocational programs, educational programs and community-based support services, the pre-trial diversion program abides by the principles of reintegrative shaming theory.

This reintegrative shaming theory is very significant in understanding the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion services in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe as it shows the importance of reintegrating child offenders into the society or community while preventing them from being negatively labeled and stigmatized permanently (Braithwaite,1989). The prevention of permanent criticism and stigmatization of child offenders after being involved in criminal activities is the main issue that is emphasizes by this theory and the pre-trial diversion program also supports this theory by redirecting child offenders from formal court proceedings to diversion services. This approach lowers the negative consequences of shame which may prevent effective reintegration of child offenders into the community and also reduces the chances of re-offending in the future.

Moreover, studies have demonstrated that reintegrative shaming principles aligned with restorative justice tactics effectively reduce recidivism (Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005). According to this theory, juvenile offenders confront the victims of their criminal activities as well as other people of the community. Therefore, it is then recommended that during that session, juvenile offenders acknowledge the harm that their acts have caused and take responsibility of it. It is important to note that while the community denounces this behavior, the community also offers guidance and support to help the offender reintegrate into the community without being stigmatized. Therefore, this method of shaming encourages accountability and positive transformation while attempting to reintegrate convicts into the society.

Putting in place the reintegrative shaming theory can assist policy makers and well as some practitioners to get more comprehension on dealing with juvenile offenders while further research is needed on the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2014), these initiatives can contribute to the total well-being and effective restoration of child offenders by putting emphasis of transparency, reintegration and assistance.

2.2.2. THE RELEVANCE OF THE REINTEGRATIVE SHAMING THEORY

The effectiveness of the pre-trial services in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe is better comprehended when it is being examined through the shaming reintegrative theory. John Braithwaite, in his theory, put emphasis on the fact that shame is a benefit in the justice system but only if offenders are shamed and encouraged to be reintegrated into the society while preventing them from future and long term stigma. Therefore, the theory proposes that if shaming brings positive change to the juveniles' behavior then it is beneficial. The pre-trial diversion program which abides by the principles of rehabilitative justice is also in line with this

theory. This program intends to dig out the root causes of juvenile delinquency with the aim of restoring good behavior and also restoring relationships. In addition, according to Braithwaite, the reintegrative shaming theory is also relevant to the study as it recommends rehabilitative services rather than punitive measures when dealing with children in conflict with the law. This view aligns with the goals and goals of the pre-trial diversion which one of them is to assist juvenile offenders cope up with hardships and be accepted into their community without being stigmatized and be regarded as useful and productive members in the community (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2010).

In addition, since the pre-trial diversion services include programs like educational program, counseling and therapy, which means it goes in line with the reintegrative shaming theory as it emphasizes rehabilitative services over punitive services. Through the use of these rehabilitative services, there is an instillation of hope into these child offenders which then leads to positive behavioral change, thus reducing the rates and the likelihood of reoffending in the future. Rehabilitative measures under the pre-trial diversion program understands that children can be involved in criminal activities due to factors like poverty, family dysfunction and mental health challenges (Vandiver et al., 2018). For example, by being placed under rehabilitative services, children who are struggling from drug and substance addiction can be provided with resources and techniques which can help them cope up with these challenges by participating in therapy or counselling sessions, thereby creating a brighter future for them and reducing their chances of being involved in such cases again, thus curbing recidivism (Bradshaw & Roberts (2019)).

Finally, another significance of the reintegrative shaming theory is that it internalizes a sense of shame for one's actions which then contributes to long term changes in behavior. This then means that under the pre-trial diversion program child offenders will be aware of their actions, taking responsibility and accountability of their actions, thereby promoting positive behavior changes and

patterns ,hence reducing their probability of being involved in criminal activities (Maruna & LeBel,2013).

2.2.3 LABELING THEORY

In his book ‘Social Pathology’ which he published in 1951, Edwin Lement developed the Labeling theory which was later made popular by Howard Becker in 1963 in his book ‘Outsiders’. This theory suggests that labeling someone as an offender can make them eventually be involved in criminal activities (Becker,1963 & Lement 1951).The main idea surrounding this theory is that people conform to their labels and they eventually act exactly as what they are labeled as.

The labeling theory can be applied to the research on the efficacy of pre-trial diversion program in curbing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe in various ways. One of the ways in which the theory can be applied is when clarifying why children under pre-trial diversion services are less likely to repeat offenses unlike the ones that are not (Fagan, Cullen & Chambliss, 1989). A possible reason that can explain this is that children that are redirected from the formal court systems are kept away from being labeled as criminal at the same time being prevented from being issued a criminal record.

Furthermore, another way in which the labeling theory can be applied to this research is through explaining why some diversion initiatives are more successful than others. This theory can also be used to explain why some of these services are more effective to first time offenders than to those who would have recidivated. This can be best explained by the fact that first time offenders are less likely to be labeled as criminals, hence the lower their chances of acting according to the labels of being a criminal, thus their chances of re-offending are reduced and they respond positively to diversion services unlike repeat offenders.

2.2.4 THE RELEVANCE OF THE LABELING THEORY

The theory is very useful in this research as it clarifies how children repeat offenses after conviction. This theory suggests that being labeled as a criminal also leads to more criminal activities. Therefore, if child offenders in Zimbabwe are labeled and stigmatized by their legal system or society, there is likely to be an infinite circle of criminal behaviors and activities. Such makes the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion services and their efforts fade away. According to Berker (1963), children who are labeled as criminals conform to community expectations, leading to secondary deviance, which can result in continued criminal behavior among juveniles, undermining the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion. It is then important to note that without addressing the causes of criminal behaviors and prevent negative labels, the cycle of recidivism cannot be easy to break.

After the child offender is heavily stigmatized, the society may withdraw their care from that child and become less willing to support their rehabilitation efforts thereby making pre-trial diversion initiatives fail to meet their goals and objectives which one of them is to emphasize reintegration into society (Link & Phelan, 2001). In addition, a child who is labeled will be disapproved by the community, thereby being limited their access to education, employment and some other societal links that are advantageous. According to Sampson and Laub (2017), this lack of access to education and employment then perpetuates poverty which then leads to increased cycle of criminal behavior and activities. In addition, through rejection, criminal behavior can be fostered, making it more difficult for diversionary services to be effective in reducing recidivism as per what is expected.

Another reason why the labeling theory is important and relevant to this topic is because it give a room to the policy makers and other practitioners to recognize the consequences of harm of

stigmatization and labeling child offenders through understanding this theory. It then inform their decisions so that they will emphasize rehabilitation and introduce policies that are meant to reduce stigmatization and labeling of child offenders in the justice system. According to Hannah-Moffart and Winship (2002), pre-trial diversion laws and policies that helps to prioritize support and rehabilitation from the society are very useful in breaking the cycle of criminal activities. These services are then supposed to provide a variety range of initiatives that are meant to cater for the child offenders' specific needs such as educational programs, vocational trainings and therapy sessions and these can assist children to develop methods of dealing with underlying causes of their behaviors so that they will make better life choices and avoid repeating committing offenses (Thornberry et al., 2015).

Overally, the labeling theory provides a critical foundation for comprehending how well pre-trial diversion programs operate in Zimbabwe to lower the recidivism rate among juvenile offenders. Pre-trial diversion programs help stop the harmful effects of labeling, such stigma, amplification of deviance, and self-fulfilling prophesies, by not formally classifying children as criminals. Children, who are still forming their identities and are very sensitive to environmental effects, should pay particular attention to this. Pre-trial diversion programs can assist kids avoid internalizing negative labels and instead establish good self-concepts by not classifying them as criminals. This lowers the chance of recidivism and promotes positive life outcomes.

2.3 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES OFFERED TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

Globally, pre-trial diversion services which replaced the traditional ways of dealing with child offenders are gaining more recognition. This is due to their ability to restore justice, promote social integration and achieving rehabilitation among child offenders. Though these services vary in the way they are operate and implemented, they are all service the same goal is which is to divert child

offenders from formal court system to diversionary services to deal with the causes of their criminal behaviors.

In this case, North America is a perfect example of this viewpoint as it has the greatest number of juvenile drug courts which serve up to five hundred thousand participants per year. These courts offer individualized treatment, supervision and monitoring which is reported to reduce recidivism by fifteen to thirty percent as compared to the formal court system. These Teen courts offer diversion services such as leadership and character development programs, anger management and conflict resolution training, victim-offender mediation and peer judgement and sentencing (National Association of Drug Court Professionals, 2022). Similarly, mental health services are also providing individualized services or treatments to child offenders and they are also reported to reduce the rate of criminal activities among child offenders. These services have also been implemented in Canada and they are serving the same purpose that is to emphasize victim-offender mediation.

In addition, some European countries like the United Kingdom provide community service which is an alternative solution to the formal court system to prevent prosecution (Home Office,2022).In addition, Germany uses a unique service which is referred to as “diversion outside the main proceedings” which is also a way to suspend formal criminal proceeding and put child offenders in diversionary services (German Ministry of Justice (2020).Furthermore, France also has a system called ‘Alternative sanctions’ which focuses on fines as well as community service orders to offer a flexible services based on individualized treatments (Ministry of Justice,2023). These programs are designed to help adolescents make healthy decisions and stay out of trouble with the law by addressing the root causes of delinquency, encouraging accountability, and supporting good youth development, thereby reducing recidivism.

Adding on, Asia has different intervention when it comes to diversion services. They have a system called ‘Diversion through conciliation’ in Japan which is meant to avoid prosecution among child offenders (National Police Agency (2022)). The Diversion through Conciliation in Japan also known as Chotei focuses on restorative justice, victim-offender mediation, remorse and forgiveness. This method settles juvenile criminal matters in Japan without requiring official prosecution. It uses referrals from police or prosecutors to an impartial mediator in order to allow the offender and victim to meet and discuss the case in order to come to a mutually agreeable resolution. If the case is successful, it is concluded and the perpetrator is not legally prosecuted. This approach to handling minor offenses is more effective and compassionate since it encourages community engagement, lowers recidivism, and facilitates the reintegration of criminals into society. These programs in Asia vary in names but they serve the same purpose for example in China it is called ‘Community corrections’. It must be noted that all these services are reported to effectively reduce recidivism (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2022).

Africa also has these sets of diversion services. South Africa for instance, has community service orders and restorative justice dialogues which are meant to strengthen community bonds and curb re-offending (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2018). Community service orders, which are an alternative to formal court system for offenders in South Africa, compel them to carry out voluntary labor or services for the good of the community. The purpose of these orders is to hold offenders accountable, make amends, promote accountability and lower recidivism rates through rehabilitation and reintegration. These orders can involve things like cleaning public areas, helping out at community centers or nonprofits, taking part in environmental conservation, volunteering in schools or doing maintenance work on public buildings. They encourage restorative justice by enabling offenders to make positive contributions and addressing the

underlying causes of crime. According to National Crime Research Centre under The Ministry of Interior and National in Kenya, Kenya also uses these services like the diversion boards and community service orders which seek to make child offenders productive in the communities they belong.

South Africa offers unique services like mediation, family group conferencing and community service. On the same note, Zimbabwe's pre-trial diversion program provides services like counselling, therapy and reparations to address the causes of criminal behaviors. Kenya is another African country which offers diversion programs to deal with child offenders and empower communities. Its initiatives comprise of youth monitoring and vocational training. Furthermore, looking on African countries, Ghana provides educational support and probation officers whereas Senegal provides mediation and offender-victim reconciliation. All these services vary in the implementation, the ways of operation but their main goal is to avoid child offenders from formal court prosecution and place them under rehabilitation.

Research has proved that Rwanda is the leader in Africa concerning the provision of unique and particular diversionary programs in Africa. For example, a study published in the *Journal of International Criminal Justice* (2018) praised Rwanda's Gacaca court system as a unique and innovative approach to transitional justice (Clark, 2018). Another study published in the *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* (2019) highlighted Rwanda's efforts to promote restorative justice and community service as an alternative to imprisonment (Mujawamariya, 2019). It provides creative diversionary programs for juvenile offenders that put rehabilitation and reintegration ahead of punishment. In order to address the underlying causes of delinquency and foster good kid development, the nation's juvenile justice system offers a variety of alternatives to formal prosecution, such as community service, therapy, family reunion, education, and vocational

training. Rwanda's approach, which is a model for juvenile justice reform throughout the continent, focuses on mending harm, mending relationships, and encouraging young people to become productive citizens via restorative justice methods including victim-offender mediation.

Locally, Zimbabwe particularly, has been making progress in recent years concerning pre-trial diversion services. In Zimbabwe, the Pre-trial diversion was first introduced in 2009 and later implemented in 2019 by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. The program seeks to address the root causes of criminal offenses among child offenders by diverting them from the traditional and formal court system then offer them alternative services like counselling, therapy and vocational trainings. This program recognizes different aspects about children in conflict with the law and then deal with them while they are rehabilitated in their communities.

In order to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior and encourage young adult rehabilitation, Zimbabwe's pre-trial diversion program offers a variety of innovative services, such as community service, counseling, mediation, education and skill training, mentorship, family therapy, victim-offender reconciliation, and referral services. This all-encompassing strategy lowers recidivism rates and fosters a safer and more supportive community by giving offenders the chance to complete community service, get counseling and therapy, make amends with victims, learn new skills and get support from mentors and family members.

Additionally, in Zimbabwe there are some organizations which are also in support of this movement. For instance, the Christian Legal Society of Zimbabwe (CLSZ) shows its support to this program by providing help to juveniles in the pre-trial diversion program. They offer free legal advice, psychological support and counselling to help child offenders to cope up with difficulties concerning legal and justice system. In addition, Youth Alive is another organization that provides free like skills training programs and educational opportunities to juvenile to help them to deal

with economic complexities which may lead them to commit crimes, hence contributing positively to the society.

It should be noted that these services also faces some challenges. Moreover, this pre-trial diversion program is still in its developing stages so further expansion and improvements are needed so that it can reach Zimbabwe's most vulnerable youth thereby, ensuring its effectiveness on recidivism and overall well-being of child offenders. Nevertheless, Zimbabwe is doing well in as far as the program is promoting rehabilitation and restorative justice to break the cycle of reoffending crimes among child offenders.

2.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM.

Globally, the pre-trial diversion services has been successful in many countries. Regardless of their differences, these services are connected to each other through a common goal which is to prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration of child offenders into their communities. Some of the countries with successful diversion programs are Norway and New Zealand as they put more emphasis on community participation and victim-offender mediation, greatly reducing recidivism. The Council of Europe explained that eighty percent of juvenile offenders has been never into criminal activities after 2 years of rehabilitation. New Zealand also has a decreasing number in the rates of recidivism due to the utilization of diversion programs under the Youth Court system which encourages rehabilitation and restorative justice and also addressing the root causes of criminal activities (Uggen & Exum, 2013).

Programs for pre-trial diversion drastically lower recidivism rates while also enhancing the lives of juvenile offenders. In Norway, participants' recidivism rates have dropped by twenty-four

percent in a period of 3 years, while in New Zealand, the program has reduced recidivism by thirty percent, according to a meta-analysis of fifty studies (Lundquist et al., 2020) (Wylie & Griffin, 2018). This implies that different approaches to rehabilitation, like those employed in New Zealand and Norway, may be successful in lowering recidivism rates and may be repeated in other nations, such as Zimbabwe, to enhance the results of rehabilitation.

Regionally, in Sub-Saharan countries, diversion services vary from country to country but they are all successful in meeting the program's goals and also to reduce recidivism. South Africa is the prime example of these countries that are promoting rehabilitation and reintegration of child offenders into the communities. It introduced a program called the Diversion and Child Justice Program. A research conducted by Govender (2014) proved that the Diversion and Child Justice program in south Africa did not only reduce the rates of recidivism but it also improved reintegration outcomes for juvenile offenders. According to Skelton and Sekhonyane (2016), the initiative steers juveniles away from the criminal justice system and into community-based services and programs that cater to their unique needs and situations. According to Mkhize (2019), children take part in monitoring and evaluation, family support, restorative justice, assessment and screening, and community-based activities. Promising outcomes of the program include lower rates of recidivism, strengthened family bonds, more access to education and skill development, higher community involvement, and fewer children in detention (Muntingh, 2020). The Diversion and Child Justice Program in South Africa is contributing to the creation of a more fair, equitable and sustainable society for everyone by placing a high priority on the rehabilitation and reintegration of children in confrontation with the law (Skelton, 2017). Social and cultural setups are crucial concerning the success of pre-trial diversion programs for example in Ghana, in

traditional conflict resolution programs, elders are involved and it shows that there is a link between their culture and the way they deal with delinquency.

