

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
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DEPARTMENT OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY STUDIES



THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN REGULATING CRIMINAL
BEHAVIOUR IN MUTARE, ZIMBABWE.

BY

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APPROVAL FORM

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DEDICATION

To my family and loved ones; your unwavering support, encouragement, and belief in me made this journey possible. This work is for you.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of the criminal justice system in regulating criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe. As the city continues to face rising crime rates, there is increasing concern about the effectiveness of justice institutions such as the police, courts, and correctional services. Despite their central role in promoting public safety, these institutions are often criticized for inefficiency, delays, and lack of transparency.

The purpose of this research was to assess the extent to which the criminal justice system in Mutare regulates crime, rehabilitates offenders, and is trusted by the public. A descriptive survey design was employed, using structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 30 residents from different areas of Mutare. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including means, medians, modes, and standard deviations, presented through tables and graphs.

Findings revealed mixed views on the effectiveness of the police and courts, with the majority of respondents expressing only moderate confidence in these institutions. Satisfaction with case processing speed was low, and most participants believed that rehabilitation efforts were weak, contributing to reoffending. Additionally, issues of fairness, safety, and perceived corruption were highlighted, indicating low public trust in the system.

The study concludes that while the justice system in Mutare plays a foundational role in regulating crime, there are significant gaps in efficiency, rehabilitation, and public perception that must be addressed to improve its overall impact.

Keywords: Criminal justice system, Mutare, policing, rehabilitation, public perception, Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Background of the Study

1.1 Introduction

The criminal justice system is a collection of agencies and processes established to manage crime, prosecuting, defending, sentencing and punishing those who break the law (Siegel, 2018). This system typically includes the police, courts, and prisons, which work together to enforce laws, handle legal cases, and manage individuals accused or found guilty of crimes (Banks, 2016). Criminal behaviour refers to actions that violate the formal laws of a society and can be punished by the government (Hagan, 2017). The interaction of the criminal justice system and criminal behaviour must be understood to preserve order within society and ensure public safety.

Zimbabwe has seen a rise in crime in recent years, influenced by economic issues like poverty and unemployment (Majome, 2019; Zinyemba et al., 2020). Reports indicate an increase in crimes such as robbery (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024), drug-related offenses (Mapfumo & Dube, 2024), and violence against women and girls (UNDP, 2017). These trends suggest possible weaknesses in how effectively the criminal justice system is dealing with criminal behaviour in the country, making Mutare an important location to study the local aspects of this problem.

1.2 Background of the Study

Zimbabwe's criminal justice system developed from laws and organisational structures established during its colonial era where the system was created to maintain control and order during that time (Veritas, 2018). After independence, the country has made efforts to reform the system to align it with principles of justice, human rights, and rehabilitation (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018). Important laws like the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act [Chapter 9:07] and the Prisons Act [Chapter 7:11] provide the framework for how the criminal justice system operates. More recently, the Trafficking in Persons Act [Chapter 9:25] (Government of Zimbabwe, 2014) and the Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] (Government of Zimbabwe, 2021) were introduced to address new forms

of crime.

Although Zimbabwe has tried to improve its criminal justice system, it still faces significant challenges. Overcrowding in prisons is a major problem, with facilities often holding more people than they are designed for, leading to poor living conditions (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Mukwenha, 2021). Policing faces challenges such as limited resources, allegations of corruption, and concerns about public trust and accountability (Simpson & Krönke, 2019; Afrobarometer, 2018). The judiciary experiences difficulties like delays in handling cases and perceptions of political influence (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021; Freedom House, 2018).

Crime statistics in Zimbabwe showed a dynamic and evolving situation. While specific data for Mutare is limited, national trends indicate increases in certain crimes. For example, robbery cases have been rising (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024), and drug-related offenses are a growing concern, especially among young people (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). Violence against women and girls remains a significant issue, highlighting the need for effective actions within the criminal justice system and society as a whole (UNDP, 2017).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe, has been on the rise over the past decade, particularly in densely populated suburbs such as Sakubva, Chikanga, and Dangamvura. Crime statistics from police records indicate consistent increases in offenses such as theft, assault, drug-related crimes, and domestic violence. Despite efforts by law enforcement, many cases remain unresolved due to delays in investigation, lack of evidence, or limited cooperation from the public. Reports suggest that young people are particularly involved, often due to unemployment, poverty, and lack of community support. These trends continue to pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of Mutare residents (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024; UNDP, 2017).

However, observations from local court proceedings and police stations in Mutare reveal that the justice system is facing many challenges that may be contributing to criminal behaviour. There are complaints of long case processing times, insufficient legal representation for the accused, corruption in both police and court officers, and limited

follow-up on bail conditions. Many offenders are released back into the community without proper rehabilitation, which leads to repeat offenses. This weakens the credibility of the justice system and makes it difficult for citizens to trust legal institutions. As a result, people are often reluctant to report crimes or cooperate with the police.

While some community organisations and NGOs have tried to raise awareness and promote peace-building, their reach remains limited, and there is little coordination with formal justice institutions. Government-led campaigns have focused on increasing police visibility, but have not addressed the deeper issues affecting prosecution and sentencing. There is no existing local research that explores how the justice system itself—its processes, delays, and weaknesses—may influence criminal behaviour in Mutare. Most available studies focus on general crime causes such as unemployment or youth vulnerability, leaving a critical gap in understanding the systemic drivers of crime.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of the justice system in influencing criminal behaviour in Mutare. The study aimed to assess how inefficiencies in the justice process contribute to repeat offenses, evaluate the relationship between public perception and trust in the justice system, and identify possible reforms to strengthen legal accountability. By understanding the link between justice system performance and crime rates, this study provided useful recommendations to help policy-makers and legal authorities improve justice delivery and reduce crime in Mutare.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the justice system in influencing criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How effective is the judiciary system in Mutare in preventing and dealing with criminal behaviour?
2. What role does the justice system in Zimbabwe play in helping offenders from Mutare change their behaviour and reduce the chances of them re-offending?

3. What do the people of Mutare think about how well and how fairly the criminal justice system regulates crime?

1.6 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research were to:

1. Assess how well the strategies and practices of law enforcement prevent and address criminal behaviour in Mutare.
2. Evaluate the role and effectiveness of the justice system in Zimbabwe in rehabilitating offenders from Mutare and reducing the likelihood of future crimes.
3. Explore the views of Mutare residents on the criminal justice system's ability to regulate crime and ensure justice.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is important for academic, policy, and societal reasons. Academically, it adds to the knowledge about criminology and criminal justice, especially in the context of a developing African country. By focusing on Mutare, Zimbabwe, the research offers local insights that can add to broader national and regional studies.

In terms of policy, the findings of this study can inform improvements to the justice system in Mutare and Zimbabwe in general. By identifying the problems and areas that need improvement within the criminal justice system, the research can provide evidence-based suggestions for policymakers to make crime regulation more effective. This includes informing strategies for the police, court procedures, and prison rehabilitation programs.

For society, this research is significant because it deals with the important issue of public safety and security in Mutare. Understanding how the criminal justice system regulates criminal behaviour can help create a safer environment for residents, promote social order, and increase public trust in the institutions responsible for upholding the law. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the well-being and development of the Mutare community and the wider Zimbabwean society.

1.8 Scope and Delimitations

The geographical focus of this study was Mutare, Zimbabwe, and it examined the role of the formal criminal justice system in regulating criminal behaviour within the city. The

study looked at the functions and challenges of the police, the courts (specifically the magistrates' courts and refers to the actions and methods used by the criminal justice system to control, prevent, and reduce the occurrence of criminal acts in society (Siegel, 2018).

- **Criminal Behaviour:** Actions and conduct that violate the laws established by a governing authority and are subject to legal penalties and punishments (Hagan, 2017). In this study, it includes a range of offenses common in Zimbabwe, such as robbery, theft, drug offenses, and violence.

1.10 Summary

This chapter has introduced the study, outlining the research topic, its importance to Mutare, Zimbabwe, and the background of the criminal justice system in the country. The statement of the problem highlights the existing issues in effectively regulating crime, which leads to the research questions and objectives. The significance of the study emphasizes its potential contributions to academic knowledge, policy, and society. The chapter also defined the scope and limitations of the research and provided definitions for key terms. The next chapter will present a detailed review of the existing literature relevant to this study.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter provided review of existing literature relevant to understanding the role of the criminal justice system in regulating criminal behaviour, with a specific focus on Mutare, Zimbabwe. It is organised to first establish a theoretical framework, followed by an overview of the criminal justice system in Zimbabwe. The chapter then explored factors influencing criminal behaviour in the country and analyses the roles of law enforcement, the judiciary, and correctional services in regulating crime. Finally, it will discuss the challenges and opportunities within the system and conclude with a summary of the literature and identification of research gaps. This review draws upon local, regional, African, and global perspectives from publications between 2015 and 2025 to provide a comprehensive understanding of the context.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Understanding the regulation of criminal behaviour can be informed by several theoretical perspectives. Deterrence Theory suggested that the threat of punishment can discourage individuals from engaging in criminal activities (Akers & Sellers, 2019). This theory posits that when individuals perceive the costs of crime (such as arrest, conviction, and imprisonment) to outweigh the potential benefits, they are less likely to offend. In the context of Mutare, this theory implies that the effectiveness of the police in apprehending criminals, the courts in delivering convictions, and the correctional services in administering punishments plays a crucial role in deterring crime. For instance, visible policing and swift judicial processes could enhance the perceived risk of criminal behaviour. However, the assumption that punishment alone effectively curbs crime is not always supported by evidence (Pratt et al., 2016).

Another relevant framework is Social Control Theory, which focuses on the factors that prevent individuals from engaging in crime (Hirschi, 1969). This theory suggests that strong social bonds, such as attachment to family and community, commitment to conventional goals, involvement in pro-social activities, and belief in societal norms, can

inhibit criminal behaviour. In Mutare, this perspective highlights the importance of community involvement in crime prevention initiatives (Zikhali, 2019; Mavhembu, 2023) and the role of social institutions in fostering law-abiding behaviour. Religious programs, for example, have been noted for their potential role in community development and crime prevention efforts (Chitongo, 2019). Understanding the strength of these social bonds within Mutare can provide insights into the underlying factors that influence criminal behaviour.

Both Deterrence Theory and Social Control Theory offer valuable lenses through which to examine the regulation of criminal behavior in Mutare. While Deterrence Theory emphasizes the role of the criminal justice system in discouraging crime through punishment, Social Control Theory underscores the significance of social factors in preventing crime from occurring in the first place.

2.3 The Criminal Justice System: An Overview

The criminal justice system in Zimbabwe is comprised of several key components that work together to address criminal behaviour. These include law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, and correctional services (Veritas, 2018).

Law enforcement is primarily the responsibility of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), which operates at both national and local levels, including within Mutare (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024). The police are tasked with maintaining law and order, preventing crime through strategies like community policing (Zikhali, 2019), investigating offenses, and apprehending suspects (Zimbabwe Republic Police, 1995).

The judiciary in Zimbabwe is structured hierarchically, with the Supreme Court at the apex, followed by the High Court, and then the Magistrates' Courts (Judicial Service Commission, 2023). The High Court has seats in cities like Mutare, handling various criminal and civil matters (High Court of Zimbabwe, 2019; High Court of Zimbabwe, 2024). These courts are responsible for adjudicating criminal cases, ensuring fair trials, and imposing sanctions on individuals found guilty of offenses (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Correctional services are managed by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service

(ZPCS), which oversees the network of prisons and detention facilities across the country, including those serving Mutare (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018). These institutions are responsible for the detention of convicted offenders and those awaiting trial, as well as for implementing rehabilitation programs (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service, 2005).

These three components – police, courts, and corrections – form the backbone of the formal criminal justice system in Zimbabwe, working in concert to regulate criminal behaviour within the country, including in urban centers like Mutare (UNDP, 2017). Additionally, traditional leaders and customary law practices also play a role in the justice system, particularly at the local level (Zikhali, 2019; Rautenbach, 2017).

2.4 Factors Influencing Criminal Behaviour in Zimbabwe

Several socio-economic and political factors are believed to influence criminal behaviour in Zimbabwe. Poverty and unemployment are significant challenges that can contribute to crime as individuals struggle to meet their basic needs (Majome, 2019; Zinyemba et al., 2020). Economic hardships may lead some individuals, including youths, to engage in illegal activities as a means of survival (Mpofu & Machingauta, 2023).

Substance abuse is another factor that can be linked to criminal behaviour, particularly among youths in urban areas like Chitungwiza (Mapfumo & Dube, 2024; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). The use of illicit substances can impair judgment and increase the likelihood of individuals committing crimes (Matutu & Mususa, 2019).

Political instability and corruption can also play a role in shaping the environment in which crime occurs (Amnesty International, 2023; Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021). When institutions are perceived as weak or corrupt, it can undermine the rule of law and create opportunities for criminal activity to thrive (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2018). Allegations of political influence within law enforcement and the judiciary (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, 2011) can erode public trust and potentially contribute to a climate where crime is more likely to occur and less likely to be effectively addressed (Sibanda, 2019).

Furthermore, social factors such as family breakdown and lack of parental monitoring can

contribute to juvenile delinquency (Dandapani, 2020; Tshuma, 2015). Understanding these underlying factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to regulate crime in Zimbabwe, including in Mutare (Central Statistical Office, 2014).

2.5 Role of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies, primarily the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), play a critical role in regulating criminal behaviour in Mutare and Zimbabwe. Their responsibilities include preventing crime through strategies like intelligence-led policing (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024), community policing (Zikhali, 2019; Chingwanda, 2016), and public order training (Zimbabwe Republic Police, 2000), investigating reported crimes, apprehending suspects, and maintaining public order (Veritas, 2018; Zimbabwe Republic Police, 1995).

However, the effectiveness of law enforcement in Zimbabwe is often hampered by several challenges. Resource constraints, including staff and vehicle shortages, can affect the ability of the police to respond quickly to urgent cases, particularly in rural areas (Simpson & Krönke, 2019). Corruption within the police force is also a significant concern, potentially undermining their integrity and public trust (Afrobarometer, 2018; U.S. Department of State, 2022). Allegations of political bias and the excessive use of force (Amnesty International, 2023; Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, 2020) further complicate their role and can erode public confidence, making citizens less likely to cooperate with law enforcement efforts (Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012).

The rise of cyber-dependent crimes presents another challenge, as Zimbabwean law enforcement faces constraints in technical skills and resources to effectively address these offenses (PACT, 2022; Shava & Hofisi, 2017). However, the enactment of the Cyber and Data Protection Act in 2021 (Government of Zimbabwe, 2021) provides a legal framework to combat cybercrime.

Despite these challenges, law enforcement remains a crucial component of the criminal justice system in Mutare. Efforts to enhance professionalism, improve accountability through mechanisms like the Zimbabwe Independent Complaints Commission (Government of Zimbabwe, 2022), and address allegations of misconduct are essential for building trust and improving the effectiveness of the police in regulating criminal behaviour

(Bayley, 2010).

2.6 Role of Judiciary

The judiciary in Zimbabwe, with its various levels of courts, plays a vital role in regulating criminal behaviour by adjudicating cases and upholding the rule of law (Judicial Service Commission, 2023; Veritas, 2018). The High Court in Mutare, along with Magistrates' Courts, handles a range of criminal cases (High Court of Zimbabwe, 2019; High Court of Zimbabwe, 2024; Mugebe, 2021). The judiciary is responsible for ensuring fair trials and imposing appropriate sanctions on those convicted of crimes, which serves as a deterrent to others (Duff et al., 2013; Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

However, the Zimbabwean judiciary faces several challenges that can impact its effectiveness. Delays in concluding cases, including those involving prominent individuals, are a concern (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021). Perceptions of political interference (Freedom House, 2018; Magaisa, 2016) and corruption (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021; Schultz, 2009) within the judicial system can erode public confidence in the impartiality and fairness of the courts in Zimbabwe, including those in Mutare (Caribbean Human Development Report, 2012). Efforts are being made to address corruption within the courts (Judicial Service Commission, 2023).