In addition, pre-trial diversion services in South Africa focuses on education, life skill training activities and mentors to assure the prevention of the cycle of re-offending and also prevention of long term stigma among child offenders and that are the key principles of the program. Education is a very powerful tool when it comes to empowering child offenders and avoid criminal activities and these education programs in South Africa includes vocational trainings, remedial education and in-school interventions (Scharff-Smith, 2018). These initiatives equips the juveniles with academic and life skills lowering their likelihood of committing offenses by addressing gaps in their education and providing support.

In addition, Uganda and Kenya also implemented these diversion services but there is no research to confirm their effectiveness in reducing recidivism rates but their goal is to cater for the unique needs of child offenders. The government of Kenya launched these diversion services under the program called the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Project. Similarly these services were also implemented in Uganda and just like in Kenya, enough research about the effectiveness of these services in reducing recidivism among child offenders is lacking, hence, the need to conduct this research. The effectiveness of diversionary services depend with way that they were designed, the availability of resources, and the size of social context. Therefore, finding out the rate at which these services are effective in reducing recidivism can be difficult due to limited data and also complexities in tracking long-term results. Due to these reasons, there should be a continued research to find out the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion in curbing recidivism among child offenders worldwide and particularly in the sub-Saharan region.

Locally, the pre-trial in Zimbabwe has shown hope in the juvenile justice system as it has been regarded as a promising alternative to the traditional formal court system (Mupanga, 2022). In Zimbabwe just like other countries, the pre-trial services seek to address the root causes of crime thereby promoting restorative justice and reintegration of child offenders into their society. Early researches reveal that the pre-trial diversion services have a great positive impact in Zimbabwe as UNICEF reports that since the implementation of the pre-trial diversion, there is seventy-seven percentage uptake of child offenders into the diversion program and this means that for every 30 child offenders, 23 are prevented from the formal justice system and placed under life changing programs.

Furthermore, research reveals that pre-trial is very effective in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe as a 2017 study by UNICEF reports that child offenders who completed the program were forty-two percent less likely to commit crimes again within a year than those who go through the formal criminal justice proceedings. These statistics shows that there is nearly fifty percent reduction of the chances of repeating offences among child offenders, hence, proving the effectiveness of the pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe (Gomera, 2022). Pre-trial services, through holistic approach, make child offenders face the consequences of their actions give them opportunity to make amends, thereby promoting accountability, fosters empathy and enhance social integration. These services do not only repair damages caused by the offense but also promotes long term outputs of the program.

However, even though the pre-trial diversion program in Zimbabwe has shown much hope in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe, its effectiveness needs further investigation and research. It must be noted that there are some stumbling blocks to the program's effectiveness like limited funding, lack of trained personnel and lack of effective monitoring to

track program's progress and areas that needs improvements. Therefore, the pre-trial diversion program must be fully equipped to be able to address the specific needs and difficulties that are linked with the kind of offenses to make the most of their whole impact.

2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY REHABILITATION CENTERS DEALING WITH CHILD OFFENDERS

Rehabilitation around the world face numerous challenges in trying to achieve the goals of the pre-trial diversion. The challenges can be classified as resource constraints, social integration barriers, programmatic inefficiencies and systematic limitations. Globally, there is lack of funding which results in many other challenges in most rehabilitation centers (Mugerwa, 2017; Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019). Lack of funding leads to inadequate staffing which results in limited access to some services like therapy and counselling. Lack of these facilities then results in high recidivism rates because child offenders might not get the assistance that they need. In India, for instance, diversion programs are affected by lack of funding and skilled staff at rehabilitation centers which then highlights the need for increased funding and the allocation of these resources and facilities for child offenders to make sure that the goals and objectives of the program are met (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2019). According to research conducted by the National Law School of India University (2018), there are a number of obstacles that diversion programs in India must overcome in order to be implemented effectively and maintain the high standard of care that is given to juvenile offenders. These obstacles include a lack of funding, a shortage of skilled staff, inadequate infrastructure, heavy caseloads and limited community engagement (National Law School of India University, 2018). The study emphasizes the need for more financing, the distribution of resources and facilities, staff training and capacity building, better infrastructure, increased community

engagement and increased awareness in order to address these issues and guarantee that diversion programs supporting juvenile offenders in India achieve their goals and objectives.

Another challenge faced at the rehabilitation centers worldwide is overcrowding. Overcrowding results in lack of individual attention and it limits some of the diversion plans such as individualized treatments and specialized care to child offenders that is lower service quality (Garg& Bhandari, 2019). It should be noted that this kind of environment leads to counter - production which results in the increase in recidivism rates. A perfect examples of this occurrence are China and Brazil. These countries need to have more resources to accommodate more individual needs as Mugerwa (2017) suggests because overcrowding also leads to short program durations. Child offenders in Brazil struggle to deal with positive coping skills due to overcrowding, hence being limited to some of the services such as education and vocational training which then leads to their failure to reintegrate in the society (Mugerwa, 2017). Brazil's juvenile rehabilitation facilities are severely overcrowded, accommodating between 250 and 300 youth in facilities built to accommodate 100. This has led to an increase in gang activity, violence and sexual exploitation. Children are also forced to live in filthy, small spaces or on the floor, making it difficult for the facilities to provide adequate education, counseling and rehabilitation services. The high rates of arrests and incarcerations, the dearth of community-based alternatives, the inadequate funding and the preference for punishment over rehabilitation have also contributed to the problem. Ultimately, these conditions are perpetuating cycles of violence and crime, highlighting the urgent need to address overcrowding and provide safe, supportive and rehabilitative environments for child offenders.

Programme ineffectiveness is another challenge faced by rehabilitation centers around the world. According to Sharma and Aggarwal (2019), many rehabilitations lack strong foundations of their

services which then results in ineffectiveness of the diversion program in reducing recidivism among child offenders. It is then recommended that there be done enough research to find out services that have been considered effective. Concerning programmatic ineffectiveness, the United Kingdom and Indonesia have left some child offenders struggling with some unresolved issues such as lack of access to mental health services due to lack of evidence-based interventions and budget cuts which might lead to high recidivism rates. Therefore it is critical to invest in developing evidence-based practices and effective budget management so that they would effectively implement these services and improve the efficacy of the diversion program in curbing recidivism among child offenders.

Regionally, rehabilitation facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa have a complicated range of difficulties in their efforts to successfully lower the recidivism rates of juvenile offenders. A shortage of resources is one of these difficulties. There is sometimes a lack of public financing for rehabilitation centers which leads to shortages in staffing, training, and critical services including treatment, education, and vocational training. In addition, Wylie (2018) put it clear that overpopulation creates an environment that is stressful and potentially hazardous, hinders efficient treatment programs and results in a lack of infrastructure in treatment facilities. Rehabilitation attempts may be hampered by inadequate facilities and resources, such as restricted access to healthcare, educational resources and leisure activities. For instance, a persistent lack of financing for rehabilitation facilities in Kenya has led to a staffing shortfall, which has left children receiving insufficient one-on-one care and monitoring. This contributes to a forty percent recidivism rate (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2023).

In addition, overcrowding in rehabilitation facilities is also a major issue in Uganda. It is difficult to provide personalized care and implement effective rehabilitation programs with limited space

and resources. According to Amnesty International, this has contributed to a thirty-five percent recidivism rate. According to Jonathan Kamonga (2023), the Kampiringisa Juvenile Detention Center in Uganda, which was built to house 200 children, is overcrowded and currently houses over 500 children between the ages of 12 and 17. This results in crowded and unhygienic living conditions, poor sanitation and hygiene and limited access to education and rehabilitation services, which in turn leads to high recidivism rates, increased gang activity and violence, mental health problems and the continuation of cycles of violence and crime. These issues highlight the need for increased funding and resources, community-based alternatives to detention, staff training, infrastructure improvement and prioritizing rehabilitation and reintegration services to address these issues.

Released child offenders frequently face stigma and discrimination from their communities, making reintegration and employment difficult and increasing the risk of recidivism (Maramba & Chireshe, 2022). Numerous juvenile offenders originate from impoverished, aggressive or turbulent households which may exacerbate their transgressions and complicate their smooth reintegration into society, leading to a lack of social support. Children who do not have access to mentors, support systems and good role models are more likely to commit crimes again. For instance, after being released from custody, juvenile offenders in South Africa usually experience extreme stigma and prejudice, which makes it challenging for them to obtain accommodation and work. A lack of social support has been shown to dramatically enhance recidivism (Krug & Van der Westhuizen, 2020). In Zimbabwe, a large number of juvenile criminals originate from violent or destitute homes, which may have an impact on their criminal behavior and make effective reintegration challenging. This emphasizes the importance of comprehensive rehabilitation programs that address the underlying causes of criminal behavior (Musengezi, 2018).

Inadequate legal frameworks are also a barrier to rehabilitation in dealing with child offenders in order to reduce recidivism. Antiquated laws and regulations cannot take into account the unique requirements of young offenders, which might lead to a lack of coordination, ineffective treatments, and severe penalties. According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2022), effective rehabilitation programs and community reintegration might be hampered by coordination problems amongst many parties, including courts, social agencies, and community groups. This can limit access to justice. When children encounter the court system, they could not have proper legal counsel, which could result in unjust treatment and a lack of opportunity for rehabilitation. For instance, Nigeria's antiquated juvenile justice rules and practices usually fall short of meeting the unique requirements of young offenders. This may lead to severe penalties that have no effect on rehabilitating the offending party or addressing underlying problems. (Child Rights International, 2021). Inadequate access to legal representation for juvenile offenders can result in unfair treatment and insufficient access to rehabilitation programs. This highlights the importance of ensuring equal and fair access to justice for all children who come into contact with the legal system (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

A number of problems, including overcrowding, are seriously endangering the efficacy of the program in Zimbabwe. Overcrowding prevents treatment program advancement and skill development due to a lack of resources and individualized attention. Maramba (2022) points out that children find it harder to focus on their rehabilitation because of the cramped environment, which increases stress and worry and exacerbates mental health conditions. Their development and well-being are negatively impacted by sleep deprivation and poor cleanliness. Recidivism rates and rehabilitation overcrowding have been found to be positively correlated, suggesting that resource limitations have a detrimental effect on rehabilitation outcomes (Maruna & LeBel, 2009).

Recidivism rates are directly impacted by these unfavorable outcomes. Without sufficient resources and assistance, children find it difficult to acquire the abilities and healthy coping strategies needed for a successful reintegration into society, which raises the likelihood that they will commit crimes again. In order to expand facilities, recruit more personnel and obtain more resources. Lowering recidivism rates and fostering a rehabilitation-friendly atmosphere may both be achieved by establishing a secure and organized environment via the use of clear rules, positive reinforcement and conflict resolution techniques.

Limited financial resources make it difficult for rehabilitation centers in Zimbabwe to provide children with the care and rehabilitation they need. This leads to a lack of therapy, education and recreational opportunities, also, there is a shortage of qualified staff and the facilities are deteriorating, creating an unsafe and uncomfortable environment that negatively affects children's rehabilitation and reintegration into society, increasing the risk of recidivism and reoffending (Maruna, 2009).

Zimbabwe is also facing a problem with little family support and engagement. Although some Rehabilitation centers such as Mandipa Hope acknowledges the value of family engagement on their websites, they do not go into great detail regarding the exact services or programs that are offered to families. Similarly, a 2023 post on the Addiction Center website emphasizes the necessity of comprehensive family support services as well as the vital role that family connection plays in addiction rehabilitation. Families of residents might participate in focus groups or surveys to gain important insight into their needs and any holes in the present support system.

2.6 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS

Recidivism or committing crimes again after being released from custody is a major problem for juvenile justice systems throughout. It affects community safety, hinders the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and erodes public confidence in the legal system. A multidisciplinary strategy involving community participation, efficient justice system interventions, early intervention, and thorough data collecting and international collaboration is needed to handle this complicated issue.

On a global perspective, reducing juvenile offenders' recidivism can be accomplished through a variety of strategies. The prevention of juvenile delinquency depends heavily on early intervention. Programs that tackle the underlying issues that lead to crime, such as inequality, poverty, and a lack of education can greatly lower the likelihood of committing a crime. The effectiveness of e-learning is demonstrated by programs like the Chicago CRED program in the United States, which pairs social workers and mentors with high-risk youth to reduce violence by twenty-five and arrests by sixty-seven (Hanson et al., 2019). Similarly, the Perry Preschool Project in Michigan, which provided preschool education to underprivileged children, significantly reduced crime rates and increased employment among participants later in life (Schweinhart, 2005).

Another important measure that can be used to reduce and control recidivism among child offenders is effective justice system interventions and promoting rehabilitation and reintegration. Specialized juvenile courts, proportionate sentences and restorative justice programs can all help to promote rehabilitation and reintegration within the justice system. When compared to regular court procedures, victim-offender mediation at the Restorative Justice Center in San Francisco, California, reduces recidivism rates by fifteen percent (Zehr, 2015). The United States' Segundo Chance Act further furnishes funds for evidence-based initiatives in juvenile justice systems,

including CBT, drug rehab and mentorship programs (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). This perspective is also supported by the New Zealand Youth Courts, which provide young offenders the opportunity to engage in a court-like setting, reducing recidivism rates and raising victim satisfaction (Maxwell, G., 2009). With an emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration, these justice system initiatives offer alternatives to traditional punishment, making the system more equitable and successful for juvenile offenders.

Involving the community is crucial to helping juvenile offenders get support after their release. Positive role models and safe environments are provided by mentoring programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters, which pairs adolescent children with mentors to reduce delinquency and improve educational outcomes (Rhodes et al., 2013) and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which offers safe spaces for youth after school and during the summer to lower crime rates and foster positive development. In addition, community-based organizations such as the United States' National Youth Leadership Council, which provides youth with the tools to advocate for change and strengthen their communities, and the United Kingdom's Street Games, which uses sport to engage youth and develop social capital, collaborate closely with communities to address the root causes of crime and create a more supportive environment for young people.

To comprehend the efficacy of different treatments and to inform policy decisions, robust data collection and analysis are necessary. Evidence-based practices are implemented thanks in large part to initiatives like the European Commission's Juvenile Justice Platform, which offers resources and data on juvenile justice systems across Europe, the Campbell Collaboration, which reviews and synthesizes research on crime prevention programs to identify best practices and the National Center for Juvenile Justice in the United States, which keeps an eye on recidivism rates and conducts research on effective interventions (Grossman et al., 2017). By consistently gathering

and evaluating data, we can determine what works and modify our tactics. International collaboration is also essential for the establishment of international standards, the exchange of best practices and the providing of funding to developing nations. Two such programs are the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates and the UNODC Global Programme on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which offers nations technical support and training to improve their juvenile justice systems. Early intervention programs are also essential in the Sub-Saharan area for avoiding child delinquency in the first place. In order to reduce the likelihood that street children may engage in criminal behavior, the Street Children Empowerment Foundation in Ghana offers safe places for them in addition to educational possibilities and life skills training (Street Children Empowerment Foundation, 2018). Similarly, the Wajir Peace and Development Initiative in Kenya provides community-based conflict resolution programs that teach young people how to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts constructively, promoting peaceful coexistence and reducing violence (Wajir Peace and Development Initiative, 2018).

Reducing recidivism also requires spending on education. According to a study conducted by the United States Sentencing Commission, child offenders who engaged in educational programs while jailed were forty-three percent less likely to recidivate. Another research from the RAND Corporation in South Africa found that those who participate in any form of educational program while in rehabilitation are 43 percent less likely to recidivate. Additionally, youth are given the tools they need for sustainable livelihoods and are less likely to become victims of crime through the Skilling Young People in Africa program, which is being implemented in nations like Ethiopia and Nigeria. This program gives youth entrepreneurship and vocational training (Hannah-Moffat & Winship, 2002). Increasing the robustness of family support networks is also essential. In Uganda, the Empowering Families Project helps families struggling with poverty, trauma, and

other challenges by providing financial assistance, parenting skills training, and access to mental health services. Environment for children and reducing their risk of offending.

Specialized juvenile courts are essential for establishing a fair and effective legal system, reducing recidivism and promoting rehabilitation (Khoury, 2020). In South Africa, specialized child justice courts with trauma-informed procedures and trained judges and court workers have been established to address the unique needs of child offenders (Skelton & Sekhonyane, 2016). Diversionary programs, such as those offered by Malawi's Restorative Justice Center, provide an alternative to incarceration and focus on addressing harm and promoting reconciliation through mediation circles (Mwangi et al., 2018). Cultural sensitivity is crucial in rehabilitation programs, as seen in Nigeria's Borstal Institute, which integrates cultural beliefs and customs to help young offenders develop a sense of identity and belonging (Okoro & Okeke, 2017). Effective reintegration after release requires continued mentorship and support services, such as those provided by the Pan African Children's Organization in Zimbabwe, which offers mentorship programs and life skills training to increase career opportunities and reduce recidivism (Moyo & Mopfu, 2019).