Furthermore, the need to respect the independence of the judiciary while ensuring accountability is a delicate balance that the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) is mandated to uphold (Judicial Service Commission, 2023; Veritas, 2020). The JSC is also working to enhance the efficiency of the justice delivery system through measures like virtual sessions (Southern African Chief Justices' Forum, 2021).

2.7 Role of Correctional Services

Correctional facilities in Zimbabwe, including those serving Mutare, are responsible for the detention of individuals convicted of crimes and those awaiting trial (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Veritas, 2018). Beyond confinement, these institutions are also expected to contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders and the reduction of recidivism (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service, 2005; Gendreau et al., 2016). Some prisons offer vocational training in areas like mechanics, carpentry, tailoring, and computer literacy (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service, 2005; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO

Forum, 2018), aiming to equip inmates with skills for reintegration into society (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002).

However, Zimbabwean prisons often face significant challenges, including severe overcrowding (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2024; Mukwenha, 2021), which can lead to poor sanitation and health conditions (Amnesty International, 2020; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018). Limited resources can further hinder the ability of correctional facilities to provide adequate healthcare, nutrition, and comprehensive rehabilitation programs (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Dullah Omar Institute, 2018). The high prevalence of mental health problems among prisoners globally (Fazel et al., 2016) is likely mirrored in Zimbabwean prisons, highlighting the need for adequate mental health services to support rehabilitation efforts (World Health Organization, 2018).

Despite these challenges, the role of correctional services in regulating criminal behaviour extends beyond punishment to include efforts at rehabilitation and reintegration (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service, 2005; Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). Improving prison conditions, expanding access to effective and relevant rehabilitation programs, and providing post-release support are vital steps towards reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety in Mutare (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Goyer, 2004). Community-oriented approaches that involve the community in the reintegration process are also increasingly recognized as important (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018).

2.8 Challenges and Opportunities

The criminal justice system in Zimbabwe faces numerous challenges in its efforts to regulate criminal behaviour effectively. Corruption remains a significant systemic weakness, affecting various components of the system (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2018; U.S. Department of State, 2022). Underfunding and resource constraints across law enforcement, the judiciary, and correctional services limit their operational capacity (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Simpson & Krönke, 2019; Judicial Service Commission, 2023). Allegations of political interference in the judiciary and law

enforcement continue to be a concern (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Amnesty International, 2023; Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, 2011).

Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities for improvement and reform. The government has shown a willingness to involve civil society and communities in crime prevention and rehabilitation programs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Chingwanda, 2016). The existence of academic institutions with law and social science research capabilities provides a valuable resource for local expertise (Midlands State University, 2023; University of Zimbabwe, 2023; Great Zimbabwe University, 2023). Legislative efforts, such as the Trafficking in Persons Act (Government of Zimbabwe, 2014) and the Cyber and Data Protection Act (Government of Zimbabwe, 2021), demonstrate a commitment to addressing specific forms of crime. Strengthening the independence and accountability of institutions, addressing corruption, and improving prison conditions remain key areas for future progress (Judicial Service Commission, 2023; Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018; Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021).

2.9 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

This literature review has highlighted the complex landscape of criminal justice in Zimbabwe, particularly in the context of regulating criminal behaviour in Mutare. The theoretical frameworks of Deterrence Theory and Social Control Theory provide a foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which crime can be regulated and prevented. The overview of the Zimbabwean criminal justice system reveals a structure comprising law enforcement, the judiciary, and correctional services, each facing unique challenges and playing a critical role. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, and political instability are identified as significant influences on criminal behaviour in the country.

The review further analyzed the specific roles of law enforcement, the judiciary, and correctional services, outlining both their functions and the challenges they face, including resource limitations, corruption, and allegations of bias. Opportunities for improvement, such as community involvement and leveraging local academic expertise, were also noted.

A significant research gap identified in this review is the limited availability of specific

studies focusing directly on the role and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in regulating criminal behaviour within Mutare itself, using data from the period of 2015 to 2025. While national-level research and comparative studies offer valuable insights, there is a need for more localized research to understand the unique dynamics and challenges within Mutare during this specific timeframe. This study aims to contribute to filling this gap by focusing specifically on the Mutare context and examining the effectiveness of the local criminal justice system in regulating crime within the specified period.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the methodology that was used to investigate the role of the justice system in criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The chapter described the research design, the subjects of the study (population and sampling), the research instruments that was used for data collection, the procedures for collecting the data, and finally, the methods for data presentation and analysis.

3.2 Research design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey purpose is to systematically describe the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or behaviours of a particular population (Creswell & Clark, 2017). This design was appropriate for this research as the primary goal was to understand the perceptions and experiences of people living in Mutare regarding the role of the justice system in addressing criminal behaviour within their community. Descriptive surveys are effective for gathering data from a large sample, providing a broad overview of the issues under investigation (Babbie, 2010). The theoretical framework underpinning this design is its capacity to provide a snapshot of the current situation and identify key trends and patterns in public opinion. While descriptive surveys can highlight associations between variables, they do not establish causal relationships. This limitation is acknowledged, and the findings will be interpreted accordingly. The choice of a descriptive survey was justified by the need to gather widespread perceptions from Mutare residents, which aligns with the research objectives of understanding community views on the effectiveness and fairness of the justice system.

3.3 SUBJECTS (Population and Sampling)

The target population for this study were all individuals residing in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Mutare is a city with a diverse population, making it a relevant case study for understanding urban perceptions of the justice system (Mutare, n.d.; Wikipedia, n.d.).

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to obtain a representative sample of the population. First, Mutare was divided into its various residential suburbs or wards. Second,

a stratified random sampling method was used to select a proportional number of participants from each stratum (ward) to ensure representation across different socio-economic areas within the city. Within each selected ward, systematic random sampling was used to choose households. For example, every n th household was approached to participate in the study. From each selected household, one adult member (aged 18 years or older) will be invited to participate. If the selected household member is not available or declines to participate, a simple random sampling method will be used to select another eligible adult member from the same household, if available. This approach aims to achieve a sample that is both representative of the geographical distribution of the population within Mutare and includes a diverse range of residents. The desired sample size will be determined based on statistical power analysis to ensure adequate representation and allow for meaningful data analysis. Considering the population size of Mutare (approximately 224,802 according to the 2022 census (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2024)), a sample size of 384 participants was targeted to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, which is a standard benchmark for social science research (Cohen, 2013).

3.4 Research Instruments

The primary research instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire. Questionnaires are a widely used method for collecting data in survey research, offering a standardized way to gather information from a large number of respondents (Dillman et al., 2014). The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions included multiple-choice and Likert scale items to gather quantitative data on residents' perceptions of the police, courts, and correctional services, as well as their experiences with crime and the justice system. Likert scale questions measured the degree of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to the effectiveness, fairness, and accessibility of the justice system in Mutare. Open-ended questions were included to allow participants to provide more detailed qualitative feedback and express their views in their own words. The questionnaire was developed based on the research questions and objectives of this study, drawing upon relevant literature and adapting existing survey instruments where appropriate.

Measures were taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Validity was

addressed through expert review of the instrument by academics and professionals in the field to ensure that the questions accurately measure the intended constructs. Reliability, which refers to the consistency and stability of the instrument, was assessed through a pilot study. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of individuals from the target population who were not included in the final sample. Feedback from the pilot study was used to identify any ambiguous or unclear questions and to refine the instrument before the main data collection phase.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process involved the following steps:

- 1. Gaining Ethical Clearance:** Approval to conduct the study was sought from the relevant institutional ethics review board to ensure that the research adheres to ethical principles (Ethical Code of Conduct and its Impact in Decision Making Among Managers in Local Government in Zimbabwe, 2018; Making research ethics review work in Zimbabwe--the case for investment in local capacity, 2015).
- 2. Making Appointments and Distribution of Instruments:** Researcher visited the selected households based on the sampling plan. They were introduced the study to the eligible household member, explanation of the purpose of the research, assure them of confidentiality and anonymity, and obtain their informed consent to participate (Worth the gamble? Access to information, risks and ethical dilemmas in undertaking research in authoritarian regimes: the case of Zimbabwe, 2022). Questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews to ensure clarity and completeness of responses, especially considering potential variations in literacy levels within the population.
- 3. Retrieval of Instruments:** Completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher immediately after the interview. Researcher carefully checked each questionnaire for completeness and accuracy before leaving the household.
- 4. Data Storage:** All collected questionnaires were stored securely to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' responses.