Including youth in decision-making processes is also essential. The National Youth Development Agency in South Africa gives young people a forum to voice their issues and get involved in the creation of laws and initiatives that impact them. According to Grossman (2017). Providing local researchers and practitioners with training in data analysis and interpretation is essential. Empowering people with training programs in data analysis and research methods is the West African Institute for Management and Public Administration. Furthermore, involving communities in the design and execution of initiatives is essential. For instance, the Community Policing Initiative in Tanzania works with local communities to identify and address issues connected to

crime while fostering a feeling of accountability and ownership. By working together with faith-based groups, you may make the most of already-established community institutions. Working with Islamic leaders, the Association Islamique pour le Développement in Senegal enables local stakeholders to produce and use evidence-based knowledge via religious education. Through regional and worldwide collaboration, best practices and research findings may be shared, which is advantageous. Knowledge sharing and capacity building are encouraged by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN).

Strengthening the Pre-trial Diversion Program is one of the actions that should be taken in order to lower the rate of reoffending among young offenders. An essential early intervention option is offered by the 2012-established pre-trial diversion program. Just five percent of participants in the program reoffend after two years, demonstrating the program's remarkable effectiveness in keeping kids out of formal imprisonment and offering alternatives including counseling, victim-offender mediation, and community work (UNICEF Zimbabwe, 2022). Additionally, child-friendly areas offered by groups like Save the Children and Childline Zimbabwe offer safe havens for kids, reducing their chance of involvement in crime and fostering good development via educational and recreational activities.

Positive development and the prevention of crime depend on attending to mental health issues. The importance of emotional strain and trauma on children's conduct is acknowledged by the government's attempts to provide access to counseling and therapy. Maramba (2022) suggests that enhancing family support networks via entities like Family Counseling Trust can assist children in residing in a more secure setting, thereby decreasing their susceptibility to criminal activity. Lastly, creating a more fair society where all young people may flourish depends on tackling poverty and inequality via programs like the Zimbabwe National Youth Development Policy. The government

may invest in economic possibilities, healthcare, and education to address the underlying causes of crime and provide young people a brighter future.

By putting these diverse strategies into practice and tackling Zimbabwe's particular problems, the nation may drastically lower the recidivism rates of juvenile offenders. It is not only morally required, but also a vital investment in the future of the country, to support and invest in the well-being of its youth. Collaborative work is necessary to build a brighter future where every kid may realize their potential, but the rewards are incalculable.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher examined the theoretical underpinnings of the study before reviewing the literature from earlier studies on the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in curbing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Following that, the researcher examined the literature in relation to the study's objectives. The gaps in the examined literature were identified by the researcher who then concentrated this work on filling some of these gaps. Literature was produced on a local, regional and global scale. Hence, the next chapter will focus on the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology utilized for the study. The chapter presents the research paradigm, the research approach and research design, setting of the study, targeted population, sampling and sampling procedures. The data collection methods and instruments used in the study are also discussed. Ethics used in the study are also discussed, with the study feasibility and limitations also explained.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study used a qualitative research methodology. A research methodology refers to the behaviors and techniques utilized to choose and build a research approach (Berwick, 2016). Qualitative research is typically conducted in a natural context, with the researcher interviewing study participants at their homes, offices, or other environments in which they are familiar and comfortable (Fossey, 2017). Qualitative research employs a range of interactive data gathering

approaches (Kuyper 2020). These data gathering approaches include in-depth interviews, focused group discussions, and key informant interviews, which allow the researcher and participants to engage and obtain information more easily. Qualitative method is used because it captures the study participants' thoughts, feelings, and values (Burgess, 2012). This is due to the participatory nature of the data collection methods, which allows the researcher to see the participants' attitudes and actions. Qualitative research was essential in this study because it revealed important information about the social and cultural milieu in which pre-trial diversion programs function. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to capture information based on the experiences of participants, which helped the researcher collect many information that was important for the research, therefore the researcher used the qualitative methodology.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher adopted a quasi-experimental design due to ethical concerns about randomly allocating young offenders to a pre-trial diversion program or standard criminal justice processes. A quasi-experimental design is a research approach in which participants are assigned to groups based on predetermined criteria rather than at random. It administers a therapy or intervention to one group and compares results to a control group. Random assignment may have unintentionally disadvantaged some children or exposed them to danger. Instead, the researcher opted to analyze two unique groups of child offenders, one that participated in a pre-trial diversion program and another that did not. To ensure the comparison was fair and valid, the researcher methodically matched people in both groups based on age, gender and past criminal activity. This matching procedure aims to produce two comparable groups, decreasing the possibility of bias or confounding variables impacting the results. The researcher then followed and examined the frequency of repeat infractions in each group over a set period of time. The researcher wanted to

establish the efficiency of the pre-trial diversion program in avoiding future offenses among young offenders by analyzing if there was a significant difference in recidivism rates between the two groups. This in-depth research provided a more nuanced picture of how involvement in the diversion program affects the chance of reoffending among minor offenders. Overall, the quasi-experimental technique offered a strong framework for assessing the success of the pre-trial diversion program while addressing ethical concerns and assuring fair treatment of all participants.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

The whole group of potential participants in a study is known as the target population (Kumar, 2020). The "entire aggregation of respondents that meet the designated set of criteria" is referred to as the target population (Creswell, 2018). The study's target group consisted of juvenile offenders who qualified for diversion from prosecution. The age, gender and other characteristics of the target group, including the nature of the infraction, might be used to further define it. The study focused on male and female juvenile offenders who had committed various offenses and were between the ages of 8 and 17. The geographic location can also be used to define the target population. Here, the researcher decided to concentrate on juvenile offenders in Harare, the nation's capital city.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE

According to Creswell (2018), a sample is a subset of the target population that the study will examine in order to generalize findings about that community. According to Creswell (2018), sample size is an essential factor to consider and should be determined prior to data collection. This is regarded as significant because it is impossible for a researcher to get data from the entire intended population. Consequently, creating a sample is crucial and simple because it will serve

as a representative of the targeted community, allowing the researcher to still obtain information. This research used a total sample of 13 participants. The participants comprised of 10 children from Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Center who have committed different offenses. These children were 8-17 years of age and the researcher also engaged 3 key informants who includes the psychologist who works with child offenders, the occupational therapist and the psychiatrist at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

A sampling technique is a way to choose a portion of a population to research rather than the full population (Lohr, 2019). Non-probability sampling was employed by the researcher. Non-probability sampling, according to Mohsin (2016), is the process of selecting a sample based only on the researcher's subjective assessment. Non-probability sampling is frequently connected to qualitative research and case study research designs (Hamed, 2016). Concerning the latter, case studies often concentrate on small samples and aim to investigate a real-world occurrence rather than drawing statistical conclusions about the general population (Yin, 2003). As a result, the researcher used non-probability sampling, which allowed for the use of a small population and required less money and effort. The researcher sampled important informants, such as the therapist, psychiatrist, and psychologist, using purposive judgmental sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Additionally, children aged 15 to 17 who are enrolled in Rehabilitation were sampled using convenience sampling.

3.6.1 Purposive sampling

A technique known as purposive or judgmental sampling involves the intentional selection of specific contexts, people or events in order to yield crucial information that cannot be found

through alternative options (Maxwell, 1996). Purposeful or judgmental sampling, sometimes referred to as purposeful or purposeful sampling, is the deliberate selection of people or circumstances that are most likely to produce a deeper comprehension of the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2003). When gathering data, purposeful sampling is thought to be acceptable for important informants (Kumar, 2014). The primary informants offer a wealth of information as they discuss the difficulties encountered in the rehabilitation center and the reasons behind recidivism. In this research, 3 key informants were purposefully chosen as a sample for the research. Because sampling is convenient and doesn't take much time, the researcher employed this technique. Since the key informants are involved in the process of diverting children from the traditional juvenile court system to rehabilitation, they were chosen for purposive sampling because of their knowledge of the lives of child offenders.

3.6.2 Convenience sampling

Convenience sampling was used by the researcher to select children who have committed various crimes between the ages of 8 and 17. Participants are chosen for convenience sampling because they are frequently easily accessible (Hamed, 2016:22). Convenience sampling is generally more popular among students than other sample approaches since it is less expensive and simpler to use (Ackoff, 1953). Using the convenience sampling approach, ten children from the Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Center in Harare, ages eight to seventeen, made up the sample for the study. The researcher contacted children undergoing rehabilitation who they could reach in a timely manner as part of their sample.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The process of obtaining and assessing information on relevant variables in a predetermined, methodical manner so as to address research questions, test hypotheses and assess results is known as data collection (Kabir, 2016:203). The aim of all data gathering is to obtain high-quality evidence, which enables rich data analysis and the development of a credible and convincing response to the issues that have been addressed (Kabir, 2016:203). The researcher employed qualitative data collection approaches, such as in-depth interviews, to investigate the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. Face to face interviews with key informants were also utilized to get deeper information on the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-trial diversion services. They were chosen because they are informed about how children are recommitting the same offenses that they have previously committed.

3.7.1 Face to face interviews

In-depth interviews, according to Flick (2014), are a qualitative research technique that involves conducting detailed individual interviews with a small number of participants to learn about their opinions on a given initiative, program, or condition. In this study, in-depth interviews were done with young offenders at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre. The researcher questioned five child offenders for an average of 15 minutes each. These interviews were chosen because they can provide extensive information and insights about the usefulness of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among minor offenders in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, as noted by Boyce et al. (2006), in-depth interviews provide a more relaxed environment for information gathering than other methods such as surveys, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences and perceptions of rehabilitation professionals involved in the implementation of pre-trial diversion programs at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre. The researcher also conducted interviews with

the Rehabilitation Centre's personnel, who are also known as key informants. The key informants for this study were the rehabilitation psychologist, therapist and psychiatrist who work with child offenders at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre. The interviews with key informants lasted 30 minutes, with each interviewee spending an average of 10 minutes. Key informants are often well-informed about neighborhood events and may give useful insights into local concerns. Given their role as knowledge repositories, key informants are critical to research efforts, providing unique perspectives and insights that contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs in reducing recidivism among Zimbabwean child offenders.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions

The researcher conducted focus group discussions to get a diverse variety of viewpoints on how successful pre-trial diversion is in reducing recidivism among Zimbabwean young offenders. According to Maxwell (1996), Focus Group Discussions leverage group interactions to generate facts and insights that would otherwise be difficult to get. The researcher conducted a Focus Group Discussion in which five child offenders participated. The focus group conversation was informal, allowing individuals to freely engage. The researcher used a focus group discussion guide as part of the data gathering process. A written consent form was provided to the respondents before the participants participated.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This study comprehensively investigated qualitative data utilizing Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis methodology. This method entailed arranging the data using codes, identifying similar themes, and comprehending their significance. This strategy ensures that the findings are accurate and give useful information regarding whether pre-trial diversion programs assist minimize

recurrent crimes among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. This analysis's findings might assist enhance policies and programs aimed at reducing recurrent crimes and improving outcomes for young people in Zimbabwe's criminal justice system. Finally, the research will contribute valuable knowledge to the field of juvenile justice. Braun and Clarke (2012) describe theme analysis as a flexible tool that allows researchers to investigate data via many lenses and viewpoints.

Familiarization: Braun and Clarke (2006) underline the need of going through five stages of data analysis, which begin with the researcher immersing themselves in the obtained data. In this analysis, data was obtained from the Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre, and the researcher performed the required steps to become acquainted with it before beginning to develop first codes. The research findings were scrutinized through focus group discussions and in-person interviews with key informants, including professionals working with young offenders and offenders themselves. The goal was to gain a complete understanding of the collected data. To do this, the researcher reviewed the participants' recorded data and transcribed their replies methodically for later study.

Generating Initial codes: After becoming acquainted with the material, the investigation moved on to the production of initial codes, which Braun and Clarke refer to as the second stage of theme analysis. According to Naeem and Ozuem (2023 et al), this stage entails finding reoccurring patterns and keywords and then translating them into key words. The researcher selected significant concepts from the perceptions acquired from group discussions and interviews and aligned them with the study questions aimed at determining the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. Following familiarization with the collected data, the researcher retrieved relevant attributes. Notes were extracted directly from the obtained data and categorized based on key themes deemed significant for the investigation.

Searching for themes: Braun and Clarke characterize the third step of thematic analysis as the search for themes. According to Dawadi (2020), this step expands on the created codes by stressing their relation to the study's developed themes. Because of the involvement of several participants, including key informants and youngsters, the researcher was required to assess the research data and uncover common patterns within the produced codes. These patterns were then divided into various themes, ensuring that each subject was unique and autonomous, with no recurrence.

Reviewing themes: In the fourth phase of thematic analysis, the identified themes were reviewed to align with the research questions in a study on the efficacy of pre-trial diversion for reducing recidivism among child offenders at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre in Zimbabwe. The themes were scrutinized to eliminate redundancies and ensure relevance to the study's topic. The findings were thoroughly examined within the Zimbabwean context to avoid overlooking any important data or themes.

Defining and naming themes: In the fifth stage of thematic analysis, the focus shifts towards defining and naming the themes. During this phase, the research selected final themes from the reviewed set, ensuring they complemented the research topic effectively. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) characterize this stage as involving a comprehensive understanding of the themes' essence, their interrelationships, alignment with collected data, and potential sub-themes. This process entailed naming each final theme and providing a definition approved as an explanatory fit for the respective theme, elucidating how they directly relate back to the research topic, specifically the efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. The themes were elucidated through the responses obtained from the participants during the interviews, consolidating the insights gathered from the data analysis phase.

Writing up: The last step, as defined by Braun and Clarke, focuses on preparing the report, which is the conclusion of the success obtained over the prior rounds of theme analysis. Extending beyond this last step, Ibrahim (2012) claims that theme analysis improves the discovery of links between concepts and allows for comparison with replicated data, hence demonstrating its fit for this qualitative study comprising all participants. As a result, this phase was executed in the next chapter, where the presentation of the studied data followed theme analysis principles.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical considerations are the concepts and values that guide researchers in conducting studies that respect and safeguard participants' rights, safety and dignity while also ensuring the integrity of the research process (Mopfu, 2019). They are crucial in research for ensuring participant rights, safety and dignity. Key values include informed consent, secrecy, privacy damage minimization, impartiality and respect for vulnerable groups, cultural sensitivity and openness. Prioritizing these ethical issues allows researchers to increase trust, credibility and rigor in their findings, thus benefiting society. Ethical research techniques are critical for maintaining public trust and faith in research, as well as ensuring that it is performed responsibly and socially accountable.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Rose et al. (2013) describe it as a situation in which an individual volunteers to participate in a study. This is one of the most important ethical difficulties in research, implying that a person offers his or her permission consciously, willingly, intelligently, and in a clear and obvious manner. Participants submitted information freely, and the researcher had to tell them about the study and its potential risks so that they could participate willingly. Those who agreed to participate signed a consent form before participating in the study.

3.9.2 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

Anonymity refers to keeping respondents' ethnic or cultural backgrounds hidden, refraining from referring to them by name, or disclosing any other sensitive information about a participant (Mugenda, 2003). Confidentiality is described as an individual's or organization's obligation to maintain information provided by participants or clients and not dispose of any information given to them by clients without their consent. Kaiser (2009). The researcher ensured that all information obtained from participants was kept secret, and if this information had to be shared, the participant's agreement should be considered.

3.9.3 Voluntary participation

This study used voluntary participation which is the process of selecting people who freely and voluntarily consent to participate in the research without being compelled or forced to submit research-related information. Before participation, the researcher made certain that participants were well informed about the study's goal, risks and benefits and that they gave their informed permission. By allowing participants to participate voluntarily and without compulsion or manipulation, the researcher honoured their autonomy and rights while also ensuring the reliability and validity of the data acquired.

3.10 ASSUMPTIONS

Among other things, there is an assumption that Pre-trial diversion programs are effective in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders. This is a general assumption that is supported by research from other countries. However, more research is needed to confirm the efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe specifically. Another assumption is that Pre-trial diversion programs are implemented effectively in Zimbabwe. This assumption is important because the

efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs depends on how they are implemented. Another assumption is that the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe are similar to the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in other countries. This assumption is important because the research on pre-trial diversion programs has identified a number of specific factors that are associated with a reduction in recidivism rates. If the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe are different from the factors that contribute to recidivism among child offenders in other countries, then the research on pre-trial diversion programs from other countries may not be generalizable to Zimbabwe. In addition, researchers also assume that child offenders in Zimbabwe are willing to participate in pre-trial diversion programs. This assumption is important because pre-trial diversion programs are voluntary. If child offenders in Zimbabwe are not willing to participate in these programs, then they will not be effective in reducing recidivism rates.

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are many limitations to the research of pre-trial diversion's effectiveness in lowering recidivism rates among Zimbabwean minor offenders. One drawback is the absence of research on this issue in Zimbabwe. A few studies have been completed, but additional research is needed to establish the success of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe and uncover the precise characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness. Another drawback is the difficulty in carrying out randomized controlled studies of pre-trial diversion programs. This is due to the unethical practice of randomly assigning young offenders to either a pre-trial diversion program or a standard criminal justice procedure. As a result, researchers must use quasi-experimental designs, which are less stringent than randomized controlled trials. Furthermore, a variety of variables can impact recidivism, including family ties, academic achievement, and drug usage. It can be

impossible to control for all of these variables in research studies, making it difficult to separate the effect of pre-trial diversion programs on recidivism rates. Finally, it is critical to understand that pre-trial diversion programs are not a one-size-fits-all answer. The efficacy of these programs may differ based on the juvenile offenders' individual needs and the resources available to administer them.

3.12 DELIMITATIONS

Delimitations are the limits that are set around a study, such as the scope of the study, the population being investigated, and the variables being assessed (Creswell (2014)). The limitations of a study are often dictated by the researcher's resources, time restrictions, and the specific research topics that the researcher is attempting to address. The first research restriction is its breadth. This study is confined to Harare Metropolitan Province geographical area. The research focuses on juvenile offenders of a specific age, gender, or criminal category. Finally, the study focuses on a specific collection of data, being recidivism rates, demographic features, and risk factors for recidivism.

3.13 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The study employed a qualitative research approach, interviewing both program developers and program participants at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre to ensure the validity and reliability of the gathered information. To minimize bias and gain comprehensive insights, the researcher held separate interviews with key stakeholders, including social workers, legal professionals engaged in juvenile justice, and beneficiaries of the pre-trial diversion program. This allowed for capturing diverse perspectives from individuals directly involved in the program's design and implementation. Additionally, the research triangulated findings by incorporating scholarly

literature on pre-trial diversion in Zimbabwe and comparable contexts in Southern Africa as well as in first world countries. This exploration of broader perspectives helped to situate the program within the existing landscape of recidivism reduction strategies. This multi-faceted approach establishes a more nuanced understanding of the program's effectiveness and its potential for wider application within Zimbabwe's juvenile justice system.

3.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter presented the methodology utilized in the study. It presented the qualitative research approach which utilized the case study as a research design. The non-probability sampling methods utilized were also discussed in the chapter. The chapter presented the study population and the setting in which the study was conducted. It also presented the data collection methods and instruments utilized in the study, ethical considerations and also limitations used. This allowed the researcher to gather information which was relevant for the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, analyzes and discusses the acquired data. Because of its qualitative nature, face-to-face interviews with key informants as well as Focus Group Discussions, were utilized to gather information from participants. Thus, this chapter is given in accordance with the study's main objectives, which are firstly, to investigate the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders. Secondly, to identify the Pre-Trial Diversion Services in Zimbabwe. Finally, to explore the challenges faced by Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation and determine the measures that can be put in place to reduce recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe. As highlighted by the interpretivist approach, participants' remarks were presented in the manner in which they expressed their ideas on the phenomenon under consideration. Except for important informants' responses, the researcher offered exact quotations in vernacular language, in this case Shona (which were later translated into English but retained their content).

4.2 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section contains biographic information, which includes participants' backgrounds and personal data. It covers demographics, occupation, personal background, and other pertinent information. This section assists researchers in understanding the participants' characteristics and interpreting their replies. It guarantees sample variety and explores how different backgrounds may impact study findings.

4.2.1 Table 1. A table presenting the total count of individuals who participated in the research.

Participant	Quantity	Male	Female
Juveniles	10	5	5
Occupational Therapist	1	0	1
Psychologist	1	1	0
Psychiatrist	1	1	0
Total	13	7	6

As shown by the above table, there were a total of 13 participants for the study. Out of these, 7 were male and 6 were female. Among the juveniles, there were 5 males and 5 females. There was one male psychiatrist and one female occupational therapist. Lastly, there was also one male psychologist. In table 4.2.1 above, the researcher listed three categories of participants which are juveniles, therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists. A combination of individuals from these categories were interviewed to gather diverse perspectives on the efficacy of pretrial diversion in reducing re-offending among child offenders. The table showed that the number of participants for the interviews from each category and gender were balanced to ensure fair providence of information. Therefore, by interviewing both male and female participants, the researcher aimed to capture the experiences and opinions of both genders and also by striving for balanced participant selection. The researcher aimed to avoid any potential bias in the research findings and provide a well-rounded understanding of the efficacy of pretrial diversion in curbing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 Table 2. A table showing experiences of the participants

Occupation	Sex	Age	Years of experience at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation	Qualifications
Occupational Therapist	Female	33 years	4 years	A bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy
Psychiatrist	Male	30 years	4 years	Bachelor's degree in Health Science
Psychologist	Male	41 years	4 years	Diploma in Social Work, Bachelor's degree in Social Work and a Master's degree in Psychology
JF 1	Female	14 years	2 months	Form 1
JF 2	Female	12 years	2 months	Grade 6
JF 3	Female	13 years	1 month	Grade 7
JF 4	Female	15 years	3 months	Form 2
JF 5	Female	14 years	1 month	Form 1
JM 1	Male	16 years	2 months	School dropout
JM 2	Male	13 years	2 months	Grade 7

JM 3	Male	14 years	1 month	Form 1
JM 4	Male	16 years	2 months	Form 3
JM 5	Male	16 years	1 month	School dropout

As shown in the table above, the juvenile female participants were coded JF1, JF2, JF3, JF4, JF5 and the juvenile male participants were coded JM1, JM2, JM3, JM4 and JM5. One of the participants in the study was a female occupational therapist. With four years of experience at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation, she brought valuable expertise to the research. Her educational background included a bachelor's degree in Social Work and a master's degree in Occupational Therapy. As an allied healthcare professional, she provided insights into the role of occupational therapy in the rehabilitation of child offenders. A male psychiatrist with four years of experience at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation was also included in the study. With a bachelor's degree in Health Science, he contributed his knowledge and experience in mental health to the research. His expertise shed light on the psychological aspects of recidivism among child offenders and the potential benefits of pretrial diversion programs. Another male participant was a psychologist with four years of experience at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation. His qualifications included a diploma in Social Work, a bachelor's degree in Social Work, and a master's degree in Psychology. With his multidisciplinary background, he offered valuable insights into the social and psychological factors influencing recidivism and the effectiveness of pretrial diversion in addressing these factors.

In addition to the professionals, the study included a group of child offenders, referred to as juveniles. The juvenile participants were balanced in terms of gender and represented a range of ages and educational backgrounds. Their inclusion aimed to capture the diverse experiences and

perspectives of child offenders in Zimbabwe. The juveniles included both males and females, with ages ranging from 12 to 16 years. Some of them were still attending school, while others had dropped out. The educational levels varied, with participants ranging from Grade 6 to Form 3. This diverse group of child offenders provided firsthand insights into their experiences, challenges and potential outcomes related to recidivism and the impact of pretrial diversion programs.

4.3 QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION

The researcher used thematic analysis to assess data, and almost identical replies were clustered into a single topic. The use of theme analysis in qualitative data presentation enabled the researcher to explain the findings clearly and coherently. It offered a method for identifying and highlighting key material, allowing for a more in-depth knowledge of the participants' opinions and experiences with the study issue. The researcher also used the four study objectives to elicit replies from participants. By connecting the participants' replies with the study objectives, the researcher guaranteed that the data acquired was relevant to the research goals and allowed for a thorough analysis of the effectiveness of pretrial diversion in reducing recidivism among young offenders.

4.4 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE.

Participants' submissions said that the PTD program consists of a variety of alternatives or services aimed primarily at diverting juvenile offenders from the formal criminal justice system. A 17-year-old juvenile interviewee reported the following:

“Pane maOptions akawanda anoshandiswa kugadzirisa nyaya dzedu isusu vana vanenge vaita zviri kunze kwemutemo. Handinyatsoziva hangu dzese sezvo vachishandisa nzira dzakasiyana siyana zvichienderana nemhosva yaunenge wapara. Asi, ndinoziva kuti pane 7 kusanganisira Reparation, Counselling, mediation, conferencing nema Police Cautions”

(Authorities have several alternatives for dealing with our situations as young offenders. I don't recall everything because each alternative is referred to base on the form or kind of offense committed. But I still recall seven alternatives, including compensation, counselling, mediation, and conferencing and police warnings)

One of the key informant informants further added to the above sentiments that:

“In practice, I can affirm that there are seven diversion possibilities, including restitution, counselling, vocational and entrepreneurial programs, victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, police cautions, and constructive use of leisure time. However, the eighth one, community service, does not normally apply in Zimbabwe.”

4.4.1 Counselling

Counselling has emerged as a central component of Pre-Trial Diversion programs, serving multiple purposes such as educating juveniles, promoting restorative justice and preventing future offenses. Research findings revealed that counselling has been used as the primary diversion option for juvenile offenders because it was provided to educate children and as a restorative and rehabilitative measure to prevent re-offending. Participants emphasized the effectiveness of one-on-one sessions and group therapy.

From a face to face interview, a participant explained that:

“Ehe taimboita nguva yataimbotaura naMadam X tiri 2 ndichivaudza kuti sei ndakaita zvekunwa bronco.Pekutanga zvainetsa kuti ndivaudze asi ndakazoshinga ndikavaudza zvese ende zvakatozoita kuti ndione kuti hazvisi right.Madam X vakabva vandiudza kuti next time ndikasangana nezvinhu zvinozoita kuti ndipare mhosva ndinoita sei.

(Yes, there was some one-on-one time with the therapist. It wasn't always easy to talk about what drove me to use drugs, particularly Broncleer, but it helped me understand why I did what I did and see that it wasn't good. The therapist also offered me strategies to handle things differently the next time).

4.4.2 Therapy

The research also proved therapy as another Pre Trial Diversion service provided at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation. Therapy is crucial as exemplified by a juvenile participant's experience. Individual and group sessions provide a safe space to explore reasons behind negative behavior and develop coping mechanisms. Participants learn to manage emotions, communicate effectively and make better choices, all through therapy and life skills programs focused on anger management, problem-solving and relapse prevention. These tools empower individuals to build a fulfilling life in recovery.

One of the juvenile participants, in support of the above view, explained that:

“During the program before the trial, I got different kinds of help that were made just for me because I'm a young person who did something wrong. I had one-on-one talks with a counselor, I joined group therapy, and I learned important skills for life. They also had classes where they taught us how to control our anger, solve problems without fighting, and make good choices. The goal of all these things was to understand and fix the reasons why I did bad things and help me become a better person”

4.4.3 Individualized treatment plans

The research underscores the importance of individualized treatment plans. Unlike a "one-size-fits-all" approach, PTD programs assess each juvenile's specific needs and tailor interventions

accordingly. These individualized treatment plans include detoxification process, focus on co-occurring disorders, aftercare planning and psychiatric evaluation. This personalization is evident in the participant's testimonies about receiving support based on their family background, challenges and the reasons behind their offenses. Individualized treatment plans are some of the Pre-trial diversion services provided at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre according to the response provided by one of the juvenile offenders. They explained that.

“Havatiudze havo zvinhu zvakafanana.Vanotitora 1-1 vachitarisa kuti munhu ega problem yake ndeyei.Inin hangu ndiri kudzidziswa kuti ndodzora sei hashu dzangu asi mumwewo anenge achiudzwa zvakasiyana nezvangu.”

(They didn't just treat us all the same. They talked to us one-on-one to figure out what each of us needed most. For me, it was learning to control my temper. For someone else, it might have been something different).

To further augment the above sentiments, another 16 year old juvenile offender added that:

“Diversion manje iri bho pakuti inondibatsira pamaproblems angu.Vaitarisa kwandinobva, mhuri yedu nekuti chii chiri kundinetsa.Vaindipa masolutions aindererana neproblem yangu.sekuti kana paine chandaita chiri wrong vaindibatsira kudealer nacho seindividual coz vanoziwa kuti everyone ane problem iri different neyeumwe.Zvakaita kuti ndive munhu aakutozivawo kuti mamwe machallenges anoitwa sei”.

(The pre-trial diversion program was good at understanding and helping me with my own problems. They looked at things like where I came from, my family, and the things I struggle with. They gave me the right kind of help that suited my needs. For example, if I had gone through something difficult, they talked to me about it, or if I needed to make

better choices, they taught me skills to do that. They knew that everyone is different and that it's important to give personalized care. This really helped me make progress and become a better person by overcoming challenges and making positive changes in my life).

4.4.4 Reparation or compensation

The program includes reparation or recompense for victims who have incurred losses as a result of the juvenile's activities (such as theft or violence). This encourages restorative justice by encouraging the perpetrator to accept responsibility and reconnect with the victim's family. When asked what pre-trial diversion programs are available at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre, one of the key informants responded:

“We have employed reparations, sometimes known as recompense, in circumstances when the victim has suffered a loss, such as theft and assault in which the victim has been hurt and must pay hospital fees. This alternative requires the offender's parent or guardian to compensate for the loss experienced, which helps to maintain good ties between the families involved in the case.”

To further support the above suggestion, a 16 year juvenile offender added:

“Sezvo munhu wandaive ndarova akanga akuvara akanorapwa kuParirenyatwa Hospital uko, takanzi tibhadhare Mari yese yakashandiswa pakurapwa kwake kusanganisira yetransport yaaishandisa kuenda kuchipatara. Pamwe chete yaitopfuura kuma US\$40”

(Because the individual I had battered had been injured and treated at Parirenyatwa Hospital, we were instructed to refund all costs incurred for that person's treatment, including those spent on transportation while they were visiting the hospital. Overall, it exceeded \$40)

4.4.5 Mediation

Mediation is a constructive conflict resolution procedure in which a neutral third-party mediator helps disputing parties toward a mutually accepted agreement. Mediation enables victims and offenders to confront harm, accept responsibility and establish common ground by promoting active listening and open conversation. This method promotes healing, reparation, and personal growth while also increasing community safety and lowering recidivism. Mediation, which resolves disagreements in a constructive and courteous manner, provides a restorative justice approach that benefits all parties involved. During face-to-face interviews, the occupational therapist corroborated the claim by saying:

“We offer mediation as a Pre-Trial Diversion service at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre. Our trained mediators facilitate open dialogue and empathy, empowering parties to take responsibility and make amends, promoting healing and reduced recidivism”

4.4.6 Police cautions

Police cautions serve as a reprimand for minor offenses, often stemming from peer pressure rather than a lack of guidance. These cautions can be delivered on the spot or formally at a police station with a diversion officer and the juvenile's parent's present. From the face to face interviews conducted, a participant stated that:

“Police caution is used for juveniles who commit trivial offences not necessarily as a result of lack of counselling but as a result of peer pressure”

Another key informant, the psychologist, added that:

“The police reprimand juvenile offenders without even charging them of the offence committed, and they usually do that on the spot we catch them committing those crimes.

Another alternative they use is formal caution where they caution them in the presence of the diversion officer and their parents”

A young offender also supported the above assertions by outlining that:

“Ndakatsiurwa pandaive ndaenda kucourt nemumwe mupurisa so akanditi ndisazoparazve mhosva coz zvinosungisa nekuendesa kujeri”

(I was warned when I was at court by a certain police officer against committing offences as it leads to arrests and attracts imprisonment).

4.4.7 Community service

Community service is an important component of pre-trial diversion programs because it promotes restorative justice, rehabilitation, accountability, personal growth and reduced recidivism. It also engages the community, provides cost-effective alternative sanctions, and provides victims with a sense of justice and closure, ultimately contributing to a more holistic approach to justice. In discussing one of the diversion programs, the rehabilitation psychologist stated:

“I can confirm that community service is indeed used in Zimbabwe as a Pre-Trial Diversion service. We've seen great success with this approach, as it allows offenders to take responsibility for their actions and make amends through constructive contributions to their community. Community service helps offenders develop a sense of purpose, empathy and accountability, which are essential for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. It's a valuable component of our Pre-Trial Diversion programs”

4.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS IN ZIMBABWE IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS.

Pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe show promise in reducing recidivism among child offenders. The program tackles both behavioral changes through therapy and skill development, fostering hope for the future. It delves into the root causes of crime with approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and trauma-informed care. Additionally, the program facilitates family reconciliation and equips youth with tools for positive change and legal awareness. These combined efforts create a path for a brighter future for participating young offenders.