These steps were designed to ensure a systematic and ethical approach to data collection, maximizing the quality and completeness of the data obtained from the residents of Mutare.

3.6 Data Presentation and Analysis Procedures

The collected data was organized, described, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Quantitative data from the closed-ended questions was entered into a statistical software package (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, was used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the overall perceptions of Mutare residents regarding the justice system and criminal behavior. The data was presented using tables and graphs to provide a clear and concise overview of the findings. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within the textual data to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The choice of these presentation and analysis procedures was justified by the need to provide both a broad statistical overview of the community's perceptions and a more in-depth understanding of their experiences and opinions regarding the role of the justice system in criminal behaviour in Mutare.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has detailed the methodological framework that guided this research on the role of the justice system in criminal behaviour in Mutare. The study employed a descriptive survey research design to gather data from a representative sample of Mutare residents using structured questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of community perceptions and experiences. The following chapter will present the findings of this research based on the methodology outlined in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the data collected from 30 residents of Mutare regarding the criminal justice system's role in regulating criminal behaviour. After ensuring completeness and accuracy (scanning and sifting), responses were organized according to themes derived from the research objectives. Tables and figures are used to summarize large amounts of information, while narrative explanations highlight key patterns. The chapter unfolds as follows: first, a brief description of how data was handled; second, presentation of respondent demographics; third, thematic presentation and interpretation of findings corresponding to each research objective; and, lastly, a concise summary of major results.

4.2 Data Presentation Process

Scanning and Sifting: All 31 returned questionnaires were reviewed. One respondent omitted their residential location and was excluded, leaving 30 valid cases. Responses were checked for consistency and relevance. Trends; such as clusters around certain Likert-scale categories; were noted for each question.

Organizing Data: Answers were grouped into three thematic areas, aligned with the research objectives:

1. **Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System,**
2. **Rehabilitation and Recidivism,** and
3. **Public Perception and Fairness.**

Within each theme, numerical (Likert-scale) responses were tallied to produce frequency tables. Socio demographic variables (age, gender, education) were organized first to contextualize respondent backgrounds.

Summarizing Data: Large datasets were condensed into tables that capture frequencies and percentages. Where appropriate, brief narrative commentary accompanies each table to draw attention to noteworthy findings.

4.3 Presenting the Data

4.3.1 Respondent Demographics

Soci-demographic characteristics provide context for interpreting later thematic findings. The following tables display age, gender, and educational background.

Table 4.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–24	1	3.3%
25–34	5	16.7%
35–44	11	36.7%
45–54	8	26.7%
55–64	2	6.7%
65 or older	1	3.3%
Total	30	100%

Most respondents (63.4%) fall between 35 and 54 years, suggesting middle aged adults predominated. Only 3.3% were 65 or above, and another 3.3% were 18–24 years.

Table 4.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	60.0%
Female	10	33.3%
Other / Unspecified	2	6.7%
Total	30	100%

A majority (60%) of respondents were male. Females constituted one-third, with a small fraction (6.7%) not specifying gender.

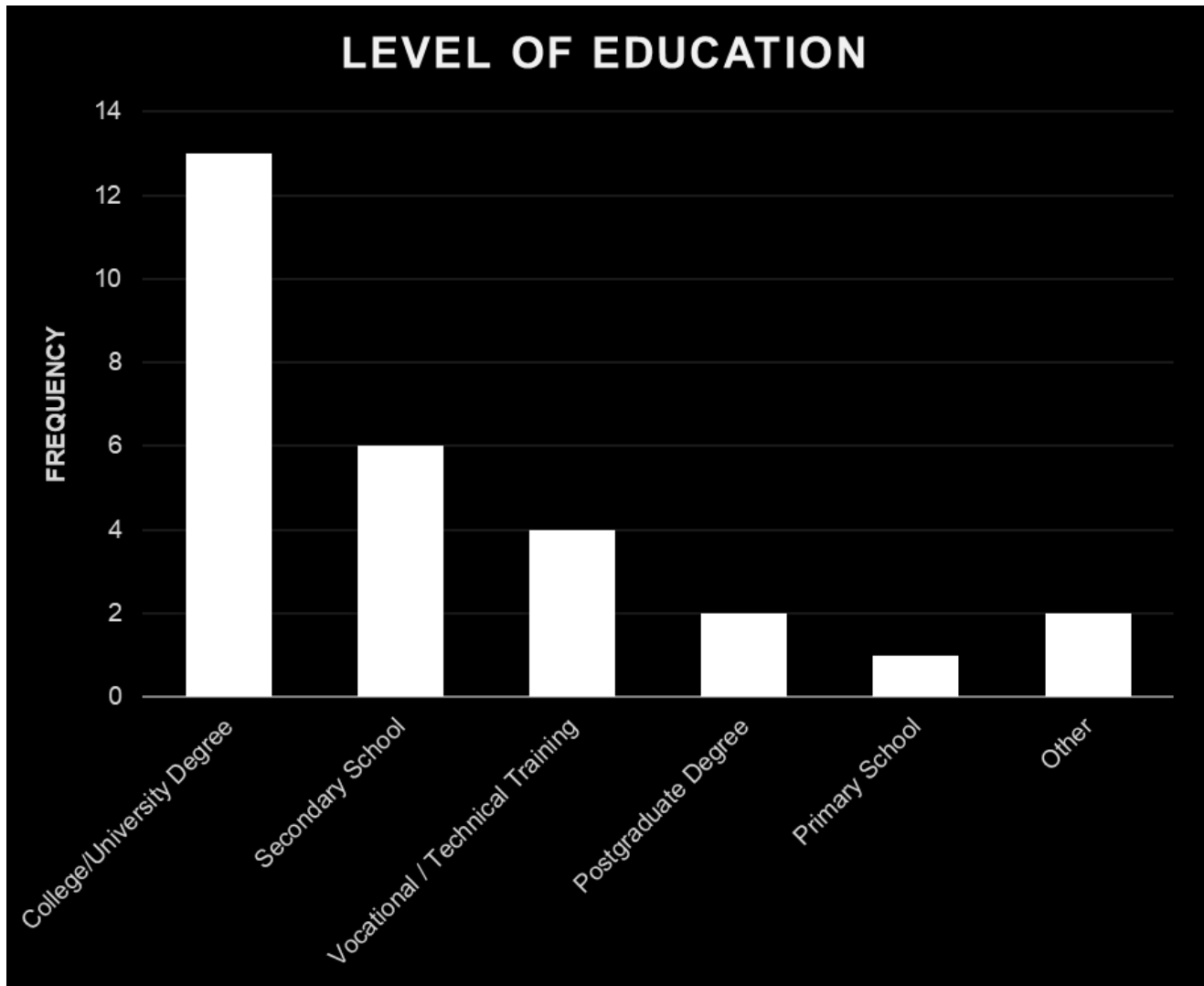


Fig 4.1 Educational Background

Nearly half of respondents (43.3%) hold a college or university degree. Combined with those having postgraduate study (6.7%), over half (50%) possess tertiary qualifications. Secondary school completion accounts for 20%, and vocational training 13.3%.

4.3.2 Theme 1: Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

Under this theme, data address how residents perceive the police, courts, case processing speed, and accountability of offenders.

Table 4.3 Perceived Police Effectiveness in Preventing Crime

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Not Effective at All	2	6.7%
Not Very Effective	10	33.3%
Somewhat Effective	7	23.3%
Very Effective	11	36.7%
Total	30	100%

36.7% believe police are “very effective,” while **23.3%** say “somewhat effective.” However, a combined **40%** rate police as either “not very effective” (33.3%) or “not effective at all” (6.7%). Overall, views are mixed but tilt slightly positive.