4.5.1 Attitude and behavior change

Research findings showed that the pre-trial diversion has been effective in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders through changing their attitudes and enhance positive behavior change through therapeutic sessions. Participants reported improved self-awareness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. They expressed a greater respect for authority figures and the law. They developed a sense of responsibility and empathy towards society. From a face to face interview, the rehabilitation's occupational therapist who was a key informant submitted that:

“Yes, I have observed positive changes and improvements in the behavior and mindset of child offenders who have participated in the pre-trial diversion program. Through occupational therapy interventions, we have witnessed increased self-awareness, improved emotional regulation and enhanced problem-solving skills among participants. They have shown a greater willingness to engage in meaningful activities and explore alternative ways of coping with challenges, leading to a reduction in negative behaviors associated with criminal activities.”

A 14 year juvenile offender supports the above sentiments by stating that:

“Ndingangoti kubva pandakapinda muprogram iyi ndakatoona kuti hunhu hwangu hwachinja nekuti ndaakuremekedza nekuteedzera mitemo nekuti tinoenda kumaworkshop kwatinombodzidziswa nezvekukosha kwakaita mitemo kuma plus ndakatozooona kuti mitemo yakaiswa kuti itichengetedze kwete kuti chinhu chakashata endee ndakaona futi kuti mitemo ndiyo inoita kuti tigare zvakana saka ndava munhu anotevedzera mitemo kubva zvandakapinda muprogram ye diversion”.

(Since participating in the pre-trial diversion program, I have noticed a positive change in my attitude towards authority figures and the law. Through workshops and discussions, I have gained a better understanding of the importance of respecting authority and following the law. The program has helped me develop empathy and a sense of responsibility towards society. I now see authority figures as individuals who are there to guide and protect us, rather than adversaries to rebel against. I have learned to appreciate the value of law and order in creating a safe and harmonious community).

4.5.2 Skills development

The program equips children with life skills like communication skills, Problem-solving skills, Self-awareness, Stress management, financial literacy and conflict resolution as well as positive alternatives to criminal behavior. Participants learn to manage anger and frustration, reducing the risk of conflict. They gain valuable vocational skills, increasing their employability and reducing the temptation to resort to crime. A juvenile offender who participated in face to face interview answered the question about how the program has been effective in making sure they would not repeat offenses and their response was:

“Ehe diversion yakandibatsira kuti ndisiyane nekuita zvinhu zvinosungisa. Yakandipa mukana wekuti ndigadzirise hunhu hwangu nekuti futi ndizive mamwe maWays ekuDealer nemachallenges. Kuburikidza nekundidzidzisa mamwe maskills zvakaite kuti ndive munhu anoziva zvekuzoita kana ndikasangana nemiyedzo inogona kuzoda kuti ndipare futi mhosva.”

(Yes, the pre-trial diversion program has indeed helped me in staying away from criminal activities. It gave me a chance to reflect on my actions, learn from my mistakes, and develop alternative ways of dealing with challenges. By providing me with positive role models and teaching me essential life skills, the program empowered me to make better decisions and resist the temptations that may lead me back to criminal behavior.)

4.5.3 Fostering optimism

The program instills hope for the future, motivating participants to stay on a positive path. It equips them with tools to deal with challenges and resist temptations that could lead to recidivism. Outlining the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion to young offenders, a juvenile offender participating in a Focus Group Discussion highlighted that:

“Program iyi mukoma kaa! Yakaita kuti ndikwanise kunyatsofunga zvakanaka. Yakandidzidzisa kuti ndinodzora sei hashu dzangu plus nekungotsamwa-tsamwa kkkkk (Laughing) zvaizoita kuti ndirwe nevanhu. Saka yakandipawo tarisiro yekuti ndichazovawo munhu akanaka asingaite zvakashata izvi zvinosungisa”.

(The program definitely got me thinking straight. It gave me tools to deal with anger and frustration, stuff that used to land me in fights. It gave me hope for the future and also it

made me realize that in the future I will become a good person who stays away from criminal activities).

4.5.4 Addressing underlying causes of criminal activities

The findings of this research also indicated that the program is not only concerned about outcomes of children's delinquent behaviors but it also scrutinizes the root causes of their criminal activities and address them so that in the future, these children would not repeat offenses. The program goes beyond punishment and delves into the root causes of a child's criminal behavior. Approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy address negative thought patterns and trauma-informed care tackles underlying trauma. The occupational therapist in a face to face interview explained that:

“In facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of child offenders, we utilize various therapeutic and counseling approaches tailored to individual needs. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) has proven beneficial in helping participants identify and modify negative thought patterns and develop healthier coping strategies. Trauma-informed care approaches are utilized to address any underlying trauma that may contribute to criminal behavior. Additionally, social skills training, anger management techniques and vocational rehabilitation interventions are incorporated to enhance participants' functional abilities and improve their chances of successful reintegration into society”.

4.5.5 Family reconciliation

The program has been credited by participants for providing juvenile offenders with a platform for reconciling with their families and friends. The program provides a platform for open communication and reconciliation between child offenders and their families. Family counseling

helps address issues that may have contributed to criminal activity. A 15 year juvenile offender narrated that:

“Diversion yakaita kuti tinyatsowirirana nefamily yangu plus nema friend’s angu futi.Pataiita macounseling mhamha vangu varipo takanyatsotaura zvinhu zvakaita kuti ndizoita zvemadrugs .Kare pese apa ndaisambotaura namhamha vangu nyaya dzakadaro but ndakazouvaudza”.

(The pre-trial diversion program has provided a platform for open communication and understanding with my family and friends. Through family counseling and support, we have been able to address the underlying issues that may have contributed to my involvement in criminal activities. All along I used not to discuss with my mother issues behind my involvement in taking drugs but I then told her).

4.5.6 Equipping children with tools for positive change

The study also revealed that the program provides young offenders with almost everything they need to prevent future crimes. Through educating the juveniles about the consequences of being involved in criminal activities, through counselling sessions and also through therapeutic sessions, the key informants concurred that juvenile offenders become equipped hence less likely commit offenses in the future. In a face to face interview, the psychiatrist narrated that:

“While repeat offenders exist, it doesn't necessarily mean the program is ineffective. Here is why, changing behavior and attitudes takes time. The program equips children with tools and resources, but building a new life takes continued support and effort. We at Mandipa Hope are constantly evaluating the program and looking for ways to improve. We consider

factors like working with external agencies to ensure access to education, employment opportunities and mental health services that support long-term success”.

In support of the above view, another key informant who was the rehabilitation’s psychologist, outlined that:

"The program does not guarantee instant success, as there may be obstacles along the way. However, it provides these young individuals with the necessary tools to make improved choices and construct a promising future."

4.5.7 Awareness raising

Participants complimented the programme for boosting awareness among misdirected juveniles. Juvenile offenders and key informants agree that before committing the offense, several juvenile offenders were unaware that their actions were illegal in Zimbabwe.

A 15 year old juvenile offender narrated that:

Ndakabatsirwa nechirongwa ichi kuziva zvinhu zvakawanda zvamitemo.Ndakabva ndatanga kuziva kuti zvimwe zvinhu zvatinoita kana tatsamwa kana kufurirana zvinogona kutisungisa.Tangoonawo vanhu vachiputa fodya nekunwa doro vachirovana zvichingoperera ipapo tisingazive kuti zvinoendesa kumapurisa asi ndava kuziva.

(This training helped me learn a lot about the law. I now understand that some actions we take as a consequence of anger and peer pressure will land us in the hands of the authorities. We grew up witnessing people smoking, drinking alcohol, and fighting but not reporting it to the police, so I didn't even realize that assault is an offense that will involve the police, but as a consequence of the training, I'm now aware of that.)

In a face to face interview, the psychiatrist added that:

“As per my experience, I have seen many children admitting that they did not know that the actions they did constituted criminal acts in the country, so the programme has allowed some of the juveniles to know that unlawful acts they commit as children may be considered as criminal actions and this may help them to desist from such actions and alerting their friends that what they might be doing constitutes criminal offences and risk being taken to jail”

4.6 CHALLENGES FACED BY MANDIPA HOPE REHABILITATION

4.6.1 Navigating Program Structure and Expectations

One of the challenges noted by the juvenile offenders at Mandipa Hope rehabilitation is the adaptation to the rules provided at the center which aligns with the program’s orientation. A 15 year old juvenile offender in a focus Group Discussion explained:

“Ndozvinzwisisa hangu kut mitemo yepanapa yakakosha asi pamwe pachu inozonyanya amana pane pamwewo pandinenge ndichida kumbotambawo nemafriends angu then ndotonzi ndiite zvimwe zvinhu of which ndinenge ndisina kuzvijaira”

(I understand. Rules are important, but sometimes they felt really strict, especially when I just wanted to have fun with my friends. It was hard to get used to having a schedule and things I had to do instead of doing whatever I wanted).

In concurring with the fellow juvenile offender’s statement, the other one added that:

“Imwe challenge yandakasagana nayo ndeyekujaira marules epano neenvironment but you know zvinozongojairika hazvo mbijana”

“One of the challenges was adjusting to the structured environment and adapting to the rules and regulations of the program. It took time to develop discipline and adhere to the routines and expectations but I gradually adapted”.

4.6.2 Psychological Barriers to Self-Disclosure

The study’s findings revealed that another challenge is of juvenile offenders being uncomfortable to disclose background information to the counselors so that they could be provided with necessary assistance the need. In a face to face interview, a juvenile offender explained.

“Yaah ndakabhaiza but munoziva kut pamwe pachu zvatinenge takaita hazvizotaurike pavanhu especially kumadiscussions uko haaa maI ndakatozotanga kufeeler comfortable after madays”.

(Talking about why I messed up wasn't exactly my idea of fun. It felt embarrassing and vulnerable, especially in group sessions. It took a while before I felt comfortable enough to be honest).

4.6.3 Reintegration and social support

The occupational therapist highlighted the challenge of resisting negative influences and peer pressure that may exist outside the program. This underscores the need for ongoing support and strategies to develop positive social networks. After being asked about the challenges faced in the pre-trial diversion, the occupational therapist who was one of the key informants replied:

“One challenge is resisting negative influences and peer pressure that may still exist outside the program. The temptation to revert to familiar patterns and associations can be strong. Additionally, reintegrating into the community and rebuilding relationships can be challenging, especially if there is a lack of support or limited opportunities available.

Overcoming these difficulties often requires ongoing support, consistent effort, and the development of alternative coping strategies to replace negative behaviors”.

The above findings were also confirmed by the psychiatrist who was also one of the key informants. The psychiatrist pointed out the potential stigma associated with juvenile offenders, making reintegration into the community difficult. The program's focus on skills training and education can help equip juveniles to overcome these obstacles. He explained that:

“Participating in the pre-trial diversion program may have exposed them to societal stigmas or prejudices. Society sometimes views individuals involved in criminal activities, even when they are children, in a negative light. This stigma can result in judgment, discrimination, or limited opportunities for reintegration. Overcoming societal prejudices and proving personal growth and rehabilitation can be an additional challenge during and after completing the program. However, the program's emphasis on education, skills training, and therapy helps equip them to face and overcome these obstacles”.

4.6.4 Programmatic and resource constraints

4.6.4.1 Limited trust and rapport

The findings of the research suggested that it is difficult to convince a juvenile to express and disclose every information that they need due to lack of trust. The occupational therapist in a face to face interview explained that:

“Supporting child offenders in the pre-trial diversion program can be difficult for a few reasons. Another challenge is gaining their trust and making them feel comfortable with the program. They might be unsure or doubtful about it at first. It takes time and effort to

build a good relationship with them so they feel safe sharing their needs and taking part in therapy.”

4.6.4.2 Lack of coordination

Findings from participants showed that it takes a lot of collaborations and coordination to make sure that every child meet their needs. By having these collaborations with other stakeholders it becomes easy for resource mobilization. Therefore, the organization is lacking in this aspect, hence becoming a challenge. The psychologist among one of the key informants explained that:

“Helping child offenders access the services they need can be difficult. Things like mental health support and educational resources may not always be available or easy to access. It depends on things like money, community resources, and partnerships. To make sure child offenders get the help they need, it may require working with other service providers, collaborating with professionals in the center, and speaking up for them. Solving these challenges might mean finding creative solutions, making connections, and finding different resources when needed”.

4.6.4.3 Infrastructure and material resources

From the narratives of the participants, there is inadequate infrastructure at Mandipa Hope rehabilitation centre to support Pre-Trial Diversion. Material resources are also lacking as revealed by the participants during interviews.

Responding to a question on the challenges being faced in the implementation of the Pre-trial diversion programme at Mandipa hope, one of the juvenile offenders stated that;

“Haaa, twumaRoom twunoshandiswa pano mal. Vamwe vedu tinenge tinema Asthma. Mhepo haitombopinde zvekudaro. Just imagine mauya kuGroup Counselling Session makatsikirirana.

(The rooms utilized are something else. Some of us have asthma. There is no decent ventilation. Imagine attending a Group Counselling Session in such badly ventilated rooms.)

The psychiatrist also highlighted that:

“As of now we are still facing a challenge in terms of infrastructure, there are very few offices or courts for these juveniles in particular. More still, children with disabilities especially physical disabilities may not easily step into these offices. Again, we are facing challenges in terms of finding conducive rooms for family group conferencing and mediation among others.”

They further extended their view by explaining that:

“We lack adequate infrastructure to conduct counselling sessions with juvenile offenders. We share offices and other cases continuously come to that same office that we are supposed to conduct thorough sessions and as a result we will be forced to quickly finish the session to accommodate other cases”

4.6.4.4 Limited diversion options

In a face to face interview, the occupational therapist explained that another challenge was that the services concerning the Pre-trial diversion services were limited. They revealed limitations in the types of diversion options available, such as educational opportunities. Expanding the program's scope could benefit more juveniles. In their response, they said:

“As PTD we do not have the diversion options that allow us to take children to school, but as social workers we use our skills as brokers to link children with resources so that they do not continue offending”

4.6.4.5 Ineffective monitoring and evaluation

The psychologist pointed out the lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the program's effectiveness and adjust approaches as needed. In a face to face interview, after being asked another challenge faced at the organisation, the psychologist, as one of the key informants, answered:

“I can also say there is lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation. Counselling is supposed to be ongoing and so is supervision of children undertaking diversion activities including monitoring and evaluation of the offender’s response to diversion, but as a result of a number of challenges both financial and logistical, supervision is barely done”

4.6.4.6 Lack of co-operation

The findings of this research showed that parents, whose children are under the pre-trial diversion program are not cooperating with the program’s requirements. The occupational therapist reported instances of non-cooperation from parents, particularly when they underestimate the consequences of their child's actions. Engaging families in the rehabilitation process is vital. The occupational therapist confirmed this assertion by saying:

“Some juvenile offenders and their parents are not co-operative especially once they know that by virtue of being a child and the offense committed being petty, they will not be incarcerated. They will choose not to come for counselling sessions even if they have the means to do so”

4.6.5 Technological challenges

According to the findings, the PTD program lacks enough technological backing. The program's lack of a method for tracking juvenile offenders' previous encounters with the law makes it hard to establish their eligibility for diversion.

From the interviews conducted, one of the key informants precisely stated that;

“We do not have methods in place to identify past involvement with the law in adolescents presented for diversion, so we rely on their replies to determine whether they are first-time or repeat offenders. We do have a case contact book for juvenile offenders, but it does not include the criminal history of those who migrated”

4.6.6 Legal uncertainties

Another problem encountered during pre-trial diversion is a lack of legislative mechanisms to govern the program's operation. The lack of formal legislation governing PTD programs causes considerable uncertainty in execution. A clear legal foundation may improve program efficacy.

One of the primary informants stated that:

“Since the child justice bill is still being worked on, there is currently no specific legal framework guiding the implementation of the PTD program. Instead, it is guided by the consolidated guidelines and the prosecutor general's discretion to decline prosecution.”

4.6.6.1 Unavailability of Identity Validation Documents

Participants disclosed that the lack of birth certificates hampered every step of the process, from the police's initial arrest to the point at which they needed to be referred to a diversionary activity

or procedure. This is true since proving one's identity and age requires a birth certificate. In light of this element, the following is what a participant in focused group discussions said:

“Hazvisi easy kuwana rubatsiro kuPre-Trial Diversion program kana usina birth certificateri noratidza zita nemakore ako chaiwo. Saka vamwe munongozivawo kut tinenge tisitorina mabirth acho.”

(If one does not have a birth certificate that verifies their identity and age, it is difficult to receive assistance under the PTD program. Thus, the majority of us will not possess these birth certificates.)

Another participant complimented by expressing that:

“Ini ndakatombonzi makore angu haasiriwo nenyaya ye yebody yangu yakakura iyi. So I’m saying unogona kutozoendeswa kuCourt kuna kut zvinozonetsa kuti uzogamuchirwa kune marehabilitation centres anoda mabirth certificates”

4.6.7 Misconceptions

Some people of the community are discouraged from using PTD programs because they believe they promote delinquent conduct. Public education initiatives ought to tackle these misunderstandings.