Table 4.4 Perceived Court Effectiveness in Handling Accused Individuals

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	3	10.0%
Not Effective at All	1	3.3%
Not Very Effective	7	23.3%
Somewhat Effective	13	43.3%
Very Effective	6	20.0%
Total	30	100%

63.3% perceive courts as either “somewhat effective” (43.3%) or “very effective” (20.0%). A combined **26.6%** rate courts “not very effective” or “not effective at all.” **10%** responded “Don't Know,” indicating uncertainty about court performance.

Table 4.5 Satisfaction with Court Case Processing Speed

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No Opinion	5	16.7%
Not Satisfied at All	6	20.0%
Not Very Satisfied	9	30.0%
Somewhat Satisfied	6	20.0%
Very Satisfied	4	13.3%
Total	30	100%

50% of respondents are dissatisfied to some degree (**30%** “not very satisfied” + **20%** “not satisfied at all”). Only **13.3%** are “very satisfied,” and **20%** “somewhat satisfied.” High dissatisfaction suggests delays in court processes.

Table 4.6 Perception of Offender Accountability

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	3	10.0%
Not at All	1	3.3%
To a Small Extent	10	33.3%
To a Moderate Extent	10	33.3%
To a Very Great Extent	6	20.0%
Total	30	100%

53.3% believe accountability is only to a “small” or “moderate” extent. **20%** see accountability “to a very great extent,” while **13.3%** are either “Not at All” or “Don't Know.” Indicates limited confidence in the system's ability to hold offenders strictly accountable.

Table 4.7 Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

Variable	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Police Effectiveness	30	2.70	3	3	0.85
Court Effectiveness	27	2.74	3	3	0.82
Case Processing Speed	25	3.08	3	3	1.01
Offender Accountability	27	2.37	2	2	0.90

The data presented in table 4.7 provide insights into public perceptions of the effectiveness of the criminal justice system across four key dimensions. Police effectiveness, assessed by 30 respondents, yielded a mean score of 2.70 with a median and mode of 3, indicating a general perception of being "Somewhat Effective." However, the standard deviation of 0.85 reflects notable variation in responses, with 37% rating the police as "Very Effective" and approximately 40% rating them as "Not Very Effective" or worse—demonstrating a polarized view.

Court effectiveness, based on 27 responses, produced a similar pattern with a mean of 2.74 and a slightly lower standard deviation of 0.82, suggesting a somewhat more consistent, albeit modest, perception of effectiveness; notably, 70% of respondents rated the courts as at least "Somewhat Effective." In contrast, perceptions of case processing speed, drawn from 25 participants, averaged 3.08, indicating a tendency toward dissatisfaction, supported by a higher standard deviation (1.01) and 60% of respondents reporting dissatisfaction with the pace of judicial proceedings.

The lowest-rated dimension was offender accountability, with a mean score of 2.37 and both median and mode at 2, suggesting that most respondents felt offenders are held accountable only to a "Small Extent"; a view supported by 74% of the sample. Overall, while perceptions of the police and courts hover around moderate effectiveness, the findings reveal significant concerns regarding the pace of justice and the perceived lack of accountability for offenders.

4.3.3 Theme 2: Rehabilitation and Recidivism

This section examines how respondents view the justice system's role in changing offender behaviour, reducing reoffending, and providing rehabilitation opportunities.

Table 4.8 Perceived Role in Changing Offender Behaviour

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	4	13.3%
Not at All	4	13.3%
To a Small Extent	11	36.7%
To a Moderate Extent	7	23.3%
To a Very Great Extent	4	13.3%
Total	30	100%

36.7% feel the system changes behaviour only “to a small extent,” while **23.3%** say “to a moderate extent.” **13.3%** believe it does “to a very great extent,” matched by another 13.3% responding “Not at All.” **13.3%** remain uncertain (“Don’t Know”).

Table 4.9 Effectiveness in Reducing Reoffending

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	1	3.3%
Not Effective at All	5	16.7%
Not Very Effective	18	60.0%
Somewhat Effective	5	16.7%
Very Effective	1	3.3%
Total	30	100%

A large majority (**76.7%**) rate methods as either “not very effective” (60.0%) or “not effective at all” (16.7%). Only **20.0%** feel methods are somewhat or very effective. Underscores perceptions that recidivism-reduction measures are inadequate.

Table 4.10 Adequacy of Rehabilitation Opportunities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	2	6.7%
No, Not at All	5	16.7%
No, Not Really	10	33.3%
Yes, somewhat	8	26.7%
Yes, definitely	5	16.7%
Total	30	100%

Over half (50%) believe opportunities are not adequate (“No, Not Really” or “No, Not at All”). Only 43.4% say there are some or definite opportunities for rehabilitation. Indicates perceived gaps in vocational or educational programs for offenders.

4.3.4 Theme 3: Public Perception and Fairness

Under this theme, respondents comment on how well the system regulates crime, treats individuals, their trust in courts, experiences of corruption, and perceived safety in Mutare.

Table 4.11 Overall Regulation of Crime

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don't Know	2	6.7%
Not Well at All	7	23.3%
Not Very Well	8	26.7%
Somewhat Well	10	33.3%
Very Well	3	10.0%
Total	30	100%

60.0% rate the system’s crime regulation as “not very well” or worse. Only **43.3%** believe it functions “somewhat well” or “very well.” Reflects moderate dissatisfaction with the system’s overall effectiveness.

Table 4.12 Perceived Fairness in Treatment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Don’t Know	1	3.3%
Not Fairly at All	8	26.7%
Not Very Fairly	11	36.7%
Somewhat Fairly	6	20.0%
Very Fairly	4	13.3%
Total	30	100%

A combined **63.4%** feel the system treats individuals unfairly (“not very fairly” or “not fairly at all”). Only **33.3%** perceive fair treatment to some or great extent.

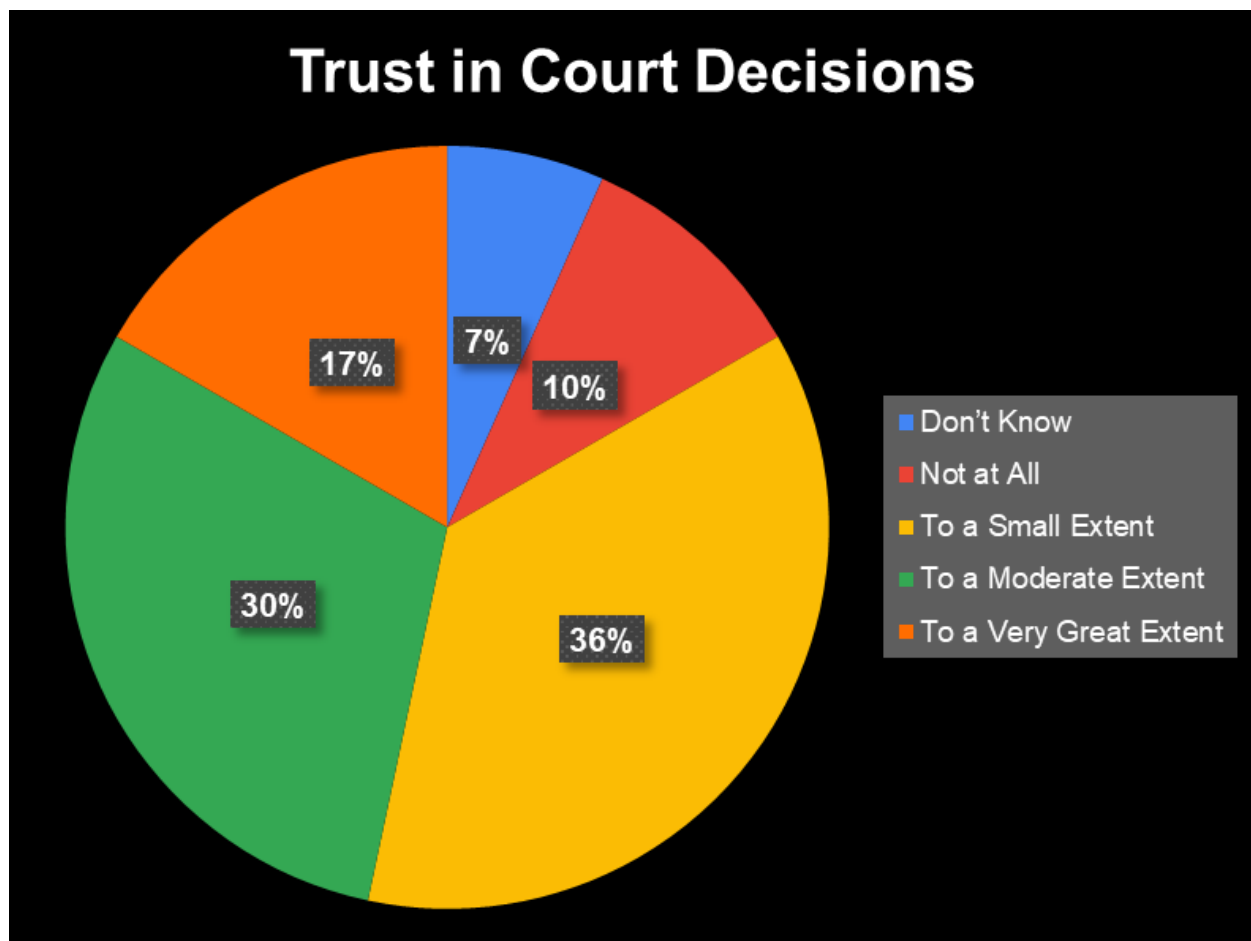


Figure 4.2 Trust in Court Decisions

Over two-thirds (**66.7%**) trust decisions only to a “small” or “moderate extent.” Less than **17%** trust “to a very great extent,” and **10%** have no trust at all.

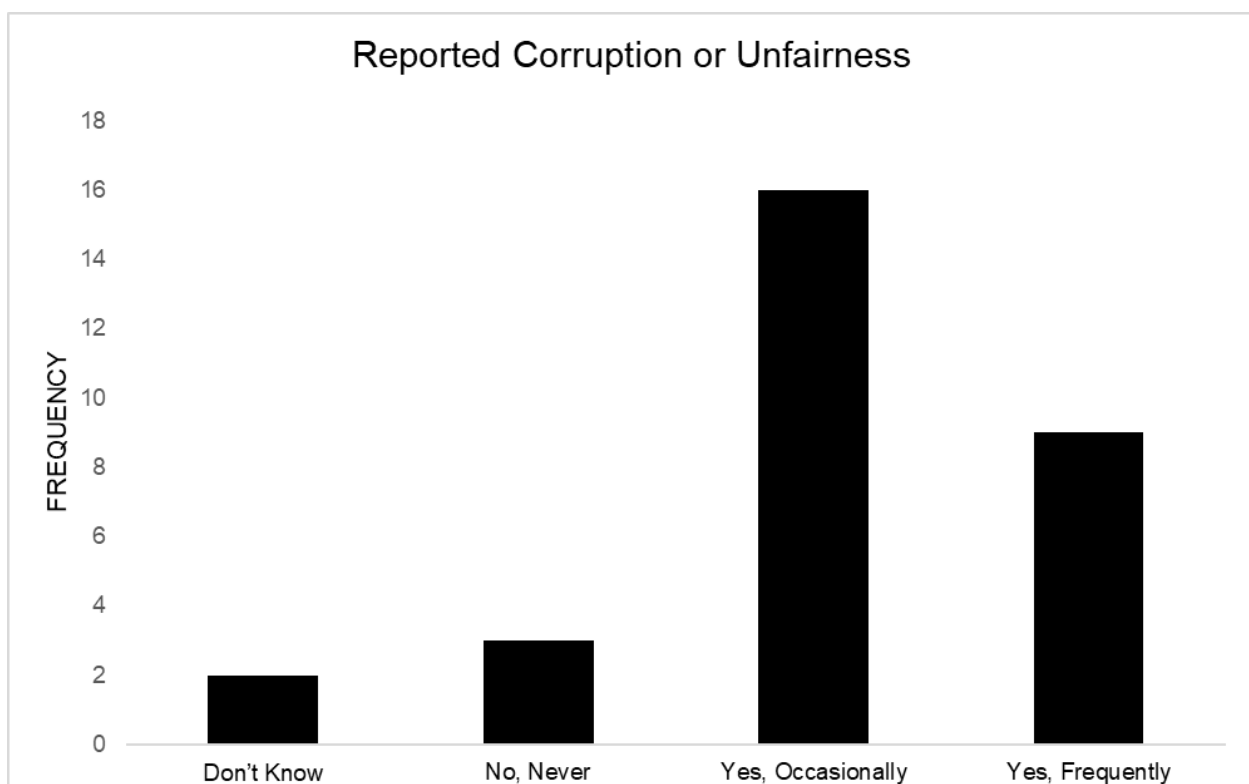


Fig 4.3 Reported Corruption or Unfairness

83.3% have witnessed or heard of corruption/ unfairness either occasionally (53.3%) or frequently (30%). Only **10.0%** claim never to have encountered such instances.

Table 4.13 Perceived Safety in Mutare

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Unsafe	6	20.0%
Somewhat Unsafe	10	33.3%
Somewhat Safe	11	36.7%
Very Safe	3	10.0%
Total	30	100%

53.3% feel “very unsafe” or “somewhat unsafe.” **46.7%** feel “somewhat safe” or “very safe.” Indicates a nearly even split, with slightly more leaning toward feeling unsafe.

Table 4.14: Rehabilitation and Recidivism

Variables	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Changing Offender Behaviour	26	2.19	2	2	0.91
Reducing Reoffending	29	2.17	2	2	0.68
Rehabilitation Opportunities	28	2.32	2	2	1.00

The data in Table 4.14 provide an assessment of public perceptions regarding rehabilitation and recidivism within the criminal justice system, focusing on three key areas. In terms of changing offender behaviour, responses from 26 participants resulted in a mean score of 2.19, with both the median and mode at 2, indicating that most respondents felt the justice system contributes to behavioural change only to a "Small Extent." The standard deviation of 0.91 reflects moderate variation, with a few respondents expressing more optimistic views, but the majority (approximately 73%) believed the impact on behaviour change is minimal. Similarly, perceptions of reducing reoffending, based on 29 responses, yielded a mean of 2.17, again closely aligning with a rating of "Not Very Effective." The median and mode remained at 2, and the relatively low standard deviation (0.68) suggests that this view is widely shared, with little divergence; implying a lack of public confidence in the system's ability to prevent repeat offenses. Finally, the evaluation of rehabilitation opportunities by 28 respondents produced a slightly higher mean of 2.32, yet still below the threshold for "Somewhat" positive perceptions. With the median and mode at 2 and a standard deviation of 1.00, responses showed more spread; some acknowledging existing opportunities, but half of the participants (15 out of 28) felt there are few meaningful rehabilitation programs available. Collectively, these findings suggest a clear public concern: rehabilitation efforts are perceived as limited, and the justice system is not viewed as effective in reforming offenders or preventing recidivism.

Table 4.15: Public Perception and Fairness

Aspect	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std Dev
Crime Regulation	28	2.32	2	3	0.97
Fairness in Treatment	29	2.21	2	2	1.00
Trust in Court Decisions	28	2.57	2	2	0.90
Reported Corruption/Unfairness	28	2.21	2	2	0.62
Perceived Safety in Mutare	30	2.37	2	3	0.91

Table 4.15 presents insights into public perceptions of fairness, trust, and safety within the criminal justice system. Starting with crime regulation, among 28 respondents, the mean score was 2.32—positioned between “Not Very Well” and “Somewhat Well,” but leaning closer to the former. Although the mode was 3 (“Somewhat Well”), the median was 2, indicating that at least half of the participant’s felt crime is not regulated effectively. The relatively high standard deviation of 0.97 suggests varied experiences, with responses ranging from very poor to very good regulation. In everyday terms, more than half (15 out of 28) believe the system is underperforming in controlling crime.

When it comes to fairness in treatment, responses from 29 individuals yielded a mean of 2.21, a median of 2, and a mode of 2; highlighting that the most common view is that people are treated “Not Very Fairly.” The standard deviation of 1.00 indicates a wide range of views, but the central tendency shows that around two-thirds (roughly 20 respondents) feel the system does not treat people fairly.