4.6.7.1 Beliefs and Perceptions about Juvenile Delinquency and its Causes

Submissions given by participants also demonstrated that perspectives on the causes of juvenile offending by the community or family members had a major influence on juveniles’ access to PTD program. Juvenile antisocial behaviour is generally believed to be influenced by evil spirits; hence, exorcism may be a better course of action to deal with these demons than participation in a PTD

program. Here are some findings from focus group discussions that some of the members shared to bolster this:

“ZvePTD izvi hakusi kunopedzerana time here coz zvimwe zvinhu izvi zvinotoda kunamatorwa kuti zvipere”.

(PTD is a waste of time; there are topics that have demonic powers and should be discussed with prophets or other spiritual advisors)

Then, another participant also supported the above view saying:

“Ndiri seni hangu, gogo vangu vakatoimboiramba nyaya yekuenda kuRehabilitation iyi vachiti zvinoda kushandirwa nekuti zvandinoita izvi ndakatore dzera baba vangu vaiita zve madrug vasati vafa.”

(Regarding myself, my grandmother first disagreed with the notion of enrolling in a diversion program, stating that I should contact Masowe shrines and seek spiritual support instead, since she believed my actions were a trait I got from my late father)

4.6.7.2 Lack of knowledge

The young offenders who were questioned showed that they were unaware of the Pre-trial diversion program before they committed the offense. Expert information was sought by key informants to validate the statements made by the minors.

A 14 year juvenile offender stated that:

“Ndaisatomboziva kuti kune chinhu chinonzi Pre-Trial diversion ini ndakatozotanga kuzviziva after ndapara mhosva yekutora zvinodhaka”

(I did not know that there was this programme until I committed this offence of drug and alcohol consumption)”

From a face to face interview, a key informant submitted that:

“The program appears to treat children leniently, which presents an issue since raising community knowledge of PTD shouldn't give the impression that you're pushing kids to commit crimes in the hopes that PTD would come to their aid.”

4.7 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE

4.7.1 Post-Program Support Services

One of the measures that can be put in place to reduce recidivism according to the findings of this research is continuous support after the rehabilitation. Juveniles expressed concerns about finding employment after release, particularly due to the stigma associated with a criminal labels. This lack of employment opportunities can create a cycle of recidivism, as juveniles struggle to meet their basic needs and may be pressured back into criminal activity. A 15 year juvenile offender explained that:

“Tinodawo support kana tichinge tabva pano munongozivawo kuti kutsvaga basa kunonetsa especially wambopara mhosva.Maybe veMandipa vachatibatsirawo kuwana mabasa kana kutidzidzisawo zvinozoita kuti tisazonetsekane nekuwana mabasa”

(We need more support after leaving the program. Finding a job is tough, especially with a record. Maybe Mandipa Hope could connect us with employers who understand our situation or help us develop skills to get a good job).

4.7.2 Mentorship Programs

Another measure is to find mentorship from someone who has been in the same situation and made it to positive behavior change. Mentors can serve as positive role models, offering encouragement, advice, and a sense of connection to someone who understands their experiences. This is according to the suggestion from one of the juvenile offenders in a focus group discussion. They suggested that:

“Kuwana munhu wekutauro naye aimbova muSame situation after tabva pano I think zvinogona kubatsira”.

(Having someone to talk to outside the program, someone who's been there and made it out, would be a huge help).

4.7.3 Family Involvement and Therapy

One juvenile expressed the need for family members to participate in counseling sessions, promoting a more unified approach to rehabilitation. Families often play a significant role in a juvenile's life and their understanding and support are essential for successful reintegration. In answering the question on what measures should be put in place to prevent recidivism, a 16 year old juvenile said:

“Ndofunga hangu kuti vabereki vamgu vanofanira kunge varipowo paye pandinenge ndichipihwa counselling kuitira kuti vanzwisisewo zvimwe zvinhu zvinokonzera kuti ndipare mhosva maybe vanotozonzwisawo zviru nani vondipawo support kumba”

“My family needed help understanding what I was going through. Maybe including them in some sessions or offering family therapy could bridge the gap and give us a better support system at home”.

4.7.4 Religious support

Since evil spirits are always assumed to play a factor in kids' anti-social behaviour, exorcism may be a better course of action to deal with them than a pre-trial diversion program. Here are some findings from focus group discussions that some of the members shared to bolster this:

“ZvePTD izvi hakusi kunopedzerana time here coz zvimwe zvinhu izvi zvinotoda kunamatorwa kuti zvipere”.

(PTD is a waste of time; there are topics that have demonic powers and should be discussed with prophets or other spiritual advisors)

4.7.5 Providing thorough assessments

A rehabilitation psychiatrist emphasized the importance of identifying each juvenile's specific needs, strengths, and challenges to tailor rehabilitation plans. A one-size-fits-all approach to rehabilitation is unlikely to be effective, and addressing the root causes of delinquency is crucial for preventing recidivism. The provision of thorough assessment is considered as one of the measures that can be useful when put in place in order to reduce re-offending. The rehabilitation psychiatrist proposed that:

“I think there should be the conducting of thorough assessments to identify the specific needs, strengths, and challenges of each child offender. This information can guide the development of individualized rehabilitation plans and interventions. By understanding the unique factors contributing to their involvement in criminal behavior, we can tailor our approach to address those areas effectively.”

They further explained that:

“Incorporating trauma-informed care approaches can help to address underlying traumas that may contribute to criminal behavior. Providing counseling, therapy, and support specifically tailored to their traumatic experiences can help in their healing process and reduce the risk of reoffending. Understanding and addressing the impact of trauma is crucial for promoting long-term rehabilitation and reducing the likelihood of future criminal involvement.”

4.6.6 Enhance collaboration and communication:

Participants indicated that there should be open communication and collaborations among all the stakeholders involved in this program so that the program would smooth-flow. Regular meetings and case conferences involving social workers, therapists, educators, and other professionals can facilitate a more holistic approach to rehabilitation. Open communication ensures all parties are working towards the same goals and that the juvenile receives comprehensive support. One of the key informants suggested that:

“Organizing regular meetings and case conferences where social workers, therapists, educators, and other professionals involved in the program can come together to discuss individual cases, share insights, and coordinate their efforts effectively. These collaborative discussions allow for a holistic understanding of the child offender's progress, challenges, and needs, fostering a multidisciplinary approach to their rehabilitation.”

The occupational therapist also emphasized this view by proposing that:

“Yeah, there should be also the provision of interdisciplinary training sessions or workshops to enhance understanding and collaboration among different professionals. By

learning about each other's roles, perspectives, and expertise, professionals can develop a shared language and common goals. This facilitates effective communication, teamwork, and a cohesive approach to supporting child offenders throughout their rehabilitation journey."

4.7.7 Collaboration and Co-operation

Data from in-depth interviews with juvenile offenders and from Focus Group Discussions reflects that participants propose increased collaboration between the government, the diversion committee, NGOs and the community, and co-operation of stakeholders and parents/guardians of juvenile offenders.

During face to face interviews, one of the key participants submitted that:

"Government, the PTD committee, non-state actors and the community all need to collaborate to ensure that children do not commit crimes"

A participant in a focus group discussion indicated that:

"Co-operation of other committee members and the community at large by looking after the children and make sure they do not commit crimes may assist in improving the programme's performance"

A juvenile offender participating in an in-depth interview adds that:

"Vabereki vanofanira kuitawo zvavanenge vanzi vaite neve kudiversion mukuedza kubatsira mwana kuchinja hunhu hwake"

(Parents should do as per what they are required to do aligning to the program's obligations in trying to foster positive behaviour change upon children)

4.7.8 Allocating resources to stakeholder

Since resource limitations accounted for the majority of the obstacles, the participants recommended that optimizing resource allocation be the top priority in order to increase the program's efficacy.

From an in-depth interview, a key informant stated that:

“Enabling stakeholders with the necessary resources to perform their tasks efficiently is essential for the program's seamless operation. These include the material and financial resources needed to put some of the diversionary choices into practice, such family case conferences and placement in educational and rehabilitation facilities.”

4.7.9 Expediting the process of harmonization and enactment of Bills into Law

The realization of juveniles' rights to restorative justice, general welfare, and protection from the harsh criminal justice system will remain a motion that is nearly impossible as long as legal instruments and bills that interfere with juvenile justice administration are not harmonized or aligned and enacted into law, respectively, according to participants, especially the key informants. Thus, one of the key informant interviewees hinted to the following as a proposed intervention measure:

“In particular, the Children Amendment Bill and the Child Justice Bill should be signed into law as soon as possible. The government must now move quickly to align or harmonize existing laws and bills with current legislation. This measure is desperately needed to provide funding for the creation of a distinct juvenile justice system that is kid-friendly and has a strong legal foundation that will effectively guide diversion procedures.”

4.7.10 Raising Awareness

Budgetary restrictions and a lack of awareness on the part of juvenile offenders, their families, and the society at large are further barriers preventing them from accessing PTD services, according to participant submissions. One of the young interviewees made the following suggestion:

“I think vanhu vazhinji vanifanirwa kudzidziswa nezve Pre-trial diversion nekuti vazhinji vanoizivisa kana vapara mhosva plus government inofanira kuisawo support nekuwedzera zvinenge zvichishota”.

(Given that the majority of us learned about the PTD program only after the law was repealed, it is necessary that the majority of people be informed about it. Once more, the government has to allocate enough funds for this initiative)

4.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Drawing upon research findings and the experiences of program participants, the study argues that pre-trial diversion serves as a powerful tool for promoting positive change and reducing the likelihood of future offenses. The qualitative findings and the positive experiences of program participants offer a compelling argument for the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in reducing recidivism among child offenders.

Based on the objective which seeks to highlight the pre-trial diversion services in Zimbabwe, findings from research conducted at Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre shed light on the multifaceted approach employed by pre-trial diversion (PTD) programs to rehabilitate juvenile offenders highlighting their emphasis on restorative justice, rehabilitation and individualized treatment plans. These programs offer a crucial intervention point, diverting young people away

from the potentially damaging consequences of the formal criminal justice system (UNICEF, 2019).

The research underscores the diverse range of Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) services available at Mandipa Hope. Unlike a singular approach, these programs provide a menu of options, with counseling emerging as a central pillar (Najavits, 2012). Participants highlighted the effectiveness of both individual and group therapy sessions in fostering self-reflection and equipping them with essential life skills. These sessions delve into the root causes of delinquent behavior, allowing juveniles to understand their motivations and develop healthy coping mechanisms to navigate future challenges (Fonseca, 2017). The testimonials resonate with the restorative justice principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 37 & 40) (UNICEF, 2019), emphasizing the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration over punishment. This alignment with restorative justice principles strengthens the program's approach by focusing on healing and addressing the underlying causes of offending behavior, ultimately aiming to reduce recidivism.

Individualized treatment plans are another hallmark of the Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) programs offered at Mandipa Hope. Research underscores the critical shift away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach in favor of tailoring interventions to each juvenile's specific needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). This emphasis on personalization is echoed in participant testimonials, where youths describe receiving support specific to their family background, unique challenges and the reasons behind their offenses. This individualized approach aligns with best practices in juvenile justice reform as advocated by UNICEF. The organization highlights the importance of addressing the underlying causes of delinquency to prevent recidivism (UNICEF, 2019). By creating plans that target a juvenile's specific risk factors, Mandipa Hope's PTD programs move beyond simply

addressing the offense and aim to equip young people with the tools they need to make positive choices and avoid future criminal behavior.

Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) programs at Mandipa Hope also incorporate the concept of reparation or compensation for victims. This restorative justice principle aligns with the work of scholars like Zehr (2005) who emphasize the importance of repairing the harm caused by crime. By encouraging juveniles to take responsibility for their actions and mend relationships with those they have harmed, PTD programs promote accountability and prosocial behavior. For instance, reimbursing victims for losses incurred due to the juvenile's offense, such as assault fueled by drug use, allows them to make amends and contribute to healing within the community.

Police cautions serve as another key component of PTD programs, particularly for minor offenses often stemming from peer pressure. Documented in research by Youngs et al. (2018) as a successful intervention for early delinquency, these cautions act as a timely reprimand, delivered either on the spot by police officers or formally at a station with a diversion officer and the juvenile's parents present. This approach offers an opportunity for early intervention, potentially preventing further delinquent behavior before it escalates. By incorporating restorative justice principles and utilizing police cautions, Mandipa Hope's PTD programs address the immediate offense while also aiming to foster a sense of accountability and prevent future criminal activity.

The findings of this research prove that, one of the key strengths of the Mandipa Hope program lies in its holistic approach, addressing both behavioral change and the root causes of criminal behavior. The program goes beyond simply teaching right from wrong. Through therapeutic interventions and workshops, participants gain valuable life skills like self-awareness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving (McCart, Ruehlman, & Webb, 2017). Therapists like occupational therapists utilize techniques that enhance self-control and provide participants with alternative

coping mechanisms for dealing with anger, frustration and peer pressure (Schaefer & Long, 2007). This empowers them to make better choices in challenging situations, reducing the risk of impulsive or reckless behavior that could lead back to crime. These findings from Mandipa Hope highlight the program's strengths in this area, particularly its emphasis on a multifaceted approach which aligns with theories and research presented in the literature review.

Furthermore, the program delves into the underlying factors that may have contributed to a child's initial offense. Childhood trauma, dysfunctional family dynamics, and socioeconomic issues can all play a role in pushing a child towards criminal activity (Burton, Cullen, & Travis, 1990). The program acknowledges this complexity and employs various therapeutic approaches, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), to address negative thought patterns and trauma-informed care to tackle past experiences that may be influencing behavior (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). By addressing these underlying issues, the program seeks to create a lasting foundation for positive change, reducing the likelihood of future offenses stemming from unresolved problems. Furthermore, by addressing the underlying causes of offending behavior, the program seeks to prevent the negative labels associated with the criminal justice system (Link & Cullen, 2006). Labeling theory (Becker, 1963) proposes that being labeled a criminal can have a self-fulfilling prophecy effect, pushing individuals further into criminal behavior. The Mandipa Hope program disrupts this cycle by focusing on rehabilitation and equipping youth with the tools for success.

The findings of this research outlines that another crucial aspect of the program is fostering a sense of optimism and hope for the future. Many child offenders come from backgrounds marked by instability and lack of opportunity (Teplin, McClelland, Messinger, & Dulcan, 2002). The program provides a supportive environment where these young people can develop a positive outlook. Through workshops and individual counseling sessions, participants gain the tools to manage

anger and frustration, cultivate a sense of responsibility towards society, and believe in their own potential for leading a productive life (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). This newfound hope serves as a powerful motivator to stay on the right path and resist the temptations that could lead back to criminal activity. From the findings of this research, it is proved that the program's focus on rehabilitation and reintegration aligns with the principles of reintegrative shaming theory (Braithwaite, 1989). This theory suggests that shaming can be a positive force for change when it is delivered within a supportive context. The Mandipa Hope program avoids public condemnation and instead focuses on restorative justice practices that hold young offenders accountable for their actions while also providing them with the support they need to become productive members of society.

The program also recognizes the importance of family involvement in the rehabilitation process. While traditional programs focus on individual behavior modification, a growing body of research emphasizes the crucial role of family involvement in reducing recidivism, the tendency to re-offend. The Mandipa Hope program exemplifies this approach, recognizing the importance of family dynamics in the rehabilitation process and fostering open communication and reconciliation between child offenders and their families. Studies have consistently identified dysfunctional family environments as a significant risk factor for recidivism (Aos et al., 2006). Fragile family structures, characterized by poor communication, lack of support, or conflict, can contribute to a child's delinquency. The Mandipa Hope program directly addresses this issue by facilitating family counseling sessions. These sessions create a platform for open communication, allowing families to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues that may have contributed to the child's offense. This fosters healing and rebuilding trust, which are crucial for creating a supportive and stable environment upon the child's reintegration into society. The program's focus on

strengthening family bonds aligns with research on the effectiveness of family-based interventions in reducing recidivism (Van Voorhis, Vaiva, & DeLateur, 2011). By equipping families with the tools to better understand and support their children, the program creates a more positive and stable home environment. This, in turn, reduces the risk factors that may lead the child back into criminal behavior.

Finally, the Mandipa Hope program empowers children by raising awareness about the legal consequences of their actions and equipping them with the tools they need to stay out of trouble. Workshops and discussions educate participants on the law, dispelling any confusion about what constitutes a crime (McCart et al., 2017). This newfound awareness allows them to make informed choices and avoid situations that could lead them back into the justice system. Research suggests that legal education programs can be effective in reducing recidivism by fostering a better understanding of the law and its consequences (Aos et al., 2006). Additionally, the program provides crucial resources such as educational opportunities. Equipping young offenders with the skills to secure employment and build a positive life reduces the economic pressures that can often push them towards criminal activity (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). Studies have consistently shown a link between recidivism and unemployment or lack of economic opportunities (Petersilia, Turner, & Beck, 2009). By providing a pathway to economic reintegration, the Mandipa Hope program addresses a significant risk factor for re-offending. This focus on education and economic empowerment complements the program's emphasis on family involvement. By equipping young offenders with knowledge, skills, and opportunities, the program empowers them to make positive choices and build a successful future, reducing the likelihood of returning to crime.

However, adaptation and program structure present an initial hurdle for juvenile offenders entering the PTD program. Research by Burrell et al. (2017) highlights the difficulty participants' face in

adjusting to the structured environment and rigid rules at the center (Burrell, MacKenzie, & Wright, 2017). This rigidity can be counterproductive, as juveniles may struggle to adapt and feel a sense of disconnect. The desire for more flexibility and opportunities for socialization with friends underscores the importance of striking a balance between structures and fostering a sense of normalcy for these adolescents (McNeill, Ezokola, & Higgins, 2014). As research by McNeill et al. (2014) suggests, a sense of normalcy is crucial for successful rehabilitation. This challenge highlights the need for a nuanced approach within PTD programs. While structure provides stability and clear expectations, inflexibility can hinder adaptation and a sense of normalcy, potentially hindering rehabilitation efforts. Striking a balance between these seemingly opposing forces is vital for creating a program that effectively supports reintegration and reduces recidivism.

Furthermore, psychological barriers further complicate engagement in the program. Self-disclosure and feelings of shame emerged as key concerns, with participants expressing discomfort in revealing personal information and past mistakes to counselors during group sessions. This aligns with research by Steiner & Fraser (2014) which highlights shame as a significant barrier to help-seeking behaviors in adolescents (Steiner & Fraser, 2014). Shame can prevent young people from admitting their vulnerabilities and seeking the support they need. Building trust and creating a safe space for open communication are crucial steps in overcoming these barriers and fostering a therapeutic environment. As Ford-Hopkins (2016) emphasizes in her work on building rapport with young people, establishing trust allows them to feel comfortable expressing themselves freely (Ford-Hopkins, 2016). By addressing these psychological barriers, the Mandipa Hope program can create an environment conducive to positive change, where participants feel empowered to confront their past mistakes and work towards a brighter future.

Integration and social support pose significant challenges upon program completion. The occupational therapist working at Mandipa Hope emphasizes the difficulty of resisting negative peer pressure that may exist outside the program's supportive environment. This concern aligns with research by Kroneman et al. (2018) who highlight the significant influence of peer groups on adolescent behavior, both positive and negative (Kroneman et al., 2018). Equipping juveniles with strategies to develop positive social networks and resist negative influences becomes essential for successful reintegration (Catalano et al., 2016). Research by Catalano et al. (2016) emphasizes the importance of social support networks in preventing recidivism. Youths surrounded by positive influences are more likely to make positive choices and avoid returning to criminal behavior. Furthermore, the psychiatrist highlights the potential stigma associated with juvenile offenders, making reintegration into the community difficult. This is a well-documented challenge, as research by Lösel & Bender (2003) points out. The stigma attached to a criminal record can make it difficult to find employment, housing, and positive social connections. The program's focus on skills training and education can help equip juveniles to overcome these obstacles and demonstrate personal growth. By developing marketable skills and achieving academic success, participants can build self-confidence and gain the respect of their communities, fostering a smoother reintegration process.

Adding another layer of challenges are programmatic and resource constraints. The occupational therapist highlights the initial difficulty of gaining trust and rapport with juvenile participants, hindering their engagement in the program (Landreth, (2016). Building positive relationships is crucial for successful rehabilitation, as research by Landreth (2016) emphasizes. This underscores the need for trained personnel skilled in establishing rapport and trust with adolescents. The psychologist further emphasizes the need for better collaboration and coordination among

stakeholders to ensure access to essential services like mental health support and educational resources. Research by Clyde & Roehl (2004) highlights that a lack of collaboration can create fragmented services and hinder positive outcomes for adolescents in need (Clyde, M., & Roehl, 2004). Collaboration between youth workers and mental health professionals in schools). Limited access to these resources can hinder a juvenile's ability to fully benefit from the program. Additionally, participants and staff indicated a lack of proper infrastructure, including poorly ventilated rooms and limited material resources. These shortcomings can negatively impact the program's effectiveness and highlight the need for improved resource allocation.

In addition, the research also reveals limitations in the types of diversion options available, such as educational opportunities. Expanding the program's scope could benefit more juveniles by offering a wider range of pathways to rehabilitation, such as vocational training or apprenticeships aligned with local job markets (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). This aligns with research by Lipsey & Cullen (2007) who highlight the link between economic opportunities and reduced recidivism. The lack of continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the program's effectiveness and adjust approaches as needed is another critical concern raised by the psychologist. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation practices, as advocated by The National Institute of Justice (2018), is essential for ensuring the program remains responsive to the needs of juvenile participants and achieves its intended outcomes. Instances of non-cooperation from parents, particularly when they underestimate the consequences of their child's actions, pose an additional challenge. Engaging families in the rehabilitation process is vital, as research by Andrews & Bonta (2011) suggests. By addressing these limitations and incorporating best practices in program design and evaluation, the Mandipa Hope PTD program can maximize its effectiveness in reducing recidivism and fostering positive youth development.

Technological challenges further hinder program efficiency. The program's lack of a system to track juvenile offenders' past encounters with the law makes it difficult to assess their eligibility for PTD and tailor interventions accordingly. This highlights the need for investment in data management systems, as recommended by the Pew Charitable Trusts (2016) in their report on improving juvenile justice data collection. Investing in technological solutions could streamline eligibility assessments, ensuring appropriate placement within the justice system and efficient allocation of resources. The absence of specific legislation governing PTD programs in Zimbabwe creates another layer of complexity. This lack of a clear legal framework can hinder program effectiveness, as inconsistencies in application and a lack of standardized protocols can emerge. Establishing clear legislation informed by research on effective PTD practices would strengthen the program and promote its consistent application throughout the justice system (Maguire & Morgan, 2017). For instance, clear guidelines could define eligibility criteria and program protocols, ensuring a more uniform and effective approach to PTD across the country. By addressing these technological and legal shortcomings, the Mandipa Hope PTD program can improve its efficiency and ensure its practices align with best practices in juvenile justice reform. A more streamlined system for assessing eligibility and a clear legal framework would allow the program to better serve juvenile offenders and contribute more effectively to reducing recidivism. Nevertheless there are the measures that can be put in place in order to curb the challenges faced through the diversion process. According to the findings of this research, the major hurdle for juveniles leaving the PTD program is finding employment, especially with a criminal record. This lack of opportunity creates a vicious cycle, pushing them back towards criminal activity to meet their basic needs. To bridge this gap, Mandipa Hope can establish partnerships with businesses willing to hire program graduates. These partnerships can create internship, apprenticeship, or full-

time employment opportunities. Additionally, developing vocational training programs equips juveniles with marketable skills, increasing their employability and reducing reliance on criminal activity for financial gain.

Mentorship programs emerged from the research as another valuable intervention to address the challenges faced by the Mandipa Hope PTD program. Matching juveniles with mentors who have overcome similar challenges fosters hope and provides ongoing guidance beyond the program's structured environment. This aligns with research by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (2014) which highlights the positive impact of mentoring relationships on adolescent development. Mentors act as positive role models, offering encouragement, advice and a sense of connection to someone who understands their experiences. The program can partner with community organizations or recruit volunteers to establish a mentorship program, ensuring mentors receive ongoing training and support. This approach aligns with recommendations by the National Mentoring Resource Center (2019) which emphasizes the importance of mentor training and support. Fostering trust and relatability between mentors and juveniles is crucial, as shared experiences can offer valuable insights and inspiration for positive change. Youths connected with mentors who have overcome similar challenges may be more receptive to guidance and motivated to pursue a positive path. By incorporating mentorship programs alongside efforts to address technological and legal shortcomings, the Mandipa Hope PTD program can create a more comprehensive and effective support system for juvenile offenders. This combination of interventions can address the various challenges faced by participants, both within the program and upon reintegration into society.

Family involvement is another crucial factor for long-term success. The research highlights the need for family therapy sessions, as advocated by The National Institute of Corrections (2018), to

address underlying issues within the home environment that may have contributed to the juvenile's delinquency. These sessions can equip families with communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and positive parenting techniques, as documented by Barton et al. (2018) in their study on the effectiveness of family therapy in juvenile justice. Including families in the program fosters a sense of accountability and responsibility for positive change, creating a stronger support system for the juvenile upon reintegration into society. This collaborative approach aligns with best practices in juvenile justice reform, as promoted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP, 2019).

In addition, a one-size-fits-all approach to rehabilitation is unlikely to be effective for juvenile offenders. Research by Andrews and Bonta (2011) emphasizes the need for risk and need assessments to tailor interventions to individual circumstances. Therefore, implementing comprehensive assessments that go beyond simply evaluating the offense committed is essential. These assessments, as suggested by the American Psychological Association (2014) in their guidelines for assessing youth, could include psychological evaluations, social history interviews, and trauma screenings. By understanding the individual factors contributing to a juvenile's delinquency, such as abuse, neglect, or violence, the Mandipa Hope PTD program can develop individualized rehabilitation plans that address specific needs and learning styles. This aligns with the principles of the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, a widely supported approach in juvenile justice reform (National Institute of Justice, 2018). Incorporating trauma-informed care can further address these underlying issues. This approach, as described by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014), involves creating a safe and supportive environment, recognizing the impact of trauma on behavior, and utilizing therapeutic approaches that promote healing and resilience. By implementing comprehensive assessments,

individualized plans, and trauma-informed care, the Mandipa Hope PTD program can move away from a one-size-fits-all approach and create a more effective and responsive rehabilitation system for juvenile offenders. This shift in focus, from simply addressing the offense to understanding the underlying causes, allows the program to equip young people with the tools and support they need to make positive choices and avoid future criminal behavior.

Finally, building on the need for individualized rehabilitation plans, open communication and collaboration among stakeholders are essential for program effectiveness. Regular meetings and case conferences involving social workers, therapists, educators, and other professionals can facilitate a more holistic approach to rehabilitation, as highlighted by Sigurdardottir (2009) in her research on interagency collaboration in youth justice. The program should establish these meetings to ensure all parties are working towards the same goals reducing recidivism and fostering positive youth development and that the juvenile receives comprehensive support tailored to their individual needs. Additionally, a communication protocol can be developed, as recommended by the American Correctional Association (2014) in their standards for juvenile correctional services. This protocol would ensure information is shared effectively among stakeholders, including social workers, probation officers, families, and educators. This collaborative approach allows for a coordinated effort to address a juvenile's unique challenges and facilitates adjustments to the rehabilitation plan as needed, maximizing the program's effectiveness.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter provided a thorough presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings. It covered the ways in which the Pre-trial diversion has assisted children in conflict with the law to prevent future crimes. Under that objective, diversion services and benefits of the programme to

juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe were all explored. Challenges faced in the implementation of the diversion programme in Zimbabwe with the case of Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation centre and the measures that can be put in place to enhance the programme's performance have also been presented, analysed and discussed in this chapter. Findings have been compared and contrasted from the observations made by other researchers and the verdicts of several scholars at local, regional and international level. Also enshrined in this chapter was the degree to which the study findings are related to the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the study's conclusions, analyzes its implications for the social work profession, identifies topics for further research and offers suggestions for enhancing the Pre-trial diversion program's efficacy. It also summarizes the findings from the preceding chapter. It highlights the main findings and their importance, looks at the real-world applications for social work professionals, points out any possible research gaps and provides recommendations on how to improve the program's results.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research investigated the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in curbing recidivism among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. Drawing upon existing research and relevant background information, the study employed qualitative methods, including face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from the Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Centre in Harare. Four key objectives guided the research and these are; evaluating the national effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs, identifying existing services within the country, exploring the challenges faced by the specific rehabilitation center, and finally, determining potential measures to decrease recidivism rates. This comprehensive approach aimed to provide valuable insights into the impact of pre-trial diversion in Zimbabwe.

5.2.1 PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION SERVICES IN ZIMBABWE

This research into pre-trial diversion (PTD) programs in Zimbabwe highlights a multifaceted approach aimed at rehabilitating juvenile offenders and fostering restorative justice. This research

found that the programs prioritize diverting youth away from the formal criminal justice system. A cornerstone of this approach is counselling, delivered through individual and group sessions to help young people understand their actions and develop positive coping mechanisms. The research revealed that therapy sessions provide a safe space to explore the root causes of negative behaviour and equip juveniles with skills for managing emotions, effective communication, and better decision-making. Recognizing the unique needs of each offender, Pre-trial diversion program incorporate individualized treatment plans that may encompass detoxification, addressing co-occurring disorders, aftercare planning and psychiatric evaluation. The research also revealed that community service is a crucial component of pre-trial diversion programs as it promotes restorative justice, rehabilitation, accountability, personal growth and reduced recidivism while also engaging the community, providing cost-effective alternative sanctions and offering victims a sense of justice and closure, ultimately contributing to a more holistic approach to justice. The research discovered that when a juvenile's actions resulted in harm, the program facilitates reparation to the victim or their family, promoting accountability and reconciliation. Finally, the research showed that for minor offenses, police cautions serve as a reprimand, delivered on the spot or formally with a diversion officer and the juvenile's parents involved. Overall, these findings demonstrated that Pre-trial diversion program in Zimbabwe prioritize rehabilitation and restorative justice through a range of services tailored to address the specific needs of each young offender.

5.2.2 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION PROGRAMS IN ZIMBABWE IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE.

The research paints a promising picture for the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion program in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders. The program's multifaceted approach goes beyond

punishment to address both behavioural changes and equip youth with the tools they need to build a positive future. The research indicated that therapy sessions cultivate positive behavioural shifts through improved self-awareness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. Participants develop a newfound respect for authority and a decreased inclination towards criminal behaviour. Furthermore, the research found that the program equips young offenders with essential life skills like communication, conflict resolution and vocational training, empowering them to deal with challenges constructively and resist criminal temptations. The research revealed that Pre-trial diversion fosters optimism for the future by equipping youth with tools to navigate challenges and resist criminal activity, fostering a sense of purpose and a vision for a brighter path. The program delves deeper than simply addressing the offense and it tackles the root causes by employing approaches like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and trauma-informed care to address negative thought patterns and past traumas that may contribute to delinquency. The investigation showed that family reconciliation is also promoted through a platform for open communication and rebuilding relationships with families, addressing underlying issues that may have contributed to the initial criminal activity. The research also identified that equipping children for positive change is a key element. Pre-trial diversion equips them with the knowledge, resources and support needed to make positive choices and build a successful future. This includes education on the legal consequences of their actions, access to counselling and mental health services. Finally, the investigation concluded that the program raises awareness about the legal implications of behaviour. Many juveniles were unaware that certain behaviours constituted offenses and the program empowers them to make informed decisions. Overall, these findings suggest that Pre-trial diversion program in Zimbabwe offer a promising approach to reducing recidivism by promoting

rehabilitation, restorative justice and equipping young offenders with the tools they need to become law-abiding and productive members of society.

5.2.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY MANDIPA HOPE REHABILITATION

This research highlights various challenges faced by Mandipa Hope's pre-trial diversion (PTD) program for juvenile offenders, indicating areas that require improvement. The research revealed that some juveniles struggle to adhere to the program's structure and expectations, feeling constrained by its requirements. This research also found that psychological barriers hinder the disclosure of crucial personal information necessary for effective treatment. In addition, reintegration after release presents difficulties due to negative peer pressure and potential lack of social support. The research also discovered that the program itself confronts limitations, such as establishing trust with juveniles, acquiring adequate resources to address their diverse needs, insufficient facilities, limited diversion options and inadequate monitoring and evaluation protocols. The investigation indicated that non-cooperation from parents and guardians further complicates matters. The findings implied that the absence of a system to track juvenile offenders' legal history hampers eligibility assessment, while unclear legislation adds ambiguity to program implementation. Furthermore, the study revealed that limited access to the program arises from the lack of birth certificates for some juveniles. Carrying on, the findings also suggested that misconceptions about PTD programs, both within the community and regarding the causes of juvenile delinquency, discourage participation due to the spread of false and misleading information about the program. Additionally, low program awareness restricts its reach. Finally, the analysis also indicated that, effectively addressing these challenges is crucial to fortify the Mandipa Hope PTD program, enhance its capacity for rehabilitating juvenile offenders, and ultimately reduce recidivism rates.