Trust in court decisions, based on 28 responses, had a slightly higher mean of 2.57, suggesting that most respondents trust the court system only to a small or moderate extent. While the median and mode were both 2, indicating limited trust, the standard deviation of 0.90 shows some variability in responses. Still, a significant majority (about 20 out of 28) expressed only low to moderate confidence in judicial decisions.

Regarding reported corruption or unfairness, the responses of 28 individuals produced a mean and median of 2.21, with the most common answer (mode) also at 2; “Yes, occasionally.” This, combined with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.62, suggests a broadly shared perception that corruption is a regular concern. In fact, 25 out of 28 respondents admitted to witnessing or suspecting corruption at least occasionally, and 9 of them felt it occurred frequently.

Lastly, perceived safety in Mutare, based on 30 responses, yielded a mean of 2.37—situated between “Somewhat Unsafe” and “Somewhat Safe,” but skewed toward the former. The median was 2, yet the mode was 3, showing that while some individuals feel somewhat safe, the majority lean toward feeling unsafe. With a standard deviation of 0.91, it’s clear that views are split. In practical terms, a slim majority (16 out of 30) reported feeling unsafe to some degree.

Together, these findings point to a lack of public confidence in the fairness and trustworthiness of the justice system, with concerns about corruption and personal safety adding to an overall sense of unease.

4.4 Discussion

Below, findings are discussed in relation to literature and theoretical expectations. Whenever a result aligns or diverges from earlier research, it is noted.

4.4.1 Effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System

Police Effectiveness: Although 36.7% see the police as “very effective,” 40.0% rate them “not very effective” or worse. This mixed perception aligns with literature on resource constraints and corruption in Zimbabwean policing (Simpson & Krönke, 2019; Afrobarometer, 2018). Where respondents see police as effective, it may reflect localized community policing efforts (Zikhali, 2019).

Court Effectiveness: 63.3% rate courts positively (somewhat or very effective), higher than perceptions of the police. This may reflect improved judicial reforms (Judicial Service

Commission, 2023). However, **26.6%** remain critical—pointing to delays and perceived political interference (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021). A combined **50.0%** express dissatisfaction, reinforcing known delays in case handling (Magaisa, 2016; Freedom House, 2018). Slow processes can undermine deterrence (Pratt et al., 2016). Only **20.0%** feel offenders are held accountable to a “very great extent,” matching reports of bail abuses and limited follow-up (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024). Deterrence Theory suggests that swift and certain punishment deters crime (Akers & Sellers, 2019). High levels of perceived ineffectiveness and low accountability may weaken deterrent effects in Mutare.

4.4.2 Rehabilitation and Recidivism

Behaviour Change: **36.7%** perceive only minimal change, and **23.3%** moderate change. Literature on Zimbabwean correctional challenges (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2018) notes overcrowding and under-resourced programs (Mukwenha, 2021), corroborating limited perceived rehabilitation. **76.7%** feel methods are ineffective or only “not very effective.” This aligns with research showing high recidivism due to lack of post-release support (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002; Gendreau et al., 2016). Only **43.4%** believe adequate opportunities exist, while **50.0%** disagree. This supports findings that vocational and educational programs remain insufficient (Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service, 2005). Social Control Theory highlights that opportunities for prosocial integration reduce crime (Hirschi, 1969). Perceived lack of rehabilitation resources suggests weakened social bonds and higher recidivism risk.

4.4.3 Public Perception and Fairness

60.0% rate regulation as “not very well” or worse, in line with increasing crime trends (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024; Zinyemba et al., 2020). **63.4%** perceive unfair treatment, reflecting literature on judicial corruption and bias (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021; Bar Human Rights Committee, 2011). Only **16.7%** trust “to a very great extent,” while **66.7%** trust “to a small” or “moderate extent.” Studies note low public trust due to delays and political influence (Freedom House, 2018). **83.3%** report witnessing or hearing about corruption, matching widespread reports of systemic corruption (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2018; U.S. Department of State, 2022). Nearly half (**53.3%**) feel unsafe, reflecting high levels of violent crimes and inadequate policing

in Mutare's suburbs (Mugari & Chakanyuka, 2024). Public legitimacy is crucial for compliance (Bayley, 2010). High perceptions of unfairness and corruption undermine legitimacy, making crime regulation more difficult.

4.5 Summary

- **Demographics:** Respondents skewed toward middle-aged adults (35–54), majority male (60%), and largely well-educated (50% tertiary).
- **Effectiveness:** Courts fared slightly better than police, but both institutions suffer from perceived delays and low accountability.
- **Rehabilitation:** Over two-thirds believe rehabilitation efforts are inadequate, and a large majority see recidivism-reduction methods as ineffective.
- **Perception & Fairness:** The majority rate the system's overall crime regulation as poor, perceive widespread unfair treatment and corruption, and lack trust in court decisions. Half of respondents feel unsafe in Mutare.

These findings directly address each research objective and reveal critical weaknesses in both enforcement and rehabilitative functions. In Chapter Five, these results will inform recommendations to improve justice delivery and community trust in Mutare.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter sought to discuss the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this study, and their practical implications.

5.2 Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the justice systems in criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe. The most important findings of the study are organized by each research objective. The first objective was to assess how well the strategies and practices of law enforcement prevent and address criminal behaviour in Mutare. The second objective was to evaluate the role and effectiveness of the justice system in Zimbabwe in rehabilitating offenders from Mutare and reducing the likelihood of future crimes. The third objective was to explore the views of Mutare residents on the criminal justice system's ability to regulate crime and ensure justice.

Objective 1: Only 36.7% of respondents felt that the Zimbabwe Republic Police in Mutare were “very effective” in preventing crime; 33.3% described them as “not very effective” and an additional 6.7% as “not effective at all.” A majority (63.3%) perceived the courts as either “somewhat effective” (43.3%) or “very effective” (20%) in handling accused individuals, though 23.3% considered them “not very effective” or worse, and 10% were uncertain. Half of respondents (50%) were dissatisfied with how quickly courts handle criminal cases, citing lengthy delays. Only 13.3% were “very satisfied.” When asked to what extent offenders in Mutare are held accountable, 33.3% answered “to a small extent,” another 33.3% “to a moderate extent,” and only 20% “to a very great extent.” Ten percent either “didn’t know” or felt “not at all.”

The second objective in this study showed that forty-percent (36.7% “small extent,” 23.3% “moderate extent”) believed the justice system exerts only minimal or moderate influence on changing offenders’ behaviour; only 13.3% rated that influence “to a very great extent,”

while 13.3% said “not at all.” A combined 76.7% of respondents viewed current methods to reduce recidivism as either “not very effective” (60%) or “not effective at all” (16.7%); merely 20% called them “somewhat effective” or “very effective.” Half of the respondents (50%) felt rehabilitation resources (education, job training) were inadequate; 43.4% believed there were some or definite opportunities, and 6.7% were uncertain.

The study objectives 3 findings showed that sixty percent rated the justice system’s ability to regulate crime as “not very well” (26.7%) or “not well at all” (23.3%), while only 43.3% felt it performed “somewhat well” or “very well.” A majority (63.4%) believed the system treats individuals unfairly (“not very fairly” 36.7%, “not fairly at all” 26.7%); only 33.3% described it as “somewhat fairly” or “very fairly.” Two-thirds (66.7%) trusted court decisions only “to a small” or “to a moderate extent”; just 16.7% trusted “to a very great extent.” Eighty-three point three percent reported witnessing or hearing about corruption/unfairness, either “occasionally” (53.3%) or “frequently” (30%). Slightly over half (53.3%) felt “very unsafe” (20%) or “somewhat unsafe” (33.3%) in Mutare, whereas 46.7% felt “somewhat safe” (36.7%) or “very safe” (10%).

5.3 Conclusions

The effectiveness of the Judiciary and Law enforcement in preventing and dealing with Criminal Behaviour showed that a minority (36.7%) view the police as “very effective,” a larger share (40%) judge them “not very effective” or worse. The perception of court effectiveness is more favourable (63.3% “somewhat” or “very effective”), yet persistent dissatisfaction with case processing speed and offender accountability indicates that both police and courts struggle to deliver consistently timely and decisive action. These mixed ratings suggest that, while institutional frameworks exist, operational constraints (e.g., resource shortages, procedural delays) significantly impair the system’s crime-control capacity.