5.2.4 MEASURES THAT CAN BE PUT IN PLACE TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM AMONG CHILD OFFENDERS IN ZIMBABWE

This research discovered that reducing recidivism rates among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe requires a multifaceted approach. This research highlights the importance of post-program support services, such as employment assistance or job training, to help juveniles reintegrate into society and avoid the cycle of reoffending. The research findings suggested that mentorship programs can provide invaluable guidance and support from individuals who have successfully navigated their own rehabilitation journey. In addition, the study identified that, family involvement in therapy strengthens family bonds and equips families to support the juvenile's successful reintegration. For some juveniles, incorporating religious practices into the rehabilitation process can address underlying spiritual needs. The research also found that effective rehabilitation requires individualized assessments to identify each juvenile's unique challenges and tailor programs accordingly. Furthermore, the analysis identified that collaboration among professionals and stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, communities, and parents, is essential to create a comprehensive support system. Finally, the research verified that expediting legislative reforms and raising public awareness about pre-trial diversion programs are crucial steps towards a more effective juvenile justice system in Zimbabwe. By implementing these measures, the investigation confirmed that Zimbabwe can create a system that prioritizes rehabilitation, reduces recidivism, and fosters a brighter future for young offenders.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, the research concluded that pre-trial diversion can be an effective tool in reducing recidivism rates among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe, but only if they are coupled with comprehensive post-program support services and a multi-stakeholder approach to

rehabilitation. The research also concluded that individualized assessments are crucial for tailoring effective interventions and collaboration among professionals, stakeholders and the community is key to creating a holistic support system. Furthermore, legislative reform to establish a sound legal framework for diversion programs and public awareness campaigns to address the stigma associated with juvenile offenders are necessary for long-term success. Therefore, the findings indicated a strong likelihood that by implementing these recommendations, Zimbabwe can build a juvenile justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation, reduces recidivism and empowers young offenders to become productive members of society. The research also concluded that further research on the long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of diversion programs, alongside exploring their replicability, will continue to inform best practices and pave the way for a more effective and humane juvenile justice system in Zimbabwe.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the research findings, the researcher recommends that:

- Mentorship programs must be established to provide invaluable support. Pairing juveniles with individuals who have successfully navigated their own rehabilitation journey offers invaluable guidance and a positive role model. These mentors can offer practical advice, emotional support, and encouragement as the juveniles reintegrate into society.
- Therapy sessions should include family members to foster stronger bonds, rebuild trust and equip them to provide essential support. Families play a significant role in a juvenile's life and their active participation is supposed to be a cornerstone of their overall well-being and positive development.
- To break the cycle of reoffending, juveniles need opportunities for employment. The program should connect them with understanding employers who are willing to overlook

past mistakes or help them develop marketable skills through training workshops. This equips them to confidently enter the workforce and build a sustainable future.

- Incorporating religious support can be beneficial. This may involve consulting with religious leaders or incorporating spiritual practices to address the root causes of delinquent behavior. Faith can provide additional strength and motivation for those who find solace in their religious beliefs.
- Thorough assessments must identify each juvenile's unique needs, strengths and challenges. Understanding their background, including any underlying traumas is essential for addressing the root causes of criminal behavior. This trauma-informed approach allows programs to tailor support and promote healing and growth.
- There should be effective communication and collaboration between professionals from various fields. Regular case conferences and information sharing ensure a holistic and coordinated approach. By working together, stakeholders can pool their expertise and resources to provide comprehensive support and increase the chances of successful reintegration.
- There should be an increased collaboration between government agencies, diversion committees, NGOs, communities and parents/guardians so that by sharing knowledge, resources, and aligning efforts, a more comprehensive approach to preventing juvenile offenses can be established.
- Stakeholders like NGOs and government agencies need sufficient funding to operate effectively. Adequate financial and material resources are essential for successful program implementation. This includes funding for programs, staff training, and access to essential facilities and materials.

- Policy makers should prioritize the enactment of child-friendly juvenile justice legislation. Reviewing and updating existing bills, such as the Children Amendment Bill, ensures these laws support the best interests of juveniles and provide a legal framework that promotes rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Raising public awareness about post-program support services and the importance of juvenile rehabilitation is vital. This should target not only the juveniles themselves but also their families and the broader community. Additionally, allocating a sufficient budget to support these programs ensures their effectiveness and sustainability. By raising awareness and providing necessary resources, society can contribute to creating a supportive environment that enables successful rehabilitation and reintegration for juvenile offenders.
- The government should give the rapid passage of the Child Justice Bill and the harmonization of current legislation first priority in order to guarantee a strong, long-lasting, and successful Pre-Trial Diversion Program. One of the main obstacles to restorative juvenile justice is to be overcome with the help of this extensive legislative framework.
- The government ought to look into South Africa's best practices for diversion programs, as there is a greater selection of options there that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of young offenders. Programs such as Wilderness Therapy, which has demonstrated efficacy in addressing the issues faced by young people with behavioral and intellectual disabilities, may fall under this category.
- Social work education needs an update. Curriculums must reflect the evolving juvenile justice system, and course content should expand to include legal theory, child development, and mental health. Most importantly, ditch the textbooks for real-world

experiences like court procedures and diversion programs to prepare graduates for the realities of the job.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the summary of study findings specifically the major findings. Following the summary were study conclusions. The chapter explored the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in reducing recidivism among juvenile offenders in Zimbabwe. While the program itself holds promise, the chapter emphasizes a broader approach for successful rehabilitation. This includes post-program support like job training, individualized assessments to address root causes, and a multi-stakeholder approach involving professionals, NGOs and the community. Legislative reform and public awareness campaigns are also crucial. By implementing these recommendations, Zimbabwe can prioritize rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and empower young offenders to become productive members of society.

REFERENCES

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). *The psychology of criminal conduct and rehabilitation*. Andrews and Bonta, Incorporated.
- Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, S. K. (1990). *Correctional classification and treatment: Psychological foundations*. Lexington Books.
- Aos, B., McGuire, J., & Rowe, R. (2006). Reducing reoffending by addressing underlying causes of crime. *Prison Service Journal*, 165(2), 22-30.
- Berwick, D. M. (2016). The science of improvement. *Journal of Neurological Physical Therapy*, 40(3), 139-141.
- Braithwaite, J. (1989). *Crime, shame, and reintegration*. Cambridge University Press.
- Burton, V., Cullen, J., & Travis, J. (1990). *Controlling crime in America*. Rutgers University Press.
- Butts, J. A., & Gottfredson, D. C. (2009). *What works in juvenile justice?* National Research Council.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Fossey, E. (2017). The importance of flexibility and openness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1-3.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press.

- Gomera, G. L. (2016). Juvenile offenders and pre-trial diversion officers' experiences and challenges of the pre-trial diversion programme: A case study of Harare Province, Zimbabwe. (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).
- Hijmans, E., & Kuyper, H. (2020). Semi-structured interviews: A suitable method for researching subjective experiences. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 17(3), 257-273.
- Kumar, R. (2020). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Springer.
- Lelekov, A., & Kosheleva, I. (2008). Juvenile offenders in the Russian Federation: A comparative perspective on pre-trial diversion. *Russian Journal of Criminology and Criminalistics*, 1(2), 61-70.
- Lipsey, M. W., & Cullen, J. M. (2007). The effectiveness of correctional treatment: A review of research. *Crime and Delinquency*, 53(4), 430-471.
- Lohr, S. L. (2019). *Sampling: Design and analysis*, 3rd ed. Duxbury Press.
- Lundquist, T. M., et al. (2020). The effectiveness of rehabilitation programs: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 64(10), 1053-1074.
- Mandipa Hope Rehabilitation Center: Rehabilitation center in Harare, n.d. Retrieved April 16, 2024, from <https://www.facebook.com/mandipahope2021/>
- Maramba, P., & Chireshe, R. (2022). Aftercare support and relapse prevention among individuals with substance use disorders in Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 52(1), 34-45

- McCart, M. R., Ruehlman, L. E., & Webb, J. R. (2017). Meta-analysis of the effects of school-based social-emotional learning programs on social-emotional learning outcomes. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 32(2), 141-158.
- National Institute of Justice. (2005). Pre-trial diversion: A promising approach to juvenile justice. U.S. Department of Justice.
- National Institute of Justice. (2019). The effectiveness of pre-trial diversion for child offenders: A systematic review.
- Ng, M., & Shon, L. (2016). The efficacy of pre-trial diversion in reducing recidivism rates among child offenders in Hong Kong. *Criminal Justice Review*, 41(1), 49-69.
- Odhiambo, O. G. (2014). The domestication of international law standards on the rights of the child with specific reference to juvenile justice in the African context. LAP Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Schaefer, C. E., & Long, P. J. (2007). Effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy for childhood anxiety disorders. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 46(2), 110-121.
- Teplin, L. A., McClelland, G. M., Messinger, E., & Dulcan, M. K. (2002). Course of cocaine dependence and its role in homelessness among a sample of incarcerated men. *Addiction*, 97(1), 79-90.
- UNICEF. (2019). Children in conflict with the law. <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/media/7931/file/MNE-media-MNEpublication391.pdf>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2012). Pre-trial diversion for children: Consolidated guidelines. UNICEF

Van Voorhis, P., Vaiva, G., & DeLateur, A. (2011). Family involvement in juvenile justice: A meta-analytic review of the effects of family therapy and family support programs on recidivism and delinquency. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40(2), 167-180.

Wylie, C. E., & Griffin, M. L. (2018). Reducing recidivism through rehabilitation: A New Zealand case study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 55, 102-112.

Zehr, H. (2005). *Toward a restorative justice: How to repair the harm caused by crime*. Good Books.

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. (2022). *The use of pre-trial diversion for child offenders in Zimbabwe: A report*.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Research Interview

I....., hereby give my consent to participate in a research interview on the topic "**The efficacy of pre-trial diversion in curbing recidivism among child offenders in Zimbabwe.**" I understand that the purpose of this interview is to gather information and insights related to this topic.

I acknowledge that my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. I understand that all information shared during the interview will be treated confidentially and my identity will remain anonymous in any reports or publications.

By signing below, I confirm my understanding of the research interview and willingly agree to participate.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

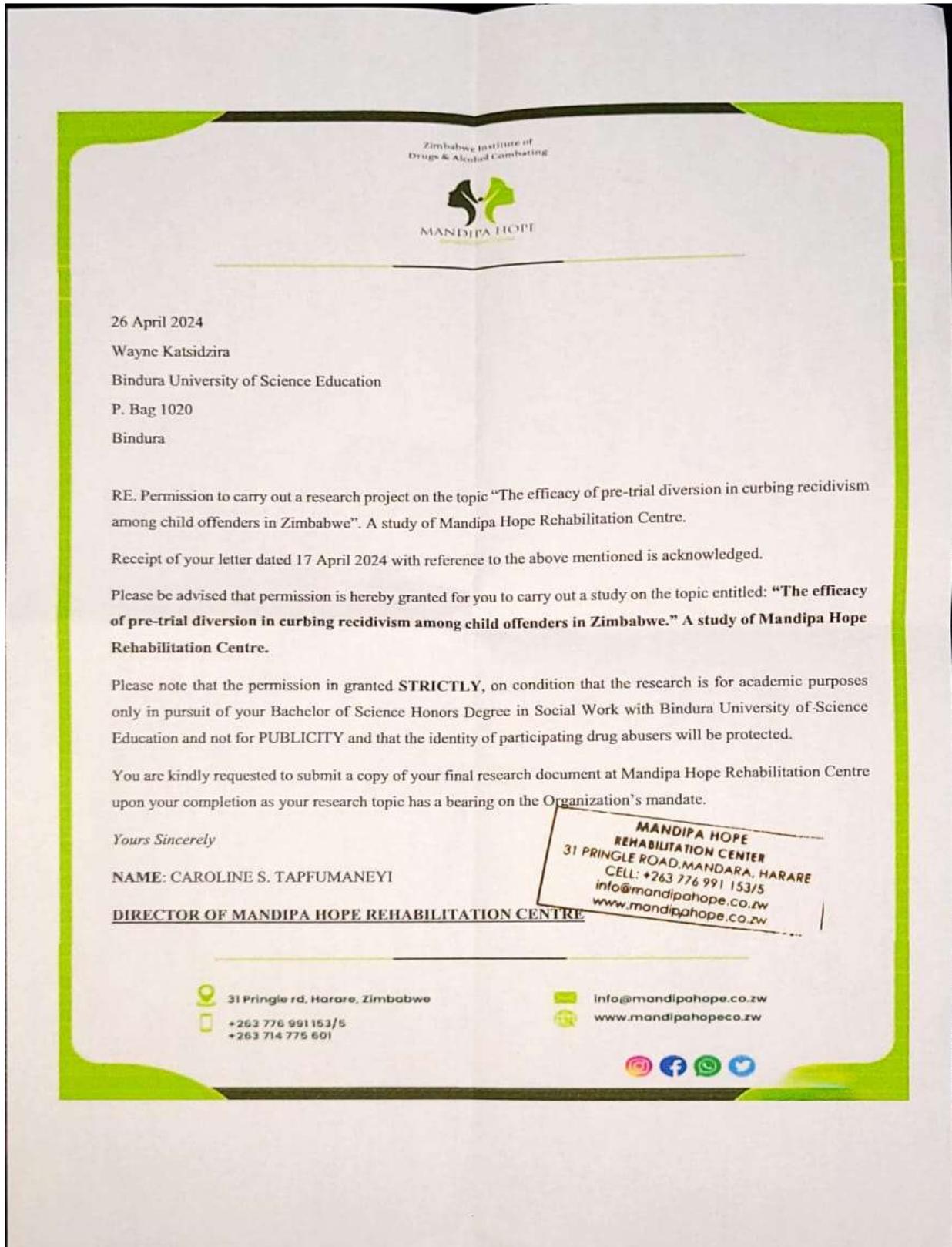
Date: _____



APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH LETTER



APPENDIX 3: APPROVAL LETTER



APPENDIX 4: INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILD OFFENDERS

1. Could you please share your age and gender?
2. How long have you been involved in the pre-trial diversion program at Mandipa Hope?
3. What led to your enrolment in the pre-trial diversion program? (e.g., offense committed, legal process)
4. What specific interventions or support services were provided to you during the pre-trial diversion program?
5. How did the program address your individual needs and circumstances?
6. Do you feel that the pre-trial diversion program has helped you in staying away from criminal activities? If yes, how? If not, why?
7. Were there any challenges or barriers you faced during your participation in the pre-trial diversion program? If so, what were they?
8. Based on your experience, what improvements or modifications would you suggest to enhance the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion in curbing recidivism among child offenders?
9. To what extent do you think these modifications will improve the effectiveness of the program?

APPENDIX 5: INDEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. Could you please provide your name and job title?
2. How long have you been working at Mandipa Hope?
3. What is your educational background or training in psychology and working with young offenders?

4. What specific rehabilitative interventions or approaches are incorporated into pre-trial diversion programs to support the long-term behavioral change in child offenders?
5. What assessments or evaluations are conducted to determine the appropriateness of child offenders for pre-trial diversion programs?
6. In your experience, what are the potential benefits of pre-trial diversion programs for child offenders in terms of reducing recidivism rates?
7. How do pre-trial diversion programs address the underlying causes or factors that contribute to the criminal behavior of child offenders?
8. How do you measure the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs in terms of reducing recidivism among child offenders?
9. In your professional experience, what are the key elements that contribute to the efficacy of pre-trial diversion programs in Zimbabwe?
10. Are there any challenges or limitations you have observed in the current implementation of pre-trial diversion programs for child offenders?
11. How do you think these challenges can be addressed?
12. Based on your expertise, are there any adjustments or improvements that you would recommend to enhance the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion programs for child offenders in Zimbabwe?

APPENDIX 6: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDE

1. In your opinion, what are the key elements or factors that contribute to the overall success of the pre-trial diversion program at Mandipa Hope?
2. What are your thoughts on the long-term outcomes of the program? How do you envision your future after completing the program?

3. Have you noticed any specific changes in your behavior, attitudes, or relationships as a result of participating in the pre-trial diversion program?
4. Are there any additional support services or resources that you believe should be included in the program to further enhance its effectiveness?
5. In your opinion, what are the main goals and objectives of the pre-trial diversion program at Mandipa Hope?
6. How do you perceive the effectiveness of the program in reducing recidivism among young offenders? Have you noticed any changes in yourself or others who have participated?
7. How do you feel the pre-trial diversion program addresses the underlying causes or factors that contribute to criminal behavior among young offenders?
8. What challenges or barriers have you encountered while participating in the pre-trial diversion program?
9. How do you think these challenges can be addressed?
10. How do you think the pre-trial diversion program can be further improved to better meet the needs of young offenders like yourselves?
11. What advice or insights would you give to other young offenders considering or currently participating in the pre-trial diversion program at Mandipa Hope?
12. Have you noticed any specific changes in your behavior, attitudes, or relationships as a result of participating in the pre-trial diversion program?

THE END