The majority of participants believe that the justice system has only a minimal or moderate effect on changing offender behaviour (60%). Similarly, 76.7% rate current recidivism-reduction methods as ineffective or barely effective, and 50% say rehabilitation opportunities are inadequate. These perceptions confirm that, in practice, rehabilitative

programs (such as vocational training, educational workshops, and post-release support) remain under-resourced and fail to curtail repeat offending.

On public perception of fairness and trust, this study concludes that more than 60% of respondents believe the justice system treats people unfairly, and 66.7% trust court decisions only to a “small” or “moderate” extent. Furthermore, 83.3% have witnessed or heard of corruption within the system. These findings demonstrate a loss of credibility in the Justice system by the population of Mutare

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1. Strengthen Law Enforcement Capacity and Accountability

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in Mutare should receive additional funding to hire more officers, procure vehicles, and improve equipment. Enhanced patrol coverage and faster response times will address perceptions of inefficacy. Implement ongoing professional training and focus on ethics and good investigative techniques to reduce corruption and improve community trust. Transparency in handling complaints will rebuild community trust.

5.4.2. Expedite Court Processes and Enhance Judicial Fairness

Introduce stricter timelines for case filing, evidence disclosure, and trial scheduling. The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) should pilot electronic case-tracking systems in Mutare Magistrates’ and High Courts to reduce backlogs. Given widespread dissatisfaction with case-processing speed, appoint additional magistrates and support staff. Training and deploying more judicial clerks and registrars will ease administrative bottlenecks. To ensure fairness for accused individuals, expand publicly funded legal-aid clinics in underserved suburbs (e.g., Sakubva, Dangamvura). Pro bono partnerships with University law students can supplement professional services.

5.4.3. Rehabilitation Programs and Reduce Recidivism

The Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service (ZPCS) should redesign in-prison programs to include accredited vocational training (e.g., carpentry, tailoring, IT skills) and life-skills workshops. Collaboration with technical colleges can formalize certifications.

Establish a “Reintegration Unit” within ZPCS that links parolees to community NGOs for housing assistance, job placement, and counseling. Evidence from other jurisdictions shows that sustained support reduces repeat offending (Gendreau et al., 2016).

5.4.4. Enhance Public Trust and Community Engagement

Organize regular “town-hall” style meetings in each major ward where residents can voice concerns directly to police commanders and magistrates. Such forums, moderated by civil society organizations, foster transparency and responsiveness. The Ministry of Home Affairs should launch radio, social-media, and print campaigns to showcase successful prosecutions, rehabilitation success stories, and corruption-complaint outcomes. Positive narratives can counteract cynicism. Initiate school-based “Crime Prevention Clubs” in partnership with local NGOs to educate students about the legal system, conflict resolution, and career paths in law enforcement. Engaging youth early may deter future criminal involvement.

5.4.5 To Address Corruption and Improve Ethical Standards

Develop and enforce a strict code of conduct for police, magistrates, and correctional officers. Clear disciplinary guidelines, coupled with anonymous reporting channels, will deter corrupt practices. Task an independent body (e.g., the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission) to perform annual audits of policing budgets, court fee collections, and prison resources. Publicly publish findings to maintain accountability.

5.4.6. Areas for Further Research

Investigate how traditional leaders and community-based dispute resolution interact with formal institutions in Mutare. Understanding these dynamics could reveal alternative pathways for crime prevention.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has summarized the major findings of the study, conclusions were drawn from the evidence collected and offered targeted recommendations to strengthen Mutare’s criminal justice system. Addressing resource gaps, reducing procedural delays, expanding

rehabilitative services, and rebuilding public trust, policymakers and practitioners can begin to close the gap between institutional capacity and community expectation.

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APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Respondent.

My name is ADMIRE ZEMBE, Registration Number B221690B. I am a Bindura University of Science Education student studying towards a degree in Police and Security Studies. I am doing a research study entitled “The role of the criminal justice system in regulating criminal behaviour in Mutare, Zimbabwe”. Prior approval to conduct this study with the school as a case in point has been attained from the administration.

The researcher consequently requests that you voluntarily participate in this study and be as honest as possible in answering the questions. If you wish not to participate, you should not respond to the questionnaire. The researcher wishes to assure you that your identity will not be revealed to any person(s) and your responses will be regarded as confidential. The information you provide will not be used outside its intended purpose.

In order to do justice to the said investigation, please complete the questionnaire to the best of your knowledge and ability. Please do not write your name on any part of the questionnaire. The questionnaire takes about ten minutes to complete.

Instructions

For your answers, you are kindly asked to tick in the box resembling your response or simply fill in the spaces provided.

Disclaimer: I hereby consent to participate in this research, and I confirm that I have read the above information and agree with it.

Place:

Date:

Sign:

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to share your views on the criminal justice system in Mutare. Your responses will help us understand public perceptions and identify areas for

improvement. All responses will be kept confidential.

Section 1: Your Background

1. Age:

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

☐ 65 or older

2. Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ Primary School

- ☐ Secondary School
- ☐ Vocational/Technical Training
- ☐ College/University Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Degree
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. In which part of Mutare do you primarily reside? (Optional)

Section 2: Effectiveness in Preventing and Dealing with Crime

5. How effective do you believe the police in Mutare are in preventing criminal behaviour?

- ☐ Very Effective
- ☐ Somewhat Effective
- ☐ Not Very Effective
- ☐ Not Effective at All
- ☐ Don't Know

6. How effective do you believe the courts in Mutare are in dealing with individuals accused of crimes?

☐ Very Effective

☐ Somewhat Effective

☐ Not Very Effective

☐ Not Effective at All

☐ Don't Know

7. How satisfied are you with the speed at which criminal cases are handled by the courts in Mutare?

☐ Very Satisfied

☐ Somewhat Satisfied

☐ Not Very Satisfied

☐ Not Satisfied at All

☐ No Opinion

8. To what extent do you believe that individuals who commit crimes in Mutare are held accountable for their actions by the justice system?

☐ To a Very Great Extent

☐ To a Moderate Extent

☐ To a Small Extent

☐ Not at All

☐ Don't Know

Section 3: Offender Rehabilitation

9. To what extent do you believe the justice system in Zimbabwe helps offenders from Mutare change their behaviour?

☐ To a Very Great Extent

☐ To a Moderate Extent

☐ To a Small Extent

☐ Not at All

☐ Don't Know

10. How effective do you think the current methods used by the justice system are in reducing the chances of offenders from Mutare re-offending?

☐ Very Effective

☐ Somewhat Effective

☐ Not Very Effective

☐ Not Effective at All

☐ Don't Know

11. Do you believe there are adequate opportunities for rehabilitation (e.g., education, job training) for offenders within the justice system in Zimbabwe?

☐ Yes, Definitely

☐ Yes, Somewhat

☐ No, Not Really

☐ No, Not at All

☐ Don't Know

Section 4: Public Perception and Fairness

12. Overall, how well do you think the criminal justice system in Mutare regulates crime?

☐ Very Well

☐ Somewhat Well

☐ Not Very Well

☐ Not Well at All

☐ Don't Know

13. How fairly do you believe the criminal justice system in Mutare treats all individuals, regardless of their background or status?

☐ Very Fairly

☐ Somewhat Fairly

☐ Not Very Fairly

☐ Not Fairly at All

☐ Don't Know

14. To what extent do you trust the decisions made by the courts in Mutare?

☐ To a Very Great Extent

☐ To a Moderate Extent

☐ To a Small Extent

☐ Not at All

☐ Don't Know

15. Have you personally witnessed or heard about instances of corruption or unfairness within the criminal justice system in Mutare?

☐ Yes, Frequently

☐ Yes, Occasionally

☐ No, Never

☐ Don't Know

16. What are your general feelings about the level of crime in Mutare?

☐ Very Safe

☐ Somewhat Safe

☐ Somewhat Unsafe

☐ Very Unsafe

17. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the criminal justice system in Mutare? (Optional)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